

September 23, 2015

Académie Lafayette is a French immersion charter school, many of our teachers are from other countries and arrive here needing housing, a car, furniture and anything else they may not have been able to bring with them from home. In these cases, we offer Mobile Citizen's service because we can get them Internet access almost immediately once they've arrived in Kansas City. They don't have to wait to have a permanent residence, bank account or proper English for contacting customer service to set up their own account with an Internet provider.

Having immediate Internet access is not only convenient, it is essential for getting their work done. Much of their preparation for class is done at home and on their own time. It helps them get their day-to-day work done without having to be stuck at school into the evening after school is finished-- finding resources online for lessons, communicating with parents and other staff via e-mail and required trainings, among other things, are all important parts of being a teacher that can only be done online and can't necessarily be focused on between 8 and 4 PM during the regular school day.

Our teachers don't tend to stay in one place. They may be in a situation where they know they will move from one living situation to another over the course of their first year(s) as they get to know the city better and find the right housing and services for them. So the flexibility of the Mobile Citizen devices and service is an added benefit.

Lastly, we know our international staff use the Internet stay in touch with friends and family overseas using websites like Skype. It is an important benefit for our teachers who do so much for our students while being so far away from their friends and family.

Our primary focus is on getting Internet access to teachers, however there has been an additional need to offer it to our families who do not have Internet at home. Much of our school work and parent-school communications are done almost exclusively online now, so having a reliable option for both teachers and families has been important to us.

As someone who has had direct experience using the service, and as the coordinator of our Internet program for teachers, I can tell you that when the service isn't as fast or as reliable as one would expect, I hear about it. If the access or usage was restricted even further, I don't imagine it would be very useful. These days it is very hard to get by without reliable Internet. Even for simple things like checking e-mail, especially if there was an attachment or a video or voice message as in the case with how our school delivers voicemails, a slower connection would be prohibitive.

With everything that is expected of teachers outside of the regular 8-4 work day, the least we could do is offer them unlimited and unrestricted Internet that allows them to accomplish everything they need and want to for our students.

Jessica Wallace  
Académie Lafayette