

ILTexas schools and Spectrum Enterprise partner to elevate educational experience

Ultra-High Speed Data powers trilingual education for over 23,000 students

International Leadership of Texas (ILTexas) is a free K-12 charter school program serving over 23,000 children on 21 campuses. Students are taught English, Spanish and Mandarin as part of a demanding curriculum designed to foster future success. Of ILTexas's 2022-23 student population, 71.8% were categorized as economically disadvantaged.

Connectivity is critical to the schools' game plan of fostering educational opportunities in underserved communities. ILTexas Superintendent and Founder Eddie Conger has noted the critical importance of online learning in fostering advancement among children growing up in crisis. In his words, "Internet is oxygen."

To that end, ILTexas is focused on building schools and classrooms with superior internet connectivity and designs lesson plans around the use of laptops for all its students. ILTexas finds Spectrum Enterprise to be a critical technology partner, meeting even the most demanding requirements of the charter school program, its students and the communities in which they live.

"Technology is central to everything we do," ILTexas Executive Director of Technology Kevin Hanson explains. "Everything is technology-enabled. Security, assessments, access control, communication, teaching, learning — everything."

To deliver on their high expectations, Hanson credits Spectrum Enterprise for helping solve a number of specific challenges. "The support we get from our partners at Spectrum Enterprise has been phenomenal," he adds.

ILTexas has come to rely on the end-to-end service commitment of Spectrum Enterprise. Potential issues across the ILTexas infrastructure are diagnosed, and solutions carefully designed and rapidly deployed to reduce any possible disruption of their education mission.

Moving at the speed of dreams

From 2020 to 2023 alone, ILTexas grew by some 3,000 students. New school locations are being planned and developed each year. With a strong focus on fostering international leadership through educational advancement, ILTexas has a long waiting list of parents across the state eager to sign their children up. Creating space for them is a constant priority.

"Our biggest issue for K-12 is our carriers being ready to support the speed and execution we need," Hanson says. "Timelines that require six months don't work for us. Not when we have to come from ideation to a campus opening in seven months. Our children's futures won't wait."



International Leadership of Texas provides free K-12 educations using Spectrum Enterprise technology. "Because of all our success, we are growing," ILTexas Executive Director of Technology Kevin Hanson says.

Client profile



Company

International Leadership of Texas

Industry

K-12 Education

Services

Dedicated Fiber Internet (DFI)
Ethernet Services
DDoS Protection
Enterprise Trunking
Managed Router Service

Overview

- International Leadership of Texas (ILTexas) is a free K-12 charter school program serving over 23,000 students on 21 campuses across Texas.
- ILTexas partners with Spectrum Enterprise to provide technology services for their students and staff. These include Ultra-High Speed Data connectivity, voice communication and cybersecurity solutions.

Outcomes

- Spectrum Enterprise's partnership with ILTexas brings fiber connectivity to 28 K-8 schools and high schools, as well as headquarters and data center locations. This connectivity is supported by Ultra-High Speed Data and Ethernet services.
- To accommodate an immediate need to expand the program's reach, Spectrum Enterprise executed fiber connectivity installs at 13 different campuses and a data center in just 45 days.
- As ILTexas is in a state of constant and robust growth, Spectrum Enterprise continues to supply connectivity to new campuses across the state.

Why it matters

- ILTexas is dedicated to unlocking the learning potential in all of its students. Spectrum Enterprise technology solutions allow ILTexas to achieve that goal by bringing together its schools with secure and reliable Dedicated Fiber Internet (DFI) and Ethernet Services.
- ILTexas is backed by Spectrum Enterprise engineers and technicians in connecting new schools and upgrading existing ones to support its mission of college advancement for Texas children.



Teamwork is critical to ILTexas and its future. "We need partners like Spectrum Enterprise who can help us innovate and solve issues," Executive Director of Technology Kevin Hanson explains.

When he asked Philip Krause, Major Account Manager at Spectrum Enterprise, to move 13 fiber circuits and a data center to accommodate connectivity improvements at multiple school locations, Hanson knew Krause was ready to tackle what others might call an unreasonable demand.

Instead of doing it in the usual standard of 120 days, or even an accelerated 90 days, the request was to complete the multi-campus install in 45 days. The need to accommodate exciting new learning opportunities was too urgent to wait on. Spectrum Enterprise delivered.

"It was a behemoth move, and we did it in half the time," Krause says. "And by the way, none of the schools lost connectivity while we did it."

How fiber helps ILTexas grow

As the nexus for ILTexas's IT infrastructure, the data center needs to leverage massive amounts of scalable bandwidth to the many schools it serves. For that, the charter school system relies on Spectrum Enterprise fiber circuits featuring [Ultra-High Speed Data](#), which offers super-fast, scalable data flow for both internet and Ethernet connections.

From its headquarters and data center locations, ILTexas manages a series of high-speed fiber circuits that individually connect to and from each campus. Across 21 campus locations, 28 ILTexas elementary and high schools utilize Ethernet Services to stay connected with the headquarters and data center, sharing vital and sensitive information like student records in an enclosed, secure environment.

"We need that trust, we need that speed, we need the ability to expedite and escalate and resolve and deliver the solutions in a timely manner. That's what Spectrum Enterprise was able to provide for us."

- Kevin Hanson, Executive Director of Technology, International Leadership of Texas

For external data transfers, and connecting to third-party platforms for remote learning, standardized testing and other needs, ILTexas relies on [Dedicated Fiber Internet \(DFI\)](#) to channel seamless connectivity across their many campuses.



New ILTexas campuses are always being planned to accommodate rising demand. “While other schools lose students, we gain them,” notes Kevin Hanson, Executive Director of Technology.

Internet connectivity from Spectrum Enterprise is an essential element in fulfilling the ILTexas mission. Classroom instruction uses laptops issued free of charge under the federal E-Rate program to every student from kindergarten to 12th grade. This not only facilitates everyday classroom education but allows students to continue and expand upon their school lessons with independent learning from home.

Also run online is an annual mandatory student evaluation program, known as the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR). Designed to ensure compliance with state educational standards, STAAR is a vital metric for ILTexas when it comes to meeting accreditation and funding qualifications.

To manage their constant fluctuations in demand for traffic flow and bandwidth, ILTexas relies on the critical operational flexibility of [Managed Router Service](#).

“We have been able to partner with Spectrum Enterprise to identify ways to eliminate single points of failure, both in our internal network and for some of our remote

locations,” Hanson explains. “That’s one of the assets we enjoy in our partnership with Spectrum Enterprise, augmenting our own IT staff to accomplish a critical function for a definitely unique segment of the ILTexas population.”

Voice communications at ILTexas locations are run via a Primary Rate Interface (PRI) system that utilizes [Enterprise Trunking](#) for cost-effective, reliable service.

Prioritizing cybersecurity

The rocket-like growth of International Leadership of Texas in just over a decade has introduced some significant security challenges. Schools are not only repositories of information useful to identity thieves but have become targets of ransomware attacks. The U.S. Government Accountability Office reports these types of cyberattacks are [on the rise](#).

“Spectrum Enterprise has been a trusted partner when we needed them the most.”

– Kevin Hanson, Executive Director of Technology, International Leadership of Texas

In 2022, ILTexas recognized the need to be vigilant against cyberattacks, and to move quickly to block them. After identifying one threat during a STAAR testing period, ILTexas asked its technology partner for an immediate way to raise its security threshold.

After a thorough systemic review by Krause and his team, a 24/7 threat detection and mitigation solution, [DDoS Protection](#), was installed at its network center.

ILTexas was counting on quick deployment. Spectrum Enterprise completed the installation in just 72 hours.

“We need support as committed as we are to making success happen,” Hanson says. “When you have that kind of relationship with a trusted partner like Spectrum Enterprise, you can accomplish a great deal.”

How ILTexas hosts the world

A core mission of the school system is preparing students with the mindset and skills they need to take on future leadership roles. In addition to being trilingual, the ILTexas curriculum is wide-ranging and college focused. Students of 45 different nationalities are brought together to share ideas and learn from one another at the various schools.

Many international students at ILTexas are housed at a dormitory located on its Garland campus. Connectivity and the bandwidth vital to help these students stay in touch with ILTexas, as well as their families back home, is supplied via Dedicated Fiber Internet.

Fiber also helps ILTexas host the Leadership Speaker Series. Here world dignitaries are connected by internet to all seven ILTexas high schools to engage in open discussions in English, Spanish and Mandarin.

“Our students run the technology, the cameras, the soundboard,” Hanson explains. “Technology is getting everyone closer together regardless of geography. It is also advancing what we can do.”

Hatching opportunities from isolated locations

In 2022 ILTexas opened a new K-8 school in New Caney, a growing community northeast of Houston. When ILTexas leadership first visited the location, not long before construction was to begin, they realized the campus location and surrounding area lacked an available online network. Spirits sank as they considered the possibility of opening a school without connectivity.

“That’s when we called Philip Krause, and with [Spectrum Enterprise Vice President] Lynne Bell, he made it happen,” Hanson says. “Seven months later, we opened a campus there with complete internet capability, just like our other campuses. I am so grateful to them for getting the fiber infrastructure in place.”

The need for connectivity is a constant at ILTexas, and central to founder Eddie Conger’s vision of a more level playing field for all Texas children. With the program’s Spectrum Enterprise partnership,

“When I talk about ideas with Philip Krause at Spectrum Enterprise, it’s kind of like throwing the ball around, talking about what might happen. We discuss what options are available so we can make the most informed, intelligent decisions about what direction we might go.”

– Kevin Hanson, Executive Director of Technology, International Leadership of Texas

ILTexas students now have access to opportunities they might otherwise have missed.

“Those who are from low-income populations face demographic as well as technological challenges, not to mention often being in a very rural location, like in New Caney,” Hanson notes. “ILTexas is providing the best education for students who can achieve wonderful things when they are given a chance.”

Transforming the future, one campus at a time

In addition to adding new campuses in Texas, Hanson is working on plans to update existing infrastructure with an eye toward standardization and technology upgrades.

“We are transforming our entire organization, not leaving behind any campus, from the ground up,” he explains. “We have a roadmap to get there, we have identified critically needed E-Rate funding opportunities and we have our partnership with Spectrum Enterprise.”

Hanson adds the ability to reach out to Spectrum Enterprise at any time for counsel is particularly helpful.

“I know I can call Philip in the middle of the night and he will pick up,” Hanson says. “I get not only commitments, but I also get action. With Spectrum Enterprise that’s the critical thing, that I can rely on their words.”



Every ILTexas student from grade K-12 is issued a laptop free of charge. “Every day we are improving the transformational capability of technology,” Executive Director of Technology Kevin Hanson says.

About Spectrum Enterprise

Spectrum Enterprise, a part of Charter Communications, Inc., is a national provider of scalable, fiber technology solutions serving many of America’s largest businesses and communications service providers. The broad Spectrum Enterprise portfolio includes [networking and managed services solutions](#); [Internet access](#), [Ethernet access and networks](#), [Voice](#) and [TV solutions](#). The Spectrum Enterprise team of experts works closely with clients to achieve greater business success by providing solutions designed to meet their evolving needs. For more information, visit enterprise.spectrum.com.

Spectrum Enterprise is a registered trademark of Charter Communications. All other logos, marks, designs, and otherwise are the trademarks and intellectual property of their respective third-party owners. Not all products, pricing and services are available in all areas. Pricing and actual speeds may vary. Restrictions may apply. Subject to change without notice.

©2024 Charter Communications. All Rights Reserved.