

# The Right Fit

School district finds everything it's looking for — and then some — in printer solution



Mike Pautz, Network Administrator  
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For a sixth-grade student, it might represent the difference between simply researching an astronomy project and actually being able to distinguish the individual craters on the moon. On a high-school junior's term paper, it could provide the slight edge the student needs to stand out among hundreds of college-bound peers. And for teachers of every subject and grade level, it may be the catalyst that sparks a child's attention and helps him understand the lesson in a new and deeper way.

Any way you cut it, there's just no comparison to color. And now, thanks to increasingly affordable pricing among today's range of high-quality color printers, school districts across the nation are finding it easier than ever to bring color into the lives — and lessons — of students.

Such was the case for the Seymour Community School District in Seymour, WI, where Network Administrator Mike Pautz is quick to heap praise on the capabilities and reliability of his new Ricoh color printers. From print speed to price points, accessibility to ease of use, the Ricoh printers have not disappointed Pautz, whose district includes one high school, one middle school and two elementary campuses serving approximately 2,500 students. With thousands of pages printed each week by administrators, teachers and students alike, the six color devices experience little downtime.

## Vivid Color

The district has embraced the functionality and performance of its color printers with much enthusiasm, especially considering that Pautz faced a laundry list of requirements when he first began shopping for color devices.

"Price was a big factor," he notes, citing ease of use, a low cost per page, and the ability to print 15 to 16 pages per minute (ppm) as other desired attributes. Additionally, Pautz says, the printer needed to provide a broad range of client support, as the Seymour Community School District's network is facilitated by a myriad of manufacturers, including an IBM AS/400 server, a Novell protocol and Windows clients at the two elementary schools, Rock Ledge and Black Creek. "We needed to have vendor support across the board with no problems," he explains.

"Finding something under a thousand dollars that could do all of that was a tough task," Pautz acknowledges.

The network administrator found everything he needed in the Ricoh CL2000 color laser printer. The CL2000 uses single-pass, color laser technology to produce exceptionally clear graphics at a rate of 16.9 ppm. Designed to produce high-quality documents on multiple paper types — including plain, thick and glossy stocks — the CL2000 also feeds and prints labels, transparencies and envelopes with ease, a beneficial function that is becoming more common in today's lineup of color printers. Furthermore, power consumption is minimized with the printer's rapid warm-up and cool-down speeds, and the duplex option enables significant paper savings.

Seymour's CL2000 model is about to be replaced by the even more versatile Ricoh Aficio CL3500N network-ready color laser printer, which produces exceptional graphics at an even speedier 22 ppm — in either full-color or monochrome. Designed for today's cost-conscious education environments, the CL3500N supports wireless capabilities with optional interfaces and duplexing capabilities, and can even be upgraded to include scanning functionality.

Primarily used for student projects, the district's color devices are responsible for printing everything from desktop publishing assignments to Web pages to multimedia content. "The kids, especially at the elementary level, just love to see their work in color," Pautz points out.

At the district's Seymour Community High School, two of the color printers serve as key components of mobile labs used for English and science classes. Additionally, the district plans to purchase another color printer in the near future to support a third mobile lab.

The increased focus on color printers in the educational community is not surprising, considering that studies show that color can significantly aid in information retention. According to research compiled by Don Jones, author of "The Definitive Guide to Office Color Printing," color communications — which command attention and improve understanding — can increase comprehension by 75 percent over black and white. Color also adds power to presentations and makes materials more compelling, which can boost efficiency and productivity, research suggests.

Furthermore, educators may be following the lead of businesses, who overwhelmingly indicated in a recent survey that color

documents help them gain new customers and a competitive edge. Conducted by Xerox, the survey revealed that at least eight in 10 respondents agreed that the use of color made their company appear more successful, enhanced employee creativity and gave them a competitive edge. More importantly, recent reductions in the cost of color printers make them a viable and attractive option for schools.

### Continuing Commitment

Just as black-and-white TVs have given way to the vibrancy of color, and the gray tones of early photography now take a back seat to the brilliance afforded by color film, so too, has color begun to take center stage among printer solutions. In fact, tech research firm IDC predicts that the growth of color hardcopy devices through 2008 will be 10 times higher than that for black-and-white devices, designating a growth rate of 20 percent versus two percent.

Although in the past, most color printers did not allow the level of management desired by many users, author Jones point out that these solutions now offer “centralized management, administration security, centralized monitoring and alerting, and all the additional features that network administrators expect.”

Pautz agrees, revealing that as other printers within the district reach the end of their lifecycle, replacements will come in the form of the Ricoh brand, considering the substantial rewards the district has reaped since acquiring the new printers. “Our costs for printing are down 25 to 30 percent,” Pautz reveals, adding that acquisition costs have also been significantly reduced. Perhaps most importantly, the busy network administrator notes,

“Ever since I deployed them, I haven’t had to go back to them. They work well and are very easy to use.”

This level of customer satisfaction comes as no surprise to CDW•G Account Manager Matthew Shortell, who initially shipped the district a sample color printer in order to convince them to try it. “It’s a quality product that offers the same, if not better, specs than other brands. And the cost point structure is so unbelievably below others, it’s shocking,” he says.

Shortell says that when you factor the price of the printer, coupled with the savings on consumables, such as toner, the Ricoh brand is tough to beat.

Still, even with all of its benefits, getting the product through the doors of the Seymour Community School District was no small task. But, says Shortell, “My job as a salesperson is to try to bring new technology and a new way of thinking to the customer.”

“Matt kept suggesting the Ricoh, but I shot him down every time,” Pautz acknowledges. “Finally, he just sent a sample and said, ‘Here, just try it.’ I was pretty impressed with it right out of the box.”

And the rest, as they say, is history. The Seymour Community School District is not only sweet on the Ricoh brand, but is equally committed to CDW•G as its choice supplier.

“They are so helpful because they have a lot of resources and get answers to my questions so fast,” Pautz reports. “Products arrive very quickly — usually the next day — and prices are very good. They’re tough to beat!” 🍌

## Constant Color!

Other great options in color laser printers include:

- **HP Color LaserJet 4700 Series** — With print, copy, scan and fax functions integrated into a single device, the HP 4700 Series enhances productivity while delivering a variety of key capabilities. Offering fast printing and processing speeds of up to 30 pages per minute (ppm), as well as two-sided printing at full speed, the device boasts a first page print-out of less than 10 seconds. This reliable workgroup printer also offers expandable memory and 600 x 600 dpi (dots per inch). [cdw.com/hpprinters](http://cdw.com/hpprinters)
- **Xerox Phaser 8500/8550 Series** — High speed, competitively priced and feature-packed, the Phaser 8000/8550 prints up to 30 ppm while delivering 600 dpi to 2400 dpi, depending on the model. Available in several configurations, the Phaser boasts a first-page printout time of only five seconds, plus offers as standard a number of features that normally are available as options, including networking true Adobe® PostScript® 3™, automated troubleshooting and job accounting. [cdw.com/xerox](http://cdw.com/xerox)
- **Lexmark C522N** — This network-ready laser delivers excellent, professional-quality color printing at 20 ppm, with a first-page printout time as fast as 13 seconds. With brilliant color achieved with 1200 x 1200 dpi, this printer is designed to meet the needs of a small workgroup or busy office. Its small footprint, two-tone LED and easy front loading of supplies enhance its ease of use. [cdw.com/lexmark](http://cdw.com/lexmark)



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