

CASE STUDY / K-12 SCHOOL DISTRICT / WYOMING

A Partnership Built on *Trust*

How a relationship that started in 1998 became a district-wide technology partnership.

AT A GLANCE

CLIENT

Sheridan County School
District #1

LOCATION

Sheridan, Wyoming

INDUSTRY

K-12 Public Schools

SERVICES

Managed Services · Cloud
Communication · Student
Safety · Network
Infrastructure

RELATIONSHIP

Preferred MSP since 2016

HEADLINE RESULT

A trusted, long-term
technology partnership

01 THE CLIENT

Twenty years in the same *chair*

Jeremy Smith has been the business manager at Sheridan County School District #1 for twenty years. In a district that size the business manager owns the budget and most of the operations, which means technology decisions land on his desk whether or not they arrive labeled as technology decisions.

Twenty years in one seat gives a person a long memory for vendors. He has watched companies come through Sheridan with a good pitch and a short attention span, and he has watched a few of them not last. Longevity turns out to be its own kind of reference.

It also means he is not evaluating Pine Cove on a proposal. He is evaluating them on more than two decades of showing up, which is a harder standard than any RFP applies and a more accurate one.

02 THE CHALLENGE

The skills gap a small team cannot *close*

The problem Smith describes is not a broken system. It is a coverage problem, and it is permanent. A small in-house IT department, however capable, cannot hold deep expertise in every area a modern district depends on at once, and the gap widens each time a new category of technology becomes a district responsibility.

Managed services, cloud communication, student safety, network infrastructure: each of those is a specialty with its own vendors, its own compliance questions, and its own pace of change. A district can hire for one or two of them. It cannot hire for all of them, and it certainly cannot hire for all of them in Sheridan, Wyoming.

That gap does not announce itself as an outage. It shows up as decisions made with less information than they deserved.

Districts in this position usually have two options, and neither is good. Hire specialists they cannot afford and would struggle to retain in a town this size, or accept that some decisions will be made by capable generalists working in unfamiliar territory.

03 FINDING THE RIGHT PARTNER

It started in 1998

Smith first met Pine Cove founder Rick Vancleeve in 1998, when Pine Cove was a two-person shop and neither side was anybody's flagship account.

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It is about bridging the skills gap. A small in-house IT department cannot have expertise in every area. With Pine Cove we gain a diverse range of skills and experience, and having a team of experts to rely on truly makes a significant difference.

JEREMY SMITH · BUSINESS MANAGER, SHERIDAN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT #1

04 WHAT CHANGED

Preferred provider since 2016

Pine Cove has been the district's preferred managed service provider since 2016.

01 Managed services

Day-to-day operations, monitoring, and support handled as an extension of the district's own team.

02 Cloud communication

The systems staff and families use to reach each other, kept current rather than inherited.

03 Student safety

Filtering and safety tooling, where compliance shifts faster than districts can track.

04 Network infrastructure

The wired and wireless foundation everything else in the district quietly depends on.

05 THE RESULTS

He calls *people*, not a company

1998

the year the relationship started, two people at the time

2016

preferred managed service provider for the district

4

specialties covered that the district cannot staff alone

Ask Smith what makes the arrangement work and the answer is not a service level agreement. It is trust and responsiveness, in that order. He does not call a support line and wait to find out who he gets. He calls the specific people at Pine Cove he has come to trust, and they answer.

That is a small distinction on paper and the entire relationship in practice. It is also the thing a district cannot buy on price, and the reason a two-person shop from 1998 is still the district's technology partner.

06 LOOKING AHEAD

The next twenty *years*

Both organizations are considerably larger than they were in 1998, and the work has grown with them. What has not changed is the shape of it: the district decides where it wants to go, and Pine Cove supplies the expertise it would otherwise have to hire for four times over.

Ready to *chat*?

Let's talk about what your organization is trying to accomplish, before we talk about products.

[Schedule Your Free IT Assessment](#)

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