

Houston County School System

Moving to the Head of the Class



Business Needs

- Improve management of an ever-growing technology infrastructure without increasing IT personnel resources.

Solution

- LANDesk® Management Suite

Business Benefits

- Have performed all desktop management tasks from one integrated management console.
- Have been able to immediately find and remote control any one of the 10,000 computers in the WAN with a click of the mouse.
- Saved \$400,000 in labor cost per software deployment of 5,000 clients or more.
- Eliminated the need to expend 1,600 man-hours for generating mandated annual technology reports.

Located near the center of Georgia, the Houston County School System hosts approximately 24,000 students and employs about 3,000 faculty and staff. In its quest for academic excellence, from elementary schools to high schools, all of the educational system's schools have either been named National Schools of Excellence or Georgia Schools of Excellence. In line with this quest for excellence, the Houston County School System also moved to the head of the class in managing its technology resources through its studied use of LANDesk® Management Suite. From being able to remotely control any of its 10,000 computers at the click of a mouse, to saving \$400,000 on a single software deployment project, LANDesk Management Suite enabled the school system to do more with less, and do it faster and smarter.

Do More, Faster and Smarter

The Houston County School System has 34 schools and five other locations that utilize more than 10,000 computers that make up its wide area network. "We have a technical staff of 15 people for managing those resources," says Wallace Reeves, director of Information Technology for the Houston County School System. "The number of people per computer is a pretty overwhelming ratio. To help us manage things better, we needed a management solution to facilitate software deployment, remote access, troubleshooting, inventory, and more." As a result, Reeves and his team put into play the desktop management power of LANDesk® Management Suite.

One of the driving factors for purchasing the LANDesk® solution was that it had all the tools the school system needed under one powerful, easy-to-use management umbrella. "We could find plenty of other tools for remote management and deployment," says Rey Que, network administrator for the school system. "But what we liked about the LANDesk solution was how everything was integrated into a single management console. It's more efficient, while giving us more options and enhancements than other solutions."

It was the increased efficiency of the integrated solution that ultimately sold the school board on LANDesk Management Suite. "Our technology infrastructure was almost growing out of control," says Reeves. "We were able to show the school board that LANDesk would enable us to get our infrastructure under control without having to increase staff. It has enabled us to work smarter, faster, and do more."

In fact, Reeves' team has been able to process twice as many work orders than last year at this time, while decreasing the overall number of open orders. "We're doing more in less time with the same people," Reeves says. "Even our users have noticed. We get more phone calls and emails telling us about how quick their problems were resolved."

Effective Remote Control

With 10,000 computers, 39 different sites and only 15 people on the technology staff, there's no way that Reeves' team can physically visit every computer that encounters problems. In the past, the school system had used another vendor's remote control program to facilitate troubleshooting and problem resolution, but its lack of an underlying management system made it difficult to use, and its per-user licensing made it cost prohibitive to implement on a large scale. Remote control with LANDesk® Management Suite addressed both these issues with its reasonable licensing costs and its integrated management framework.

"The integration with the console and inventory capabilities is what has made the remote control in the LANDesk software so effective for us," Reeves says. "It enables you to quickly find any computer among the 10,000 out there, and then once you find it, you can take it over with a click of a mouse."

Once a technician has control of the computer, he or she can see what the user sees and in most cases quickly resolve the problem without ever having to go onsite or physically touch the computer.

Significant Labor Savings

One of Reeves' team members explains that as soon as the school system deployed LANDesk® Management Suite, it immediately started taking advantage of the solution's powerful software distribution capabilities. "At the same time that we brought in LANDesk® Management Suite, the school board made a significant investment in an educational package called Classworks," says Clennie Davis, lead technician at the Houston County School System. "The goal was to deploy Classworks onto 5,000 clients at our elementary schools and middle schools. By using the group policies in LANDesk Management Suite, we were able to accomplish this in less than six weeks. It would have taken us more than a year to implement it by hand. So, for just this one deployment, we easily saved at least \$400,000 in man-hours alone."

Power of Inventory Management

Reeves believes that one of the most important pieces of a management system is often overlooked—inventory management. "Inventory management is the foundation on which everything else is built," he says. "The ability of the LANDesk server to automatically inventory every computer in our WAN by user, machine name, and IP address is what makes its remote control and software deployment so powerful and effective."

Inventory management also facilitates the school system's ability to budget, plan upgrades, and monitor software licenses. However, one of the biggest areas where it helps Reeves is in putting together an annual report for the state of Georgia. "Each year we have to provide the Department of Education a detailed inventory of all the technology resources that we have," says Reeves. "To create the report in the past, we had to take all of our technical team off of other projects, as well as a few of our technology teachers, and dedicate two weeks of their time to physically inventory every computer at every school. Now all I have to do is have the LANDesk report writer generate a report. What previously took 20 people to do in two weeks, now takes one person to do in minutes."



"Since implementing LANDesk® Management Suite, we've been able to do a lot more work in a shorter period of time and our relationship with our internal customers has been much better. I have to credit LANDesk Management Suite for what it tells us and how it lets us do our job better."

— Wallace Reeves

Director of Information Technology
Houston County School System