

SUCCESS STORY

REJUVENATING SCHOLASTIC TECHNOLOGY for Guilford County Schools and other North Carolina Public School Systems



What Data Networks Did for Guilford County Schools

- Unboxed and installed tens of thousands of PC workstations over a decade long relationship
- Performed functional checks to ensure that every workstation is ready for GCS' students

And Other North Carolina Public School Systems

- End to end project planning and management
- Setup, integration and quality control testing of devices
- Asset tagging, inventory tracking and control
- Repurpose upgraded devices
- Green waste removal

The challenge

Guilford County Schools (GCS) is North Carolina's third-largest school district. Comprising the city of Greensboro and its surrounding area, GCS serves 72,000 students in 130 schools. Ensuring that its entire inventory of computer equipment is continuously state-of-the-art is an important matter for the school district. It is also a difficult task. To avoid interruption while schools are in session, it is critical that new technology installation be performed by professionals who provide timely, cost-effective services year-round.

GCS Information Technology leadership has trusted Data Networks as their technology partner for over a decade. "Our original intention was for Data Networks to do PC installations in order to free up our own full-time technicians to focus on their critical daily student-centered responsibilities, but they've been much more than that for us over the years," says Kristie Altwater, GCS' Project Manager of Computer Inventory.

The solution

For more than 10 years now, Data Networks has helped not only GCS but also many other North Carolina public school systems modernize their technology (computers, printers and other peripheral devices), replacing a certain percentage each year on a rotational basis. According to Rich McCoy, Data Networks' End User Computing Manager, "We perform these services for North Carolina schools throughout the year, which is tricky given technology's lack of room for error, as well as the reality that we can't interrupt classes." The extent to which Data Networks assists school district IT staff with these efforts typically depends on the level of in-house IT technicians' availability and the size of the time window (a matter of hours, days or weeks) within which the technology refresh must be completed. Data Networks is versatile enough to handle projects where the school district needs a small amount of support, a complete outsourcing of the operations, or any level of effort in-between.

GCS counts on Data Networks to unload and unbox pallets of pre-imaged personal computer (PC) workstations delivered to school sites. Once opened, Data Networks transports the PCs to classrooms, connects them to power and network drops, and performs brief functional checks. This represents a very basic project for Data Networks, and demonstrates their motivation to meet client needs and expectations, no matter the scope of the assignment. No engagement is too large or too small for Data Networks.

Other North Carolina public school systems have asked more of Data Networks. In most cases, the projects include comprehensive preparation, delivery and installation of hundreds of PC workstations and peripherals in very short time periods. Data Networks typically begins by helping a school district manage the receiving and inventory control associated with incoming computer equipment. Data Networks leases a local warehouse as a "technology staging and configuration center" to handle pre-delivery PC imaging and testing. To deploy specified operating systems and software to each computer, Data Networks uses hard drive duplicators to replicate the image of a "master" PC to other computers. Once the "master" image has been validated by school district IT staff and Data Networks engineers, the duplicators are used to image individual school sites' actual computers, based on a planned installation schedule.

Data Networks leads a checklist-centered testing effort at the school once all workstations are delivered, installed and connected to ensure each PC and its peripheral components all function in accordance with manufacturer and school district specifications. Many projects include a re-use strategy with Data Networks repurposing as much as 25% of the removed workstations. A final "walk-through" on the last day of onsite activities confirms the North Carolina public school systems' expectations have been met or exceeded by Data Networks.

Mission accomplished

To successfully execute technology modernization projects for school districts across an entire U.S. state requires the experience and precision that Data Networks delivers. GCS and many North Carolina school districts today are in a much better position to provide their students with state-of-the-art educational experience now and for years to come.

Says Altvater, "My impression of Data Networks over the years has been extremely positive. Above and beyond their professional services team's tremendous PC installation abilities, they're very quick to resolve any concerns or issues that arise, and their turnaround of information is so timely, whether it's a quote for new computer equipment or scheduling a new product demonstration for us."

About Data Networks

Data Networks provides effective technology-based solutions to meet your unique needs. Our solutions are specifically developed to reduce IT complexity and help you accomplish more.

INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY

By partnering at the highest levels with the industry's most respected manufacturers, Data Networks can deliver the right products for your environment with the most aggressive pricing possible. Our strong vendor relationships also bring technical training opportunities, expedited help desk resources, and professional service liaisons for consulting and project engagements.

INSPIRED ENGINEERING

Our goal is to be your trusted technology advisor. So we staff highly-qualified engineers who bring years of experience and the most advanced technical certifications to every engagement. We assign them a single area of technical focus, a unique approach that allows them to continually update their skills and expand their specialized technical knowledge. And we arm them with documented best practices developed over more than 30 years of public-sector service.

We invite you to learn more at datanetworks.com or by calling 800-283-6387.