

Fast-growing school district earns top grades in advancing digital education

HP Care Pack Services for printers and MFPs streamline, enhance management of IT assets critical to educational mission

“Our role in IT is to give 200% to ensure that the resources our people need are up and running 100% of the time. HP Care Pack Services provide us with an easy, efficient way to streamline printer support and take great care of our customers.”

—Bobby Blount, Assistant Superintendent, Accountability, Technology & Strategic Planning, Cherokee County School District, Canton, Georgia



Objective

Advance educational achievement of K-12 students in one of the nation's fastest growing counties by providing 43,000 users with reliable, cost-effective access to the right IT resources, including multifunction printers

Approach

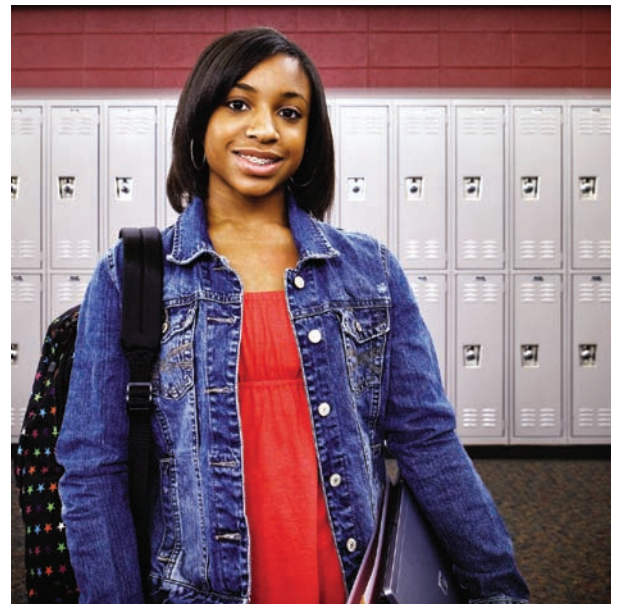
With an IT strategy based on standardization, deploy HP printers and MFPs district-wide, and both enhance and extend their warranties with HP Care Pack Services

IT improvements

- 4,039 printers and MFPs, including 2,500 networked laser printers, efficiently support 43,000 users
- Two IT staff can manage all these devices and rapidly deliver first-line support
- Reseller Southern Computer Warehouse streamlines warranty administration
- Standardizing both products and support boosts reliability, efficiency, flexibility

Business benefits

- Users avoid downtime and disruption
- Schools are not subject to unplanned replacement or repair costs
- District-wide, schools use less energy and consumables
- District gains higher return on its printer investment



Serving more than 38,000 students in the 29th fastest growing county in the U.S., the Cherokee County School District is in the vanguard of public school systems that are embracing information technology to advance educational goals.

Spanning a 429-square mile region of Georgia north of Atlanta, the district ranked fourth in the nation among large school districts in the 2010 Digital School Districts Survey conducted by e.Republic's Center for Digital Education and the National School Boards Association. The annual survey singles out school systems that are making exemplary use of IT in education and administration.

HP customer case study:

HP Care Pack Services for imaging and printing

Industry: K-12 Education



Customer solution at a glance

Primary applications

Standardize district's print infrastructure to consolidate devices, increase control of costs, and lower energy and paper usage

Primary hardware

- HP LaserJet P2055 Printer series
- HP Color LaserJet CM3530
- HP Color LaserJet CM6030 MFP
- HP Color LaserJet 4730 MFP

Primary software

- HP Web Jetadmin

HP Services

- HP Care Pack Services
 - Next Business Day Exchange Service
 - Next Business Day Onsite Support
- Original HP Supplies

But the scores that matter most to the district are measures that show rising levels of student performance. A participant in state and federal Race to the Top programs, the district received a Certificate for Highest Performance for increasing high school graduation rates and raising the percentage of students who met or exceeded state achievement standards. In 2010, Newsweek rated two of its schools among the best public high schools in the country.

"We collaborate closely with teachers, curriculum developers and school administrators to develop and implement a cohesive plan for student achievement," says Bobby Blount, Assistant Superintendent, Accountability, Technology & Strategic Planning for Cherokee County School District. The system runs 40 schools that take students from kindergarten through 12th grade as well as pre-school Head Start, alternative and evening programs.

The county's largest employer, the school district has 5,000 employees, including 2,480 teachers. It relies on IT that encompasses 30,000 computers and laptops, 4,000 printers and a host of digital media technologies.

"Every one of our departments is more reliant than ever on IT," says Blount. "Our role in IT is to give 200% to ensure that the resources our people need are up and running 100% of the time."

The district has standardized on HP printers and MFPs, each backed by HP Care Pack Services that extend and enhance its warranty. The services enable the school district to streamline the management of these IT assets and gain higher return from its printer investment.

Standards in devices and support deliver more IT for less money

HP printers and HP Care Pack Services, provided by Marietta-based IT provider and HP reseller Southern Computer Warehouse, suit Blount's strategy and budget.

Each school has, on average, 50 HP P2055 workgroup laser printers—one per classroom, as well as a HP CM3530 multifunction printer (MFP) for administrative users, a spare printer and a single color printer. Administrative offices use HP CM3530, HP CM6030 and HP 4730 multifunction units.

By standardizing products and support within each layer of the school district's IT infrastructure, Blount and his team have achieved an environment conducive to continuous improvement, low cost of ownership and high return on investment.

"The guiding principle of our IT strategy is standardization," says Blount. "With HP, we rely on one vendor and one product line. I have two engineers certified by HP who know these devices. The longevity of the HP laser printer line is ideal for standardization. With its 36-month lifecycle, I don't have to change on a dime and buy all new trays and consumables. HP understands the K-12 market's needs and budget."

Complementing this standardization strategy is an infrastructure model based on sharing devices and documents via the web. "We've made a huge investment in web-based portal technology over the last three years," says Blount. "Our workgroups share documents and devices, including laser printers, over the network. While enabling our users to access the services they need, we use fewer devices and consume less energy and paper.

"I've been working with HP printers for more than 25 years," continues Blount. "HP provides a great product line with multiple solutions for all of our needs, from classrooms and media centers to front offices and administration. Having such an array of products and services to pick from is very important to our standardization strategy. A single vendor offers us enough options to address all of our uses. And HP builds very reliable products. Its printers are workhorses."

By standardizing on networked HP laser printers and MFPs, the school district has consolidated devices, increased control of costs, and lowered energy and paper usage.

"HP multifunction devices have revolutionized how many of us work," says Blount. "Overall, we've decreased paper consumption. Instead of making multiple hard copies, we can sign, scan and e-mail documents and colleagues can read them on the screen. And by purchasing HP high-yield toner cartridges, teachers spend less time changing cartridges and we lower per-page printing costs."



Support tailored to dynamic digital education

Blount found that HP offered great flexibility in its extended warranty options as well as in its printers. “HP Care Pack Services are our standard for printer support,” says Blount. “They enable us to fully leverage our investment in HP printers and MFPs.”

Available with three-, four- and five-year coverage periods, the HP Care Pack Services selected by the school district provide three years of warranty support for each printer. Larger units have Next Day Business Onsite Support and Next Business Day Exchange Service covers the HP P2055 printers in the classrooms.

While ensuring uptime and avoiding unbudgeted repair costs, HP Care Pack Services increase the productivity of the school district’s IT and administrative staff. In-house IT personnel support users with an efficient escalation process based on Care Pack Services.

Further streamlining administration of the printing infrastructure, Southern Computer Warehouse registers each printer support contract on behalf of the school district. “By taking over this procedure for our thousands of printers,” says Blount, “Southern Computer Warehouse saves my staff a lot of time.”

Such high-level service has been the hallmark of all Blount’s business with Southern Computer Warehouse, which has been successful in winning the district’s printer bids and providing HP printers and HP Care Pack Services for almost a decade.

“Southern Computer Warehouse consistently provides great customer service,” says Blount. “Their sales team is extremely responsive and ready to go beyond the ordinary to take care of us. For example, they help me select the right products and work with HP to guarantee that we have the printers installed before we open a new school.”

Banishing downtime—and disruption

“In the classrooms, printers get quite a bit of wear and tear,” says Blount. “HP laser printers equipped with high-volume toner cartridges are workhorses. And by backing these reliable devices with HP Care Pack support, we free our teachers from disruptions for maintenance or repair. With HP Care Pack Services, our teachers and administrative staff use these devices with confidence they’ll rarely face downtime, and our schools don’t have to worry about finding funds for repairs or replacement units.”

The HP Care Pack Services are at the core of an in-house escalation infrastructure designed for rapid turnaround with minimal classroom disruption. "If users have a problem with a printer, they contact our online help desk," says Blount. "My IT specialist is their first line of defense. Every school has one. My specialist visits the classroom, assesses the problem and, if necessary, escalates it to our in-house repair center."

Two in-house support engineers whose credentials include certification to service HP printers and MFPs may diagnose and fix the problem. If their workload peaks or time-consuming repairs are required, they take the units to a local HP authorized repair center.

Blount finds HP Web Jetadmin software a valuable tool in managing the networked HP printer infrastructure. "The Web Jetadmin software is phenomenal," says Blount. "It gives us a snapshot of all our printer devices and what they are doing. The data alerts us to problems and supply levels, and enables us to automate driver updates. It's a tool with a lot of flexibility."

Creating a culture of digital literacy

The HP printing infrastructure is an integral element of the school district's 21st century digital education environment, which is creating a culture of digital literacy among K-12 students while advancing their core competencies and capacity for lifelong learning.

From back-office administrative operations to front-line functions, the school district staff relies on printing resources for uses that vary from printing paychecks, report cards and annual reports to advancing transformative educational initiatives.

"My department publishes our school district's annual report in-house," says Blount. "We design, print and bind full-color documents, including legislative brochures and posters—all in addition to day-to-day email and reports."

While students accustomed to electronic gadgetry rely less on printing for routine tasks, they find that it is an indispensable tool for more complex endeavors.

"Kids are comfortable with their screens," says Blount. "Even our pre-K classes use printers as they produce PowerPoint® slides and craft story boards to express their ideas. As we move into grade levels, kids are creating marketing materials and doing movie projects. They print and discuss their plots and scripts as they develop skills in composition, grammar, high order thinking, and research."

With their efficient IT infrastructure, Blount and his IT team ensure that their 43,000 users can count on ready access to the tools they need to advance student achievement. HP printers and MFPs are their versatile and reliable "workhorses," and, says Blount, "HP Care Pack Services and Southern Computer Warehouse provide us with an easy, efficient way to streamline support and take great care of our customers."

