thefocus

A Foundation for Learning

Why would a school district stay with the same hardware partner for 14 years?

Gene Manning knew he was witnessing the power of educational technology to change teaching and learning when he walked into the room. The Wilkes-Barre (PA) Area School District technology administrator had stepped into an elementary classroom to see how the district mandate for interactive whiteboards was working out. Manning saw students interacting with their teacher, each other, and the technology that was underpinning their lesson.

Manning's job is to ensure that the technology behind district initiatives works where it counts: in the classroom. If the technology doesn't run easily

a fresh crop of machines to distribute to teachers, staff, and classrooms.

The Wilkes-Barre district has 7,200 students across eight schools from elementary to high schools. Currently, the district is equipped with HP Compaq 6005 Pro Small Form Factor PCs with VISION Pro Technology from AMD. AMD technology enhances the user experience with processors and chipsets that provide exceptional performance while operating as efficiently as possible.

The HP Compaq 6005 Pro Small Form Factor PC includes unique features, like the Cool'n'Quiet™ technology built into the AMD processor to reduce power usage

one support technologist. Smaller school districts around us have three, four, five support people full time."

After experiencing years of reliable service, Manning is sold on HP for servers as well. In the data center, he even runs HP networking switches to keep the district network powered. "The decision on the switches was pretty straightforward," he says. "HP had guaranteed next-day replacement with no extra charges."

In the 14 years that the schools of Wilkes-Barre have been running HP, Manning estimates that its equipment failure has been less than half a percent. "The district would be hard-pressed to change from HP at this point because

> In the 14 years that the schools of Wilkes-Barre have been running HP, its equipment failure has been less than half a percent. "The district would be hard-pressed to change from HP at this point because of our focus on quality," says district technologist Gene Manning.

and smoothly, it becomes an obstacle to learning, not a support to learning. Research has shown that one reason teachers fail to use innovative technologies in their classrooms is the fear of things not working.

Wilkes-Barre teachers don't have that fear because Manning demands reliable equipment and a reliable network. His district has been using HP computing technology since 1997. "The quality is just there. We've never had a problem," he says.

Every three years—the length of the HP technology lease—the district goes out to bid for 1,700 replacement computers. Without a gap, HP has won the business—and the district receives

and noise, hood removal that can be done without tools, and the inclusion of DASH 1.1 on the motherboard. Based on a standard developed by the Distributed Management Task Force, DASH (Desktop and Mobile Architecture for System Hardware) is a mechanism for performing remote management, a crucial feature in districts that are minimally staffed.

Wilkes-Barre has an IT team of only two people, so it's especially important that the computers selected for the schools in the district stay operational. "I see what other school districts are using around us. I see the number of units waiting for repair. We don't have those issues," Manning notes. "I have

of our focus on quality."

That doesn't mean that price isn't important. "Don't get me wrong," Manning says. HP's competitive leasing program is definitely part of the reason that the district sticks with the company. "But price isn't the only deciding factor. Quality, longevity, parts availability after end of life—those types of things are big. We're an HP house, period."

Everybody On

hp / **AMD**