

Helping 18,500 K–12 students reach their full potential

South Washington County Schools gains financial agility to complete two IT transformations with Dell Financial Services.**



Customer profile



K-12 Education | United States



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Robert Berkowitz

Director of Technology,
South Washington County Schools

Organization needs

To meet the digital learning requirements of all students, South Washington County Schools was just about to purchase an IT infrastructure from Dell Technologies when COVID-19 hit. An immediate need for 5,200 Chromebooks for remote learning threatened to delay the infrastructure purchase because the district could not fund both projects in one year.

Organization results

- Ensures students have the IT tools they need to learn.
- Halves the time for 2 IT transformations without increasing budgets.
- Improves the district’s agility.
- Increases IT staff efficiency so they can focus on helping students learn.
- Cuts data center footprint by two-thirds and reduces risk.

Solutions at a glance

- Dell Financial Services**
 - [Technology Ownership](#)
- [Dell EMC VxRail Hyperconverged Infrastructure](#)
- [Dell Technologies ProSupport Enterprise and Deployment Services](#)



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South Washington County Schools is a rapidly growing K–12 district near Saint Paul, Minnesota. Every year, district teachers have less than 10 months to help 18,500 students meet — and ideally exceed — their learning goals. To gain insights that can help boost individuals’ outcomes, teachers depend on the district’s IT. Robert Berkowitz, director of technology at South Washington County Schools, says, “Our teachers need to see where every student is struggling and then personalize learning so that they can be successful. Teachers also want to know what’s next for kids who are meeting the standards.”

To ensure continuous access to core IT tools, the district had budgeted to replace its end-of-life HPE infrastructure. And after spending months reviewing and testing options, South Washington County Schools chose a solution it designed with Dell Technologies, based on a four-node Dell EMC VxRail hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI). “There are just two people who support more than 19,000 devices and 2,000 access points,” Berkowitz says. “We can manage everything in a single platform, and we get one point of contact for support with VxRail.”

Sudden need threatens IT transformation

Just as the district was about to purchase the HCI, COVID-19 erupted. “My manager of systems and I became nervous about our ability to complete our datacenter projects as we watched COVID-19 moving across the globe. We both knew we had to immediately order 5,200 Chromebooks so all students could learn remotely — and to get ahead of the device shortage that was coming. We had spent so much time designing our HCI, but we could not buy the VxRails and the Chromebooks.”

Meeting all goals with flexible financing

When South Washington County Schools explained its predicament to its Dell Technologies team, Dell Technologies offered a new solution. “They asked if we were interested in financing our infrastructure in a different way,” Berkowitz explains. “Of course I was excited to hear that. And I was even more excited when I heard the really low rate we could get from Dell Financial Services and how we could split our payments over two fiscal years.” By choosing a leased technology-ownership payment strategy, South Washington County Schools could afford to meet its IT goals for the year.



Decreases initial capital costs by spreading IT payments over 2 years.

Driving two transformations with the same budget

Within weeks, the district bought its HCI and Chromebooks — plus Dell Technologies ProSupport Enterprise and Deployment Services — without increasing its budget. “We completed an IT transformation we thought we’d have to put on hold for at least a year by working with Dell Financial Services,” says Berkowitz.

Making every dollar work to educate students

By choosing a Dell Financial Services lease as its technology payment strategy to purchase its new HCI, South Washington County Schools reduces its data center footprint by two-thirds, cuts risk and boosts IT staff efficiency. “Every dollar and minute we spend need to help educate students,” Berkowitz says. “What we’ve accomplished by partnering with Dell Financial Services has exceeded our expectations.”



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