

Managed Print Service

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Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) had been working toward supplying each office work station area and classroom space with networked computers. Stand-alone copying machines, along with local inkjet printers or laser printers, were abundant prior to the installation of networked machines in recent years. Schools and offices had no guidelines for the ratio or type of machine recommended for certain functions, resulting in a wide range of type and availability of copiers and printers.

In June 2015 FCPS concluded a Managed Print Service (MPS) project, which included a strategic plan including a financial analysis, a pilot to help determine how to better manage our printing and copying requirements and a district-wide implementation. The program reduced the number of machines in our fleet from over 4,000 to about 1000, standardized the types of equipment used, linked usage through the network and reduced the need for in-house service and repair. The financial analysis, which examined four different scenarios (each of them projecting a net savings to the system), determined that leasing the machines for a per-click charge was the most cost effective. It projected a savings over five years, at which time the MPS process would be revisited to assure it maintains a cost advantage to the district. The savings for this scenario is approximately \$210K per year which will be funneled back into the schools and will have a direct impact on student achievement. The vendor agreed to provide, at no additional charge, a dedicated facilities manager who serves as a liaison between them and FCPS. This avoided additional administration costs. The concept was new and innovative for FCPS, but in the beginning had many against it until school management agreed that the cost impact to our students would merit serious consideration.

The six-location pilot played a key role in the success of the project. It enabled us to understand the needs of the students and school staff and openly exposed potential pain points that we would need to overcome throughout the project. It also helped develop our objectives, measurements, action items and enabled us to draft an attainable schedule. We were able to verify our cost assumptions and identify key stakeholders needed throughout the project. Some of the initial cost assumptions of the financial analysis for this alternative included:

- 1) The pilot schools were representative of the school system as a whole.
- 2) The number of “clicks per month” is not linear and is based on the actual month of the year.
- 3) The number of clicks is correlated with school enrollment.
- 4) The “base cost” was representative of an average year.

The scenario or alternative that was chosen for MPS was “full implementation” where a contracted third party would impose a “per click” charge that would cover the leasing of all machines, the replacement of toner and all related parts and labor for machine maintenance. A Steering Committee was established to guide and help assure the project was on track.

Key individuals were selected to participate on the working committees during each phase of the implementation.

Based on the assumptions above, and the results of the pilot program, it was projected that utilizing full implementation of managed print services would save FCPS over \$2.4 million in a five-year period.

Although the original financial analysis did not take into account “reduced paper usage over time,” this phenomenon is evident when analyzing the usage in the pilot schools. The pilot schools’ usage (FY14 actual to FY15 actual) went down an average of 3.39%. This usage reduction can be attributable to better print management in general, as well as learning alternative solutions that the new machines offered. For instance, many schools are now promoting the use of “scanning and emailing” documentation rather than traditional printing. There is no charge for scanning so as this practice catches on, it is anticipated that usage, and therefore MPS costs in total, will continue to go down over time.

We learned very quickly that we needed to purchase software to manage usage by machine at each location. We had allocated \$88K, which enabled us to buy this software. It is installed and running with 7,500 licensed users in our system. It will be a site-based decision whether to track usage either by program level or administration level.

Communications throughout the project was most important. We established a webpage on the FCPS intranet, where all the accumulated data for the project was housed. We sent out quarterly newsletters updating everyone on the status of the project and issued updates to all administrators, principals, union representative group meetings and two tech coordinator/user support meetings. User input was solicited with two surveys – one after the pilot completion and one at the end of the project.

This project was not only a physical change to everyone’s work environment, but it was a tremendous culture change to the FCPS population because we are now leasing instead of buying our print and copy requirements. The most important reason for the success of this program was the support from the Superintendent, Board of Education members and down through the ranks. The project was well organized, used a project management approach, included key stakeholders, formulated defined and attainable goals, as well as a clear communication plan to attempt to keep stakeholders informed of the progress status of the plan. The implementation was completed in the two-year schedule, and the savings exceeded expectations, impacting students in a positive way. Based on the strategic plan, a footprint was established by which FCPS can duplicate the process for any other project-managed program. For that matter, the process can be duplicated by any organization.