

Resource Management Solutions for Organizational Efficiency and Learning Effectiveness

Strategic resource management solutions keep track of resources across the district.

By Bruce Hamilton

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BARRINGTON COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 220



A transformation to a 1:1 environment caused Barrington School District to launch a resource management plan.

Statistics bear out the fact that the typical K–12 school district loses as much as 25% of its valuable resources every two to three years. Hence, students don’t have the tools they need to be successful, school budgets are focused on replacing lost items rather than on investing in the latest technology, and public confidence wanes when taxpayer money is being wasted.

That’s why more and more districts are turning to strategic resource management solutions to track their resources, drive accountability, prevent losses, and create greater efficiency.

Administrators are finding they can make fact-based decisions, buy only what they need, better share what they have, and liquidate what remains.

One northwestern Illinois school district, with more than 9,000 students in grades K–12, is proof of what happens when districts can readily identify all their resources and services, including knowing the current value of investments and expenditures.

With its diverse range of students and the geographic distance between campuses, Barrington Community Unit 220 School District identified the dramatic need for a resource

management plan three years ago, just as it began the initial phases of a 1:1 transformation.

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Administrators at Barrington realized they had a critical need for better organization and proper tracking of resources, especially as the district was to purchase more than 3,600 11-inch MacBook Air devices for its high schools. LeeAnn Taylor, Barrington’s media services director, was confident that it was the time to act, and her experience told her the investment would not only pay off immediately but also in the years ahead.

“This was a huge transition for our district, and we knew we needed to protect and make the most of our investment in the devices we were giving to kids, so we made the financial commitment to a universal resource management system,” Taylor explains. “We are now easily able to track the number of devices remaining in each building, so we

can transfer as needed rather than purchasing new.

“Not only are we able to keep track of all of our valuable assets, we can generate reports, manage inventories, and accurately order more equipment. Now, we are looking forward to using this strategy toward other resources in our school—musical instruments, lab equipment, and the like.”

Maximizing Results

Districts like Barrington and others that have recently implemented sound resource management plans are discovering that they not only are optimizing limited resources but also are maximizing educational results. By being able to assign and deploy student resources more effectively, districts can more easily experiment with new ideas, teaching methods, and learning materials, such as tablets or e-books, and correlate them with learning results.

At Barrington, for example, all students will keep their MacBook Air devices year-round until the end of their senior year.

“We have a lot of programs in our district where teachers are requiring summer reading, plus we have a big



Students at Grove Avenue Elementary School enjoy a hands-on, vibrant learning environment.

summer school program,” explains Taylor. “The devices are such an important component of their learning experience.”

The ability to deploy digital resources directly to students on the basis of their class schedule is a best-practice feature of a resource management solution and naturally follows any 1:1 laptop initiative. That “resource-to-class-to-student” relationship can easily identify every student having the resources he or she needs.

“The power of our inventory system is that it is patron-driven and allows us to track things by the patron,” Taylor says. “To keep track of everything on one student account is simply wonderful.”

Nothing reduces the number of lost or stolen items faster than by assigning accountability to an individual, whether a student, teacher, or staff member. Having someone accept responsibility for the items assigned to them is the best way to ensure that the items are secure and can be accounted for when funding compliance audits are to be performed.

Students can’t achieve if they don’t have the things they need. Not only is Barrington getting the right resources into the right hands at the right time for the right purpose, Taylor said the district can accomplish the task incredibly fast. “We can now issue laptops to an entire classroom in less than two minutes!”



With effective resource management, Barrington School District 220 can experiment with new teaching methods and learning materials.

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