



Cobb County School District

Manually creating and updating 125,000 accounts each year was a time-consuming and expensive project for the Cobb County School District. By implementing Novell® Identity Manager, the district automated identity management, saving two months of manual effort and an estimated \$150,000 per year.

Overview

The Cobb County School District, located in north metro Atlanta, is the second-largest school system in Georgia with over 107,000 students, 18,000 staff and 113 schools.

Challenge

Each school year, the Cobb Country School District needs to create or update user accounts for 125,000 existing students, transfer students and staff. The district hired contractors each August to manually create these accounts, as well as to reset passwords for many of the staff who forgot their passwords over the summer. Often this enormous effort took well into October and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Managing identities is also a challenge for the district as user information is stored in a variety of applications, across multiple operating systems. The district needed to automate the user management its enterprise to simplify user administration and reduce unnecessary IT costs.

Solution

Cobb County School District tested several identity management solutions before selecting Novell Identity Manager to automate user provisioning and synchronize user information

across its enterprise. The district also selected Novell Storage Manager to provide its students, teachers and staff with identity-based storage capabilities.

“Novell provided the most robust identity management offering,” said Chris Ragsdale, chief technology officer of Cobb County School District. “The Novell solution can be integrated with more applications, without being limited to a single operating system. That flexibility is important in our environment with NetWare®, Microsoft* Windows*, Linux* and Macintosh* platforms.”

Using Novell Identity Manager, the district is integrating user identities across multiple applications and directories including its student information system, Novell eDirectory™, Novell GroupWise®, Oracle* and SQL* databases, Remedy, and Mac* Open LDAP. Novell Identity Manager automatically synchronizes user information across connected systems, eliminating the need for manual updating.

“With Novell Identity Manager, we can automatically provide a new user with access to all of the appropriate systems within 24 hours of the time they are entered into our HR system,” said Herb Ague, director of Network

Cobb County School District at a glance:

Second-largest school system in Georgia

■ Industry:

Education

■ Location:

United States

■ Solutions:

Novell Identity Manager

Novell Storage Manager

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server

Novell Consulting

Novell Training

■ Results:

- Automated identity management across multiple applications and platforms
- Reduced user provisioning for 125,000 users from two months to 24 hours
- Eliminated nearly 400 hours of password-related helpdesk calls per month

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Chris Ragsdale

Chief Technology Officer

Cobb County School District



“We are running the Novell identity management solution on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server and the performance has been great. We get a lot more flexibility in managing Linux servers and can make changes to systems without having to restart the server.”

Herb Ague

*Director of Network Services
Cobb County School District*

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Services at the Cobb County School District. “In the past, this could take weeks. We can also automatically deprovision users without any manual effort.”

Students now receive a single ID and password to access e-mail and other applications, and staff no longer need to remember as many as ten different passwords. In the past, one administrator at each school spent the first two weeks of the school year resetting passwords for students who stood in line during class breaks. The password self-service feature of Novell Identity Manager now makes it easy for students and staff to reset passwords on their own.

“Reducing the number of passwords users are required to remember, as well as providing self-service to reset them, has made a huge difference to our students and staff,” said Ragsdale. “Better password management also improves our ability to protect student information and comply with privacy requirements such as FERPA and HIPAA.”

With Novell Storage Manager, the IT staff can automatically create file storage for users based on their user information stored in Novell eDirectory. When a student moves grades, or a teacher transfers to another site, they can continue to access their data. Students can access their e-portfolio from grade school to graduation.

“We are running the Novell identity management solution on SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server and the performance has been great,” said Ague.

The district worked with Novell Consulting® to implement the Novell solution, and also

took advantage of customized on-site Novell training.

“Novell Consulting helped us work with all our stakeholders to ensure the success of this project,” said Ragsdale. “They really helped get everyone on board. We also appreciated the professionalism of Novell’s world-class training staff that brought everything you could imagine to create an on-site training facility.”

Moving forward, the district plans to integrate more applications and provide parents with secure access to student grades and other information.

Results

With Novell Identity Manager, Cobb County School District has reduced user provisioning time from more than two months, to less than 24 hours. The district has eliminated all manual work associated with user administration, saving an estimated \$150,000 per year, and can automatically provision users in minutes, rather than months.

The district plans to reduce the number of passwords its staff is required to remember by 50 percent this year. Implementing password self-service has eliminated nearly 400 hours of password-related helpdesk calls a month.

“Our Novell solution has paid for itself in no time,” said Ragsdale. “We avoided hiring costly temporary workers to create and update user accounts at the start of the school year, and for the first time in County history we had all registered students in our identity infrastructure before school started.”



Contact your local Novell Solutions Provider, or call Novell at:

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