



## Eaton Rapids Public Schools

An unreliable infrastructure was draining the IT resources at Eaton Rapids Public Schools. The district eliminated downtime by migrating to Novell® Open Enterprise Server on SUSE® Linux in a clustered environment. Standardizing desktops with Novell ZENworks® also reduced desktop maintenance time by 50 percent.

### Overview

Located in mid-central Michigan, Eaton Rapids Public Schools has 3,300 students and 250 staff. The district recently obtained a \$2 million construction bond for technology improvements.

### Challenge

With an aging IT infrastructure, Eaton Rapids Public Schools was experiencing regular network downtime. A small IT staff was rebooting its servers sometimes twice a week and facing downtime costs of several thousand dollars per incident. The district's network storage requirements were also doubling each year, but a more stable architecture was needed to provide adequate storage and backup.

Managing 200 separate applications across 1,000 desktops was also a challenge, often requiring IT staff to spend all their time traveling to update individual workstations. Eaton Rapids Public Schools wanted to centralize desktop management for its seven locations.

### Solution

Based on the stability of its UNIX\* server, Eaton Rapids Public Schools began evaluating a migration to Linux\*. The district worked

with Gracon, a Novell Platinum Partner\*, and decided to migrate to Novell Open Enterprise Server on SUSE Linux in a clustered environment.

“We could not have afforded a clustered environment with any other solution” said Lyne Roberts, director of Technology and Media Services at Eaton Rapids Public Schools. “With Novell Open Enterprise Server running on Linux, we have unprecedented stability. We hardly even need to go into our server room anymore.”

Working with Gracon, the district implemented a four-node cluster and has practically eliminated downtime. If one server should fail, the others will automatically take over without any business disruption. Such stability has restored user confidence and dramatically reduced network administration time. The IT staff can also perform server maintenance without scheduling network downtime.

“We have much more dependency today on online resources, including printing, storage, archiving and e-mail,” said Roberts. “A clustered network based on Novell Open Enterprise Server and Linux is essential for us to keep our schools running.”

### Eaton Rapids Public Schools at a glance:

*School district in mid-central Michigan*

#### ■ Industry:

Education

#### ■ Location:

United States

#### ■ Solutions:

Novell Open Enterprise Server

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server

Novell Cluster Services™

Novell Storage Manager

Novell ZENworks

Novell GroupWise

#### ■ Results:

- *Reduced overall administration time by 20 percent*
- *Reduced desktop maintenance time and costs by 50 percent*
- *Reduced IT travel time by 75 percent*
- *Created a stable IT infrastructure despite a 10-percent budget cut and without additional IT resources*

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#### Lyne Roberts

*Director of Technology and Media Services  
Eaton Rapids Public Schools*



**“Novell ZENworks has made a quantum difference for us. In the past, we had two full-time people running around to all our workstations. Now we can image 30 machines in a lab in just two hours.”**

**Lyne Roberts**

*Director of Technology and Media Services  
Eaton Rapids Public Schools*

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The district is currently running its file and print services, Skyward student information system and Novell GroupWise® on the Linux cluster. With a stable network, the district has been able to add two SANs to keep pace with its two-terabyte storage requirements. Using Novell Storage Manager, the district also provides each student with network file storage, based on identity. Students can maintain the same e-portfolio from grade school to high school graduation.

The district has also implemented Novell iPrint to allow users to print to any printer on the network, regardless of location. Users can install printers by just clicking on a desktop icon, freeing up the IT staff from visiting individual workstations to manually install print drivers.

Using Novell Business Continuity Clustering, the district is creating a redundant data center in a new building. In case of a disaster, the district has a solid disaster recovery strategy as its Novell network would be up and running within minutes.

Migrating to a Linux environment has also created opportunities to use open source software such as OpenOffice.org, Scribus, GIMP, as well as Xen\* for server virtualization. With increasing requests for new software, the district has more flexibility with open source options and can help reduce escalating software licensing costs.

Using Novell ZENworks, the district has standardized its 1,000 desktops and can manage them all from a central location. The IT staff can now deliver new applications

and updates in minutes, without having to leave their desks.

The remote control capabilities of Novell ZENworks allow the district's small IT staff to troubleshoot workstations from a central location, greatly reducing travel time.

“The remote control feature of Novell ZENworks is essential for us,” said Roberts. “If someone has a problem with their Windows\* desktop, we can fix it immediately from our office. We absolutely love it.”

## Results

Moving to a clustered environment with Novell Open Enterprise Server on SUSE Linux helped Eaton Rapids Public Schools consolidate servers by 22 percent and eliminate downtime. A clustered Linux environment has reduced overall administration time by 20 percent and has allowed the IT staff to create new storage and disaster recovery solutions.

Centralized desktop management with Novell ZENworks has reduced desktop maintenance time and costs by 50 percent. Without the need to manually update and troubleshoot workstations, the district has also reduced IT travel time by 75 percent.

“With Novell, we have increased our network and storage reliability, standardized our desktops and improved our overall IT services,” said Roberts. “We did it all without increasing our IT staff and despite a 10-percent budget cut. Other districts are now asking us how they can do the same.”



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

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