



CETPA MEMBER

# Data Bytes



We are proud to announce a new feature beginning in this issue of the *DataBus*. Data Bytes is a compilation of short answers from our constituency that addresses the theme for the current issue.

This month we're addressing technology standardization in our organizations. Whether it is hardware, software, video systems, security systems, operating system setups, etc., we all see the value in standardization for a variety of reasons. This issue we asked the question: Here's what you had to say:

"We have standardized on all Dell computers in the district, and are now purchasing Dell servers as well. We have only purchased HP printers. This has reduced support time since we only have one source to contact for technical computer support, and usually Dell's Web site has enough information to preclude the need for a support call. HP standard has made things work better since nearly all applications are designed with HP compatibility in mind as regards to printers."

—*Jay Dunn, Director of Technology  
Oakley Union Elementary School District*

"Dell desktops, laptop, servers. Cisco switches and routers. Canon copier/scanners. [We have] HP printers in the main office, but many Brother printers in classrooms and external offices. Our printers are primarily laser and we do not encourage the purchase of inkjets. Using standardized equipment has made support easier and knowledge more complete because we do not have to learn the intricacies of multiple vendor's products."

—*Martin Williams, Information  
Technology Support Specialist  
San Luis Obispo County Office of Education*

## What technology have you standardized in your organization and what was the benefit?

"...We have standardized on Windows-based OS, desktop and laptop computers (Dell), Edusoft Scanners (Brother), monitors (flatscreen), mice (optical), Cisco (mostly). Printers we try to buy in enough bulk to give us some measure of continuity at least from year to year. The advantages from platform and product uniformity are reduced troubleshooting, easier roll-outs, single-platform training, and better user-level collaboration and troubleshooting, to name a few."

—*Scott Mohr, Technology Coordinator  
Chowchilla School District*

"[We have] Windows PCs, Dell desktops, laptops, and servers (reason = service, support and TCO); Windows OS: XP; Apple PC's: Macbooks; networking: Cisco (reason = dependability and standards); laser printers: Mostly HP, starting to move to Dell (Reason = TCO); Inkjet: HP; classroom projectors: Epson (reason = TCO); and classroom document cameras: AverMedia (reason = features and TCO)."

—*David Feliciano, Director, Information  
Services and Technology  
East Whittier City School District*

"We have standardized as much technology as possible. Any technology outside of our approved list has to be evaluated and approved by the Instructional Technology Standards Committee, which is made up of district employees of varying roles within

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up to \$2 million for any one project or group of projects. Remember though, the pricing quoted is the highest paid for the product or service. Since many vendors could have a CMAS contract to provide that product or service, it is highly recommended you contact multiple vendors and you will usually notice a noticeable price reduction. For more information about CMAS contracts go to [www.pd.dgs.ca.gov/emas/default.htm](http://www.pd.dgs.ca.gov/emas/default.htm).

2. Piggybacking – Some products and services have already been put out to bid by another school district or the state. If the original bid documents provide contract language that other school districts can purchase off of the original contract, the district can do so.
3. Western States Contracting Alliance (WSCA) – WSCA is one commonly used piggybacking contract that many schools use. Many manufacturers hold WSCA contracts as well as cellular telephone companies such as AT&T Mobility, Nextel, and Verizon. For more information go to [www.aboutwsca.org/content.cfm/id/WSCA?CFID=361097397&CFTOKEN=34060809](http://www.aboutwsca.org/content.cfm/id/WSCA?CFID=361097397&CFTOKEN=34060809).
4. CalSAVE – CalSAVE is administered by the Monterey County Office of Education, which provides discounted pricing and licensing for hardware, software, and other products and services. Like WSCA, this is another piggybacking contract. For more information go to [www.calsave.org](http://www.calsave.org).

If you intend to use one or more of the alternate purchasing methods, please familiarize yourself with the terms and conditions of each contract. You may want to check with your purchasing department to verify that the district is able to use these alternate purchasing methods as this requires board action. Each alternate purchasing method also has its own paperwork process you must follow and some, such as CMAS, have administrative fees that the district must pay. Many times, it is suggested you look at more than one alternate purchasing method to see which one best meets the needs of the district and/or to see which one provides the lowest price for the product or service you are requesting. Don't assume, just because you received a quote from an alternate purchasing vendor, that their price is the lowest you can get for the product or service. Many times, by shopping around, you can find significant savings.

Another good source of information is your fellow CETPA listserv members. Contacting a couple of other IT directors to see how they procure goods and services is a great way to get valuable information plus insight from your peers that have been in the trenches for a while and learned the hard way what they can and can not do. ■

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both the technology and instructional divisions. The standardized hardware has led to more reliability, less maintenance, less training, quicker rollout periods and seamless transitions for teachers that move from one classroom to another. It also has the added benefit of bulk pricing even when purchasing a single item. If we know that over the course of the year we will purchase 1,000 computers, we can get that discounted pricing on every computer, even though we may purchase 10 computers at a time. Knowing that your district will purchase 1,000 computers is a useless bargaining tool if they will come from 100 different vendors. From the backbone to the forefront, we have standardized on HP servers on gigabit ports, Cisco LAN and WAN network devices supporting 100MB to the desktop, HP PCs and notebooks in the hands of staff and students, which run Windows XP with Office 2003.”

—*Jeremy Wood, Technology Planning Coordinator  
Ontario-Montclair School District*

“On technology hardware/software, we have standardized on Dell computers on the desktop, Cisco on the network, networkable HP laserprinters, and Apples in specialized areas such as video, graphics, and animation. On technology processes, we try to capture processes in easy-to-understand flowcharts we share with users and departments. This ensures we have a common understanding of how to purchase technology, surplus technology, backup data, etc.

“On technology communication, we standardized on having a periodic ‘Technology Minute’ newsletter so we can reinforce the technology standards message and champion a focused vision of where we want to go. [As for] the benefits, we minimize the risk of users being seduced by every shiny technology object that appears. Time—less time wasted reinventing the wheel with standards (backed by board policy) in place; cost—we can take advantage of volume discounts; quantity—a smaller diversity of hardware and software is easier to support; quality—standards help us produce a higher quality of service (faster response time, time to resolution), since we don't have to master every piece of technology manufactured. A bit of luck and a pinch of humor also helps our users accept technology standards as a good thing for all.”

—*Thomas Tan, Ed.D., Director-Information and  
Education Technology  
Jurupa Unified School District*

“Desktops, laptops, and servers: Dell OS: Windows XP w/ SP3, Office 2007; network equipment: Cisco; printers: HP LaserJet (no longer support inkjets); digital presenters: Elmo TT-02s; digital projectors: Infocus Learn Big Series; LCD/Plasma TV/Displays: Samsung 4-Series; Web site: Educational Networks. Using standardized equipment has made support more streamlined and more efficient as technology support staff does not have to learn the ins and outs of essentially the same or similar products from multiple vendors.

“One aspect I do not see enough emphasis on is the benefit on the user's side. For example, standardizing on the Samsung 4-Series LCD Displays allows staff member to support each other if for example, one user does not know how to switch the input to Video 1. The teacher next door who might have done it before can easily help. The same goes with digital presenters, Web site tools, etc. We even go as so far to standardize Ethernet cables. Gray for PCs, black for printers, orange for switch to switches (like the fiber optic cables). Since the Dell machines have a gray color-coded RJ45 jack, we can easily ask when an end-user calls if the “gray-phone looking cable is connected to the gray port on the wall as well as the gray port on the back of the computer, and is it lit up?” ■

—*Charles Poovakan, Systems Administrator  
Ocean View School District*