Akron Public Schools Selects Nutanix
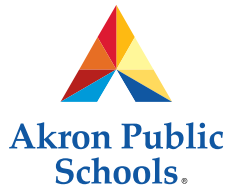
CHALLENGES

The Akron School District was relying on a three-tier VMware virtualization environment with separate storage, network, and servers. It was originally designed as an active-failover environment with two data centers, but had turned into an active-active environment due to budget constraints. Akron Public Schools is using Munis financial software from Tyler Technologies, a compute-intensive application with a large MS SQL backend and IIS front end. "Our legacy SAN environment was completely overworked for what we were trying to do with it," said Paul Doxsey, network systems coordinator at Akron Public Schools. "We also needed to upgrade our SQL software to meet the requirements of the new Munis package. Unfortunately, we couldn't do that with our old hardware since it didn't have enough horsepower for our needs."

SOLUTION

After seeing a demo from IT partner CDW and Nutanix, Akron Public Schools purchased two NX3360 systems. Before deploying the systems into production, Akron ran a proof of concept to see if the new systems would the fix the performance problems with the Munis financial software. "We created a separate test environment so our users could play with the data," Doxsey explained. "We moved our Tyler test environment off of the old storage and servers and cloned it right over to Nutanix. It took just a day to install and deploy our POC systems. That was amazing, since deploying the three-tier infrastructure always took much longer."

RESULTS

After the successful POC, Akron moved the Nutanix systems into production. "Deployment was a breeze. The Nutanix engineer came on site for a few hours and then I moved all the VMs over the weekend. We were up and running with minimal downtime and lots of happy users." Doxsey reported.

Better Performance

"Our financial team keeps a spreadsheet of all the processes they run," Doxsey said. "Every financial report runs much faster on Nutanix. When we added up the stats from each process, we discovered that we were saving more than 20 hours of compute time each week, eliminating the time the admins would have to wait and watch the cursors spin. Nutanix is enabling our users to be much more productive."

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>
> – Paul Doxsey, Network Systems Coordinator, Akron Public Schools

NUTANIX™
Your Enterprise Cloud Platform

IT TASK OR FINANCIAL REPORT	LEGACY SYSTEM TIME	NUTANIX	REDUCTION
Restoration of Prod to Dev Database	1.5 hours	15 minutes	6x
Check Reconciliation Report	1 hours	23 minutes	2.6x
Accounts Payable Report	25 minutes	3 minutes	8.3x
Year to Date Budget Report	20 minutes	6 minutes	3.3x
Payroll Deductions Report	2.5 hours	45 minutes	3.3x

Great Feedback from End Users

Doxsey has received many positive comments from the district's financial and IT users after the move to Nutanix, including:

- "Quicker logins, that's for sure."

- "Wow, much better. Noticeably faster."

- "Restoring the database now takes 15 minutes instead of 1.5 hours. Sweetness-awesome!"

- "Tasks that used to take an hour now finish in 10 seconds. I don't know what planet we're on, but I want to stay here."

Finding the 'Gotchas'

Doxsey attended the Ohio Education Tech Conference (OETC) right after he installed Nutanix. "All of my peers in education around the state attend this event," he reported. "I asked everyone who had rolled out Nutanix about the 'gotchas' in the solution – what do I need to watch out for? With any other solution, people will always tell you what will probably go wrong or cause issues. But not a single person was able to think of a problem or shortcoming of the Nutanix systems. I knew I had made the right decision to move to Nutanix.'"

NEXT STEPS

The Nutanix systems are currently being used by Akron Public Schools' faculty. "As soon as we get done with the Tyler Munis project, I plan to upgrade our student information system and move it over to Nutanix as well. Nutanix is the perfect choice because of its small footprint. If I had stayed with the legacy servers, core switches, and legacy SANs, I would have needed at least two full racks just to turn these apps on. With Nutanix, it all fits in just 4u. That will certainly save us a lot over time," concluded Doxsey.

COMPANY

Akron Public Schools is located in the northeastern part of Ohio, less than 40 miles south of Cleveland. It is the fifth largest school district in Ohio, with approximately 22,000 enrolled students and 48 schools.

INDUSTRY

K12 Education

BUSINESS NEEDS

Replace existing 3-tier infrastructure to gain performance for required SQL upgrade.

SOLUTION

Nutanix NX-3360 systems, Nutanix Prism management solution, Tyler Technologies Munis financial software

BENEFITS

Increased performance of financial apps, simplified IT management, and obtained 10x reduction in rackspace and power

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