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## Designing Your Networks to Minimize Workstation Support

Over summer break, many school districts aim to get their technology projects accomplished. With this in mind, let's look at a design concept that reduces the need for network support.

Prior to the initial design or re-engineering of your school's network environment, thorough detail should be given to minimizing the workstation support requirement.

### As an example...

Your school currently runs five networked servers with approximately 400 workstations. If your design does not incorporate a model that reduces the emphasis on the 400 workstations by placing the emphasis upon the file servers instead, the time needed to get a malfunctioning computer back up can range from two to as many as six hours.

With an inadequate model of design, there are 405 critical systems running on your network. Stretching your IT staff to support so many critical systems makes it – at best – very challenging, and with a typical district's resources, next to impossible.

Take that same scenario and implement a design that takes the focus away from the critical nature of the workstation and places it squarely on the file servers. Since file servers are designed to run 24/7 and have integrated levels of redundancy, such as disk drives, power supplies, and network cards, if a component does fail, the rest are still up and operational.

Eliminating the critical nature of a workstation is also key to allowing a user to have access to the same network resources and applications, as well as an identical desktop, as on their primary workstation that may have failed.

Once you reduce 405 critical systems down to five file servers, your IT personnel can focus their time on ensuring that services are always available at the desktop. This also provides them with a more proactive approach to managing your district's network.

In order to accomplish this improvement, many methods can be used by your network administrator or an outside consultant. As a superintendent or business administrator, you may want to look into such a model to ensure optimal time management of your school's personnel.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer!

Sincerely,



Paul Crawley

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