

# »» An Answer for IT and Service Challenges



Founded in 1871, the Fulton County School System is the fourth largest school system in Georgia and one of the 50 largest districts in the U.S. It encompasses nine cities and has more than 11,000 full-time employees, including more than 6,100 teachers and other personnel working in 90 schools and 15 administrative and support buildings. During the 2006–07 school year, roughly 88,000 students attended classes in 53 elementary schools, 18 middle schools, 12 high schools, two open campus high schools and five charter schools.

## Large Challenges for a Large District

With such a considerable number of students and staff and some 10,000 laptops alone to support, the Fulton County School System had a huge need for effective IT management solutions. Before 2004, it relied on a mainframe-based, home-grown, manual management solution. “We were really living blind,” said Greg Smith, Fulton County School System’s Certified LANDesk® Administrator. “We had no idea of what our environment looked like, even from a hardware perspective. We bought machines and configured them a certain way, but once they left the office, no one knew what happened to them. We’d have to send someone out to look at each machine before making a deployment plan.”

In 2004, the school system was using LANDesk® Patch Manager across the district. It decided to do a phased upgrade to both LANDesk® Management Suite and LANDesk® Security Suite in order to take advantage of these solutions’ added features and capabilities, including inventory management and remote control and problem resolution. The school system started the upgrade with its high schools, moving to its middle schools and is then to elementary schools.

## LANDesk to the Rescue

In the middle of its LANDesk® upgrade in 2005, the school system was hit with a reduction in both budget and headcount. The cuts left it with 12 fewer full-time IT staff—reducing the total support staff from 22 to just 10 people.

The staff laid off were the school system’s technical specialists who helped with daily IT issues, viruses, configuration and software installation within the schools. “We lost our whole software deployment team. We knew internally that we’d had a solution in place for 18 months [LANDesk] that we really needed to pull the trigger on. We all had enough confidence in the solution, because we’d started with the phased approach and had a foundation in place when we lost the positions,” said Fulton County School System CIO Katie Lovett. “It was then that we really put LANDesk in motion, nailed it down and got our remaining people trained on the things we needed to do.”

## Business Needs

- Replace mainframe-based, home-grown, manual inventory control.
- Reduce errors perpetuated by manual, touch-intensive inventory and systems management.
- Standardize and create processes around systems and security management.
- Successfully deal with IT staff reduction without impacting the department’s value or service levels.

## Solution

- LANDesk® Management Suite
- LANDesk® Security Suite
- LANDesk® Antivirus
- LANDesk® Process Manager
- LANDesk® Technical Account Manager
- LANDesk® Training Courses

## Business Benefits

- Realized significant ROI and successfully dealt with the loss of 12 full-time IT staff.
- Increased automation and reduced need for human intervention.
- Reduced errors by standardizing and creating processes around systems and security management.
- Reduced the overall number of trouble tickets.
- Reduced visits to the desktop by adding remote control capabilities.

“The solutions have given us an incredible return on our investment.”

KATIE LOVETT, CIO  
FULTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEMS

### Challenges Solved

The school system now has LANDesk® Management Suite and LANDesk® Security Suite deployed to 30,000 users. By being able to perform inventory management, remotely solve issues for its various dispersed locations and standardize its deployment and resolution approach, the school system has reduced its total number of help desk tickets and taken some of the sting out of losing more than half its IT staff.

“Today, we have inventory of everything, without leaving our management console. And we don’t have to keep up with changes made differently by 20 people who may not tell each other what was done. We’ve automated and standardized and can ensure that change management is really in place,” said Greg Smith.

Added CIO Lovett, “The solutions have given us an incredible return on our investment. LANDesk is the reason we’re still successful today.”

### Trained and Ready to Manage

The school system took full advantage of LANDesk® training courses to help with its accelerated rollout. Three of its district administrators took the DM87: Desktop Management with LANDesk® Management Suite 8.7 course in the fall of 2006. Each of the three also took—and passed—the Certified LANDesk® Administrator exam that tests—and proves—the user’s expertise with the administration of LANDesk® Management Suite.

“The training we received from LANDesk has been instrumental in helping us move forward with a full deployment and implementation of this tool,” said James Stewart, the system’s technical training administrator. “The detailed training helped us identify and plan training for our local school and district technical support staff. We found it so valuable, that when we returned, we worked with LANDesk to secure training for more than 50 of our local and district technical support staff.

“The training and product information has enabled our support staff to maximize the support they offer,” Stewart continued. “Through use of the remote tools, they can support desktop computers and laptops on our network without actually being on site or in the same room with the computers. This is a major plus due to the demographic challenges of our district and our large inventory. Getting software to our teachers and students has always been a priority as well. The training has given our support staff the ability to deploy software packages to multiple targets and ensure installation in a timely manner.”

Stewart concluded, “On numerous occasions since the training, we have taken advantage of the inventory features of LANDesk to gather necessary data for planning and reporting. There are many things the training has enhanced to make this tool invaluable; these are just a few that have really influenced the way we work.”

### Service Delivers

LANDesk® solutions and LANDesk® training courses aren't the only returns on investment Fulton County School Systems has realized. The customer service it has received from LANDesk and its LANDesk® Solution Provider has provided a significant return as well. "I've done quite a bit of work through contractors and outside vendors and am blown away with LANDesk's commitment to making things work. The commitment to our success is unparalleled," said Greg Smith.

### Even More in Store

Fulton County School System has realized such significant benefits with its current LANDesk implementation, that it's expanding its LANDesk® solution set by adding LANDesk® Process Manager for even greater IT process automation. It also plans to deploy LANDesk® Management Gateway (a feature of LANDesk® Management Suite) and LANDesk® Trusted Access™ technology (a feature of LANDesk® Security Suite) in the near future.

"Even though we've realized amazing benefits with LANDesk® solutions, we're really excited about implementing LANDesk Process Manager and more of the LANDesk Management Suite and LANDesk Security Suite features. We're excited about the added benefits and ROI that process automation and these other capabilities will give us," said CIO Katie Lovett.

Fulton County Schools also plans to continue to take advantage of LANDesk training courses. "We have had excellent and knowledgeable instructors who have made sure we have a full understanding of the product," James Stewart added. "Our plan is to continue our learning in the near future. Our next training initiative will focus on maximizing the OS deployment features. We are looking forward to following the same training path as we implemented for LANDesk Management Suite. We will focus on training our local administrative staff with the PM87 course, and then customize the content of this training to our local and district support staff," he concluded.

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JAMES STEWART

TECHNICAL TRAINING ADMINISTRATOR

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

FULTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

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