![Asset Panda logo]

CASE STUDY

Muskegon Area Intermediate School District Saves 100 Hours per Year with Asset Panda

Summary

Since 1962, students across 11 districts and 5 charter schools (charter schools often operate on leaner budgets and smaller IT teams, all while facing similar challenges that public schools do in managing their assets efficiently) have depended on the service of Muskegon Area Intermediate School District in Muskegon, Michigan. For the regional education service agency, supporting the achievements of their students and educators is at the core of their mission and long-term goals. Utilizing technology is a key component to the success of their vision "to be the premier source for quality educational leadership, programs, and services."

When the MAISD's new IT Director first reviewed the Technology Services department's inefficient asset tracking system—which primarily consisted of numerous spreadsheets scattered across multiple departments—he realized the team was losing a lot of time searching for assets and struggling to enforce accountability for their expensive IT equipment. The Technology Services team unanimously decided it was time for an asset tracking upgrade.

The Challenge

The responsibility of managing MAISD's 15,000 active user accounts, a data center, technical support programs, network services, and all the assets associated with these users and services rests solely on the shoulders of the Technology Services team.

Tracking software and equipment history was the biggest challenge for Departmental Administrative Assistant Jennifer Carlson, who often spent hours sifting through spreadsheets for essential IT asset information. "There was no searchable, complete list of all the necessary information," Carlson said.

Their spreadsheet-tracking methods made it difficult to look up asset histories, purchase dates, and warranty information, and the Technology Services team struggled to enforce accountability when devices turned up damaged or went missing altogether. This not only led to frustration but lost time and money. "Our administration knew we needed something better," Director of Technology Services Tim Brown said. "An Excel spreadsheet isn't an asset inventory system."

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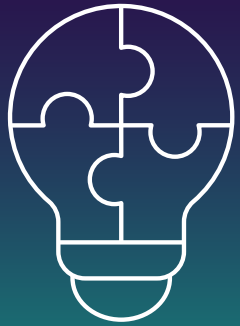
The Solution

To find the right asset management tool for their district, the team created a rubric with their criteria—cost and customization were two of the most important factors. "For K-12 schools, cost is always going to be a big concern for any product we look at," Brown said. "Being able to customize the product is really important to us because we have lots of different data streams coming into the product."

In their search for a better asset management solution, Asset Panda came out on top. "We were surprised by how customizable it was," Brown said. "We were able to pick and choose what we wanted to do with the system. It was a pretty easy sell."

PC Technician Jeffry Potts said the transition from spreadsheets to Asset Panda was a smooth one. "With spreadsheets, you're constantly trying to edit and modify everything and with Asset Panda, [the data] is already there. It's ridiculously easy compared to spreadsheets," Potts said.

The Results

Shortly after implementing Asset Panda, the MAISD Technology Services team realized various benefits.

Time Savings

The widespread benefit expressed by MAISD's Technology Services team was the amount of time they saved after switching to Asset Panda. "Timewise, it's a huge savings," Potts said. "I'm not looking at 15 different spreadsheets, I'm looking at one spot."

By unifying their asset inventory data and streamlining their workflows, Carlson said that their team saves about 100 hours of work per year with Asset Panda. "When someone asks me how old their equipment is, it is so easy to be able to pull that information up quickly, where before it would take me a long time to dig it up."

Efficiency through Data Centralization

As the primary person responsible for purchasing IT equipment and tracking warranty information, Carlson expressed how much easier it has been for her to organize important data in Asset Panda's unified solution.

"Asset Panda has been great as far as looking up [warranties] because I have all the information in one place," Carlson said. "When someone has a problem with their device, we can look it up quickly, we know when it was purchased, who the vendor was, and what kind of warranty we had on that particular product."

Enhanced Accountability
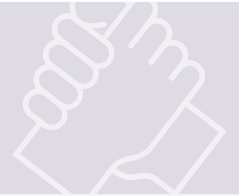
Brown expressed his relief with having a reliable system that he and his end users can depend on as a single source of truth for the district's assets.

"Being able to have a trusted source of where our assets are is very important to me," Brown said. "Knowing what we have and where it is allows us to better utilize our equipment. It's a no-brainer."

Confident Decision-Making

MAISD has thousands of assets purchased at different times and using various funding sources, with each of those funding sources having their specific guidelines to manage, replace, and dispose of assets. With the ability to accurately track the full lifecycle of their devices and associate them with the right funding source, the team can correctly manage and dispose of items to maintain grant compliance. "It's good having the funding source right there so we know for sure how to dispose of it," Carlson said.

Brown added, "Everything has its lifetime and knowing when it's time to replace an item gives us justification to our board [to get more funding]."

Substantial ROI
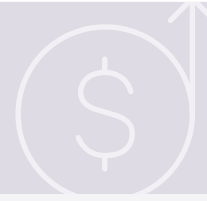
For many IT Directors, having a solution that is cost-effective and saves them money in the long run is the ultimate investment. "Switching over to Asset Panda saved us thousands of dollars over what we were doing before. It's streamlined our processes and made it really easy for our end users to know where our assets are. The product pays for itself" Brown said.

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Conclusion

MAISD is only beginning to scratch the surface of the long-term benefits that Asset Panda can provide. Whether managing thousands of devices across a large region like MAISD or a single charter school campus, Asset Panda's robust and customizable solution adapts to any school's needs. Seeing what they've been able to accomplish with their IT equipment has inspired the Technology Services team to scale their Asset Panda program to track additional use cases, like facilities maintenance and fixed asset tracking.

As the team explores the many possibilities with Asset Panda, Potts is looking forward to setting up an action on the mobile app to help him track screen repairs, especially in the early childhood classrooms where he sees the highest turnover rates. Being able to accurately track screen damage will not only help to increase accountability but also effectively budget for the repairs each year.

While Asset Panda has greatly helped the MAISD Technology Services team improve their efficiency, it ultimately enabled them to keep student and faculty devices up and running and ensure a high-quality education. "We want our users to get the best performance out of what they have, and [Asset Panda] helps us do that," Brown said.

Ready to replace your spreadsheet-tracking methods with Asset Panda's robust and customizable solution? Request your personalized demo to get started.

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