



Technology Plan Makes the Grade

Through sound advice and highly responsive support, JMARK helps Reeds Spring School District improve its network infrastructure and incorporate industry best practices to support growing use of technology.

Reeds Spring School District includes five schools serving more than 1,980 students throughout Branson West, Cape Fair, Galena, Indian Point, Kimberling and Reeds Spring, Mo. Highly rated by parents, Reeds Spring schools incorporate the very best teaching strategies to challenge students and stay on the cutting edge of instruction. The district also infuses technology in the classroom in order to prepare students for the challenges of the future. Reeds Spring High School has implemented a one-to-one laptop initiative, and the school board actively encourages online learning.



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THE CHALLENGE

Reeds Spring School District’s IT infrastructure included a mixture of FreeBSD (a free, Unix-like operating system), Linux and Windows servers and a network that had been cobbled together over time. When the district’s network administrator resigned, Director of Operations Steve Verheyen saw both a challenge and an opportunity.

“Our network administrator had been here 16 years and had grown up in our network,” Verheyen said. “He started here when we had one or two computers and built the network

entirely on his own. He did what he could with the budget that we had, which is why we have FreeBSD and Linux. Knowing that the future was Windows, he had also incorporated Windows into our network. You can’t find a network administrator that can support all three of those operating systems.

“We were without a network administrator, and also had some holes in our network that needed to be addressed. I saw this as a good opportunity to take stock and implement best practices.”

Verheyen called upon JMARK to perform a network assessment but quickly determined that it made sense to have JMARK take over the management and support of the network infrastructure.

The district had worked with JMARK on several other projects, and Verheyen felt confident that JMARK’s engineers had the skill sets he needed.

“I was working directly with Tom Douglas (president of JMARK) and he said, ‘We can take care of all of this for you.’ I had no doubt in my mind that they could — we knew a lot of the folks on their staff and have always had a good experience with them.

“One thing I like about JMARK is that they have an expert in every facet of technology. They have Linux and Windows experts and a person who is very familiar with FreeBSD. Even if we could find somebody who knew all those things we would have to pay an arm and a leg to hire them. Thanks to JMARK we did not have to do that. We had all those resources bundled up in one company.”



THE SOLUTION

JMARK helped Reeds Spring School District develop a three-to five-year technology plan built upon industry best practices. The JMARK team served as a “virtual CIO,” taking the time to understand the district’s operational requirements and mapping those requirements to the right technologies.

The plan included migration of the district’s FreeBSD and Linux servers to Windows Server platforms and beefing up network security. JMARK engineers handled every aspect of the migration.

“They did every bit of it, from soup to nuts,” Verheyen said. “They set up the new servers, moved all the data and documented everything for us. We also purchased a new firewall — the vendor did not set it up properly so a JMARK engineer got that up and running for us as well. It has been great to have someone with that level of knowledge of the latest technologies as well as an understanding our infrastructure. They have been instrumental in getting us to where we are today.”

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In the meantime, JMARK ensured that the district’s network stayed up and running as the migration progressed, and supported the launch of a one-to-one initiative involving more than 650 laptops.

“That initiative raised all sorts of questions,” said Verheyen. “What kind of traffic is the network going to have to handle? What’s the best firewall to ensure that the kids can access

SOLUTION SUMMARY

Reeds Spring School District

- A mixture of server operating systems and a network that had evolved over time made IT management and support difficult.
- JMARK developed a comprehensive technology plan, migrated all servers onto Windows Server platforms and implemented a robust firewall.
- JMARK also implemented best practices to ensure the IT infrastructure could support the district’s one- to-one initiative.
- Broad expertise and responsive support maximize network availability for a school district highly reliant on technology.



**REEDS SPRING
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

the network but still be safe? If we had continued to manage our network the way we had been doing, it was not going to be sufficient to support a one-to-one program.

“JMARK made it possible for us to be able to use those laptops as an educational tool. They spent a lot of painstaking time with us over the course of six or eight months as the initiative took shape, and we learned a lot by using them.”

“...with a long list of responsibilities encompassing every aspect of the district’s operations, Verheyen didn’t want to be a network administrator. He relies heavily on JMARK for sound advice, proactive maintenance and responsive support.”



THE RESULTS

JMARK put Reeds Spring School District on even footing and continues to monitor and manage the district’s network. Verheyen appreciates the fact that JMARK engineers don’t talk down to him. They take the time to explain technology issues so that Verheyen can make informed decisions.

“I’m not a network guy — I’m an office guy. The people at JMARK have taught me quite a bit,” he said. “They work with me and help me understand what’s going on in the network. So when I call now, I can ask questions the way they need to be asked and tell them in more detail what is happening. It helps them help us more effectively.”

But with a long list of responsibilities encompassing every aspect of the district’s operations, Verheyen doesn’t want to be a network administrator. He relies heavily upon JMARK for sound advice, proactive maintenance and responsive support.

“I talk to them on a daily basis and meet with them at least every other week in person. We go through what we need network-wise, what our plan is for the near term,” he said. “In terms of support, they are unbelievably responsive.”

When I call JMARK, I never get an answering machine — I always get a live person. And there has never been more than a 10-minute delay getting a response when I send an email. I have all of the cell phone numbers of the people I work with, and if I text them I get a response back instantaneously.”

That kind of response is extremely important for a school district that relies heavily on technology. When every student has an iPad or laptop, the network has to be available and secure.

“Education is technology. We don’t do anything without it. If the teacher says, ‘Your homework is due tomorrow’ but the network is down, the students can’t submit anything,” said Verheyen.

“We have an outstanding partner in JMARK. They took a network that was a total debacle and resolved all the issues, and they provide us with great support. We’d be foolish not to take advantage of JMARK’s resources.”

About JMARK

JMARK specializes in helping businesses eliminate technology pain while increasing efficiency and profitability. The JMARK team includes some of the best engineers and technicians in the industry, backed by disciplined processes and a state-of-the-art Network Operations Center (NOC). When you choose JMARK, you gain a technology partner who always keeps your best interests in mind by delivering your description of technology success.



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