

Case study

Kershaw County School District

HP ElitePad fulfills new state testing requirements



Industry

K12 Education

Objective

Implement touchscreen tablets to support state testing requirements and Microsoft tools for 1:1 student and teacher use

Approach

Work with HP and HP partner RTI to implement some 3,300 HP ElitePads with Productivity Jackets

IT matters

- Productivity Jacket prevents significant breakage, saving IT time and money
- HP partner provisions thousands of ElitePads leveraging IT productivity
- HP Self-Maintainer Program enables certified service by internal staff

Business matters

- Complies with state testing requirements and positions students for success
- Mobility and durability within small touchpad format meet demanding needs of 1:1 student program
- Productivity Jacket transforms ElitePad into Windows productivity tool
- HP Financial Services supports financing to meet budgetary needs



“The HP ElitePad solved all of our goals at once—to fulfill the State’s requirement for touch form testing, provide seamless Windows support for our existing applications, and present the leading-edge of technology to students and teachers for our 1:1 program.”

– Bill Oden, Senior Systems Specialist, Kershaw County School District



Kershaw County School District (KCSD), centered in Camden, South Carolina, is home to almost 10,500 students and over 1,300 employees. Faced with new state testing regulations and the desire to outfit its students with leading-edge technology, KCSD evaluated the top touchscreen tablets available. The HP ElitePad Tablet, complete with robust Windows support, rose above the competition resulting in the largest ElitePad implementation in education to date.

No stranger to excellence, all 20 of the Kershaw County School District (KCS D) schools are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the South Carolina Department of Education. In support of this standard, the KCS D IT department is dedicated to meeting the State’s rigorous regulations and providing its students with the best education-enabling technology available.

In addition to providing touchscreen functionality for testing, KCS D needed to find a tablet that doubled as a productivity device running the Microsoft Windows platform. Support of the widely used Microsoft Office and related Windows applications is critical for teaching staff and student body projects, papers, and research. KCS D ran an inclusive and thorough evaluation, and as Bill Oden, Senior Systems Specialist and Kerry Morgan, Senior Logistics Specialist Kershaw County School District, tell it, the cream floated to the top.

“Amazingly enough, considering we required more than 3,300 units, HP was the only vendor that did their homework,” they recall. “HP provided a demo of an early ElitePad, they plugged it in and addressed our needs in depth. The ElitePad sold itself to our evaluating committee.”

“The teachers chose the ElitePad. It’s not easy to find a device sophisticated enough to satisfy both teaching and student needs. The ease-of-use, unique Productivity Jacket, and Windows support impressed everyone with its versatility and robust functionality.”

– Kerry Morgan, Senior Logistics Specialist Kershaw County School District

KCS D wanted to provide a smaller footprint to better fit student desks, with greater mobility and durability. The ElitePad small form factor in a tablet emulates the touch technology already in use with the students’ smart phones and personal touch pad devices. In addition, the HP ElitePad Productivity Jacket provides an instant keyboard to transform the ElitePad into a powerful productivity tool with full size keyboard and extra ports.

“The teachers chose the ElitePad,” explains Morgan. “It’s not easy to find a device sophisticated enough to satisfy both teaching and student needs. The ease-of-use, unique Productivity Jacket, and Windows support impressed everyone with its versatility and robust functionality.”

ElitePad blends seamlessly

KCS D was in the midst of a 1200 unit pilot with a competing vendor, when it became apparent that its operating system, in addition to not fully supporting the Windows environment, literally used up KCS D’s bandwidth. According to Oden, anyone at the schools running Windows platform wasn’t able to get to websites, response was slow, and complaints rolled in.” On the other hand, the ElitePad blended right in.

“We estimate that it would cost us more than \$100,000 for additional infrastructure upgrades to support the increased bandwidth requirements of a competitive touchpad fleet,” says Morgan. “The competitive tablet we prototyped actually degenerated our current capabilities, whereas the HP ElitePad significantly expanded our functionality. And we didn’t have to add any additional access points or infrastructure to get a very good response time.”

ElitePad durability saves the day, and money

As a small form factor tablet, the HP ElitePad is very mobile and compact to work with, given the size of student desks. However, KCS D was also looking for a tablet with the durability that could withstand the attentions of even the most active students. The IT team attributes the ultra-durability of the ElitePad to the extra rubberized padding in the Productivity Jacket, as well as the solid design. “The ElitePad casing is machined out of a solid piece of aluminum with a gorilla glass top, with very few parts, and does a dramatically better job of weathering student mishaps than the other tablets we evaluated.”

“We had to repair 78 of another vendors’ touchpads, as opposed to only five of the ElitePads,” Morgan compares. “That vendor also required that we send units away to fix, which we found very time consuming. We have the ability to service the ElitePad ourselves as part of the HP Self-Maintainer Program, which is light years ahead of the competition. We gain

Customer at a glance

Application

Implement HP ElitePad Tablet in support of 1:1 program

Hardware

- HP ElitePad Tablet PC
- HP Productivity Jacket

Operating System

- Microsoft Windows 8

Financing

- HP Financial Services

Support

- HP Self-Maintainer Program

considerable savings with the inherent durability of the ElitePad and much more efficient service completion. The extra time gained by IT can now be spent on more critical activities.”

“The ElitePad is significantly more advanced than the competitors, the teacher’s and students love it, and IT finds it very efficient and simple to maintain. We also like the savings.”

—Bill Oden, Senior Systems Specialist, and Kerry Morgan, Senior Logistics Specialist Kershaw County School District

KCSD utilizes the HP Self-Maintainer Program which allows the IT staff to flexibly manage and service the tablets themselves, saving time and money. “The HP Self-Maintainer Program is ideal for our budget, because HP compensates KCSD for certified service, which helps in future purchases of product. It also gives us complete control over the response times to the students and teachers, a very important service delivery requirement.”

HP strategic collaboration

The tech staff have a lot to say about the benefits and functionality of their new world-class ElitePad implementation. But it’s the synergy of product, HP partners, and reliable HP support that enables KCSD to accomplish more than it could on its own. Educational resources seem to be always stretched, and through collaboration with HP, the IT department now proudly supports one of the most modern 1:1 programs on the globe.

HP partner RTI, headquartered in Omaha, Neb., acts as a virtual IT staff for KCSD by imaging the ElitePads as they are ordered. HP ships

KCSD orders directly to RTI, where the desired faculty and student images are installed, then the entire order is delivered to KCSD ready to go.

“RTI, HP, and KCSD work seamlessly as a team,” admits Morgan. “We would have to double our staff to provision all of our 3,300 ElitePads. It’s a tremendous time and cost savings to us. When we receive them from RTI, all we have to do is assign a serial number and tell the students to turn it on and log in.”

Oden stresses that engaging the reliable HP support structure was paramount to the sale and is the key that makes it all work.

“As the largest deployment of the ElitePad in education to date, KCSD is on the bleeding-edge of this technology,” he continues. “In the real world, there will always be inevitable issues with a new platform and solution of this scope. “HP support engineers are fantastic and work with our staff efficiently to resolve every detail. In fact, we are finding that the ElitePad is a lot easier to support than other formats.”

Oden pauses to consider the scope of KCSD’s relationship with HP. What comes to mind is the breadth of solution and support that HP offers the District.

“HP is a full portfolio one-stop-shop,” he concludes. “HP Financial Services helped KCSD with the financial aspects of our ElitePad deployment. We have a long standing relationship with HP that encompasses HP servers and storage, the ElitePad, support, Financial Services, you name it. I would recommend HP to other school districts, not because of its depth, but because they share your journey and go the extra miles it takes to get there.”

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