

A Growing School District Improves Performance and Access with ViewSonic® Integrated Zero Client Displays



Challenge

- ▶ Cost-effectively update aging computer labs and library workstations.
- ▶ Improve student access to educational programs.
- ▶ Alleviate excessive power draw at Middle School.
- ▶ Improve performance of Flash-based programs.

Solution

- ▶ The ViewSonic SD-Z225 22" integrated zero client display made the grade with the right combination of cost, performance, and compatibility.
- ▶ PCoIP® hardware optimization, and VMware® and Teradici® logo certification ensured ease of integration with existing VMware infrastructure.
- ▶ Powerful Teradici® Tera™ 2 processor and 1920x1080 resolution offered an authentic desktop PC experience with stunning 2D/3D graphics and rich multimedia.

Results

- ▶ New computer labs up and running in hours rather than weeks, minimizing educational downtime
- ▶ Improved access for students, with fast, reliable accessibility of files in the labs and throughout the district.
- ▶ Substantially reduced IT staff time needed for deployment and ongoing maintenance –allowing increased time for instructional initiatives.
- ▶ Reduced power draw, with 80% less consumption than a typical PC workstation.
- ▶ Improved performance of Flash programs with outstanding visuals and seamless PC-like performance
- ▶ Better overall TCO profile than previous solutions.

Customer Profile

Located in Southeastern Chester County, Pennsylvania, Kennett Consolidated School District (KCSO) encompasses a kindergarten center, three elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. The district's mission is to provide a quality education that increases student achievement in order to become successful and thoughtful contributors to society. Celebrating its 80th anniversary in 2012, Kennett High School recently underwent extensive renovations to its educational and athletic facilities. Technology enhancements are ongoing to meet the district-wide goal of delivering appropriate tools for the 21st century learner.

The Challenge

The iMac workstations in the Kennett Consolidated School District's middle and high school computer labs were nearing end of life. The district's technology department had been assessing replacement options for over two years. Improving student access to programs and maximizing instructional time were the top priorities, along with ensuring a cost-effective implementation that maximized the department's resources. Power consumption was another box on the evaluation checklist.

"Our top priority was to provide cost-effective access for students to programs throughout the day," said Dan Maguire, KCSO Supervisor of Technology Services.

As the aging systems grew closer to end of life, none of the options seemed to offer the right combination of cost-effective student access they were looking for. When his reseller recommended taking a look at the ViewSonic SD-Z225 22" integrated zero client display, which features hardware accelerated PCoIP optimization for VMware along with the ease of all-in-one deployment, Maguire knew they had found the answer they were looking for.

"We had been significantly growing our VMware-based virtualized environment over the past few years and were looking for something that offered the simplicity of plug and play into the VDI environment," Maguire said. "We looked at other alternatives, compared the specs and price points, and the ViewSonic SD-Z225 zero client monitors were above and beyond all the competitors."

The ViewSonic Solution

Kennett Consolidated School District began testing the SD-Z225 integrated zero client display and found it delivered the fast and easy integration into the existing VMware environment they sought. It also offered a far superior cost profile than their previous hardware.

"The ViewSonic product was definitely more cost-effective for us, in terms of TCO," stated Maguire. "The iMac hardware is very expensive. With the much lower cost of the ViewSonic hardware, even with the VMware annual license renewal it takes six years to reach the initial cost of the iMac."

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Uses of integrated zero client displays in a school environment

- ▶ Quick and easy computing in libraries, computer labs, and classrooms
- ▶ Simple file management and accessibility between home and school for students
- ▶ Fast and powerful performance for interactive learning and flash-based educational programs
- ▶ Cost-effective, energy-saving alternative to Samsung zero clients or iMacs

“With the performance of the ViewSonic workstations, student access to files is almost immediate. And that’s what it’s all about, improving the learning experience for the students.”

— Dan Maguire, KCSD Supervisor of Technology Services

The lower initial hardware cost was only the tip of the cost-savings iceberg. When Maguire’s department factored in the time for deployment and ongoing management support costs, the TCO equation became even more favorable. With the ViewSonic product, the Kennett tech team found that the majority of time required for set up was spent un-boxing the monitors, keyboards, and mice.

“Once they were plugged in,” said Maguire, “that was it. We were done.”

The Results

Kennett Consolidated School District deployed 135 SD-Z225 zero client displays in its middle school and high school libraries, computer labs and a few classrooms. Maguire’s staff reports that the deployment was about the easiest they’ve experienced, requiring notably less downtime than setup of an iMac-based lab. Not only were the workstations up and running quickly for student use, Maguire was equally enthusiastic about the cost savings represented by the substantial reduction in man-hours required.

“The iMacs took far more time for set up and imaging,” said Maguire. “With the ViewSonic setting up a 30-unit lab took a fraction of the time it used to.”

Ongoing management has likewise proved to be a breeze, thanks to the centralized PCoIP control that eliminated the need for individual updates to each machine. According to Bob Wilson, who manages the KCSD virtualized environment, the ViewSonic workstations are “simple to manage, durable and easily compatible with our current VMware configuration.”

As expected, with its eco-friendly design and LED display that consumes 80% less power than a typical PC, the ViewSonic SD-Z225 integrated zero client displays delivered on the goal of reduced power consumption, alleviating the power burden at the middle school.

“We are seeing no power issues with the ViewSonic workstations,” reports Maguire. “In the past we have had power issues with Samsung zero client monitors, and thankfully these ViewSonic workstations present a significantly lower draw on power.”

Thinking about their prior zero client monitor purchase, Maguire adds, “I wish this ViewSonic product had been available when we needed to purchase those Samsung models.”

Foremost on Maguire’s mind, however, is how well the new ViewSonic integrated zero client workstations have benefitted their students by improving access to the programs they need to further their education.

“Before this changeover, students used to run into lots of problems maintaining their files throughout the district,” says Maguire. “With the ViewSonic SD-Z225 and VMware, they have a direct link to their home folder on server. This is very easy to set up and students don’t lose files.”

Maguire says this amplified access aligns perfectly with their goal of maximizing instructional time.

“With the performance of the ViewSonic workstations, student access to files is almost immediate. And that’s what it’s all about, improving the learning experience for the students.”

Another stumbling block students faced with the older systems was unpredictable performance of flash-based programs. As students and teachers began to rely more heavily on media and interactive programs, this was beginning to pose a significant problem. With its powerful Teradici Tera 2321 CPU and 512MB of system memory, the ViewSonic SD-Z225 has surpassed expectations for performance. States Maguire, “The ViewSonic are handling whatever the students and teachers throw out.”

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SD-Z225 Integrated Zero Client Display

- ▶ 22" (21.5" viewable) LED display
- ▶ Certified VMware® Horizon View client
- ▶ Teradici® Tera™2321-based hardware accelerated PCoIP®
- ▶ No hard drive, memory, fan, or moving parts
- ▶ Ultra-high security & reliability in VMware-based networks

Going Forward

Next on the list for an equipment refresh are the Kindergarten center and elementary classrooms, all of which use Wyse terminals that have been delivering poor performance with the flash-based programs that teachers are turning to more frequently.

“When we refresh these we hope to use ViewSonic. We need to accommodate the heavy flash programs and we’ve had no problems with ViewSonic in this area,” says Maguire, in a statement that pretty well sums up his department’s experience with the ViewSonic SD-Z225 deployment.

For more information, contact ViewSonic Sales at SalesInfo@ViewSonic.com or visit www.ViewSonic.com

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