

Grade A

Building their own PCs with Crucial® parts saves a Florida school system \$300,000



Fast Facts

Customer: Collier School District

Industry: Education

Challenge: Collier needed 1150 high-end PCs for its career and technology classes, but pre-built systems were cost prohibitive.

Solution: Collier's technology department built their own PCs using Crucial RealSSD™ C300 solid-state drives and Crucial Ballistix® RAM.

Results: Collier's students got the fast performance they needed and the school district saved \$300,000 by building the PCs themselves.

Background

Headquartered in Naples, Florida, the Collier County School District serves 43,000 students in grades K-12. It operates 50 different schools, including 8 high schools and one K-12 school. In addition, more than 12,000 students per year take part in the district's Career and Adult Education programs.

Collier enjoys an excellent reputation, and during the two most recent school years, the district received an "A" grade from the Florida Department of Education. Known throughout Florida as a leader in educational technology, the district has approximately 25,000 networked desktop and laptop computers.

The Challenge

In its Career and Technical Education classes, Collier students use a variety of high-end software, including AutoCad and Adobe CS5. In order to run these programs, the students needed high-end PCs.

Unfortunately, top-of-the-line PCs were out of the district's price range, particularly at a time when schools everywhere were having their budgets slashed. Collier

School District's manager of technology and repair, John Antonacci, said that the district usually purchases their systems directly from a major PC manufacturer. Unfortunately, for these types of systems, "[pre-built] computers were going to be in excess of \$1,000, so it was going to be expensive for us," he explained.

"We decided to go with Crucial for our solid-state drives just because they operated the fastest, and we saw huge performance differences when we used them,"

- John Antonacci
Collier School District Manager of Technology and Repair

READ MORE ▶

The Solution

In order to save money, Antonacci and his colleagues decided to try something they'd never done before—building the 1150 high-end computers the district needed themselves.

Over the summer, 10 Collier School District technology department employees built all 1150 systems in just one week, averaging about 300 per day. And they had all of the systems tested and deployed within another week.

The team worked assembly-line style, with one person taking parts out of boxes, one opening cases, one installing the motherboards and processors, etc. "We're all big computer fans, so it was fun for us," said Antonacci.

For their high-end PCs, Collier chose ThermalTake power supplies and cases, ASUS motherboards, AMD Phenom six-core processors, 8 GB of Crucial Ballistix® RAM, and Crucial RealSSD™ C300 solid-state hard drives.

"We decided to go with Crucial for our solid state drives just because they operated the fastest, and we saw huge performance differences when we used them," said Antonacci.

The Results

The district and its students have been very happy with their new PCs. Antonacci noted that thanks to the Crucial SSDs, "The computer would not only boot up faster, it would also log in faster. And when you're saving files, you want to have that fast read access. For software like AutoCAD and for Adobe that's very important."

In addition, the district saved more than \$260 per PC. "By building our own PCs with Crucial SSDs and RAM, we saved \$300,000 in all," noted Antonacci.

He added that while this was a unique need, he would definitely use the Crucial products again if a similar situation arose.