

Case study

Geneva Community Unit School District 304



District builds on HP Notebooks, HP Self Maintainer status for student success

Industry

PreK-12 Education

Objective

Give students hands-on, real-world technical experience for future college and/or career success

Approach

Create Technology Support Internship in which high school students earn HP Self Maintainer Certification to work on district help desk servicing 1:1 program HP Notebook PCs

IT matters

- Support 2,000 high school 1:1 program HP PCs
- Deliver technology education to help further students' educational and career opportunities
- Provide 5,000 HP Notebook PCs district-wide, featuring touchscreens and full keyboards
- Free IT staff to pursue security, educational initiatives

Business matters

- Fulfill district's vision to educate lifelong learners, effective communicators, adaptive thinkers, collaborative citizens
- Provide opportunity for students to earn real-world credentials of value to future educational and professional goals
- Maximize internship effectiveness by combining self-directed coursework with classroom teaching and technician-supported help desk experience



“Our 1:1 program provides the technology backbone to support our students to become self-evolving, adaptive lifelong learners. HP has been essential both to our 1:1 and TSI programs.”

– Michael Wilkes, Director of Technology, Geneva Community Unit School District 304

Located in a vibrant growth corridor near Chicago, Ill., Geneva Community Unit School District (CUSD) 304 encompasses 10 schools providing high-quality PreK-12 education to 6,000 students. The suburban district runs a 1:1 PC program providing students with devices, primarily HP Notebooks, and it participates in the HP Self Maintainer program to directly manage the service of HP PCs. Recently, Geneva CUSD 304 started leveraging its relationship with HP to benefit students in a new way. The district's Technology Support Internship (TSI) at Geneva Community Unit High School combines classroom teaching, HP coursework, and HP Certification opportunities to give students real-world help desk experience and a head start for college and/or careers.



Geneva CUSD 304 is clear about its vision: to assist every student to become a self-directed, lifelong learner; an effective communicator; a complex, creative, and adaptive thinker; and a collaborative and productive citizen. The TSI program is proving itself on every one of these fronts.

“What’s made our TSI program so successful is the combination of classroom-based discussion, HP training modules and certification, and technician-supported help desk experience on our HP Notebook PCs.”

—Eric Hatczel, TSI Instructor, Geneva CUSD 304

“We’re living our district’s vision,” says Michael Wilkes, Geneva CUSD 304’s director of technology. “The TSI program gives our students real-world technical experience that prepares them for success in their chosen college field of study or career. At the same time, it frees district IT staff to take on high-value projects and challenges.”

Student interns earn valuable credentials

Karl Schmitt, 18, plans to major in cybersecurity when he starts college next year. Through TSI, he’s already racked up an impressive list of certifications: HP Certified Technician and Microsoft Technology Associate (MTA): Windows Operating System Fundamentals, CompTIA IT Fundamentals. He likes the self-paced nature of the HP training modules and moved on to pursue additional certifications, finishing a few weeks ahead of some classmates. Schmitt also works at a technology retailer doing fixes and troubleshooting. Now in his second semester with the TSI program, he’s helping to orient new interns—building teaching and management skills on top of his technical and customer service ones. “I’ve been interested in technology for years,” he says. “I put on my college application that I am doing this internship, so it might have helped me get into my program of choice. And the university I’m going to offers jobs in technical support.”

Matthew Will, also 18 and a senior, is deciding between a career in mechanical or computer

engineering. He holds HP certification and will soon achieve Microsoft certification. The highlight of the TSI program for him has been working on the devices themselves, and troubleshooting. “I got to look at the insides of the laptops, and how HP packs all of this hardware down to a very small size,” he says. “It’s really satisfying when you actually solve a problem and get things to work as they’re designed to.”

Mark Bernhard, 16, is a high school junior. After hearing about the TSI program from his computer science teacher, he earned his HP certification, started on Microsoft certification, and went to work on the district help desk. “It’s a new experience for me, working with staff at the help desk; I feel more like a staff member and not a student,” he says. “Another benefit is that being self-paced is a preview of how things will be in college or the workforce environment. It’s good to learn how to do that.”

TSI combines classroom education, self-paced modules, hands-on experience

Such words are music to the ears of the Geneva CUSD 304 staff and faculty who designed the TSI program to give students exactly such advantages. The district had become an HP Self Maintainer several years ago, using its own IT staff to speed repairs and reduce costs. Then in educational conferences, it connected with other school districts that had developed student-based technology help for their 1:1 programs. In discussions with their HP representatives, district staff learned that HP certification was also available to students. After completing the HP trainings, students take the Service Qualification Exam and the PC Hardware Diagnostics Qualification Exam to earn certification. “We knew it was important to give the students a real credential they could use beyond Geneva High School—a certification that would stay with, and bring value to, them in whatever future they choose,” Wilkes says.

Geneva CUSD 304’s TSI program combines self-paced HP coursework with classroom learning, help desk experience, and mentoring by district IT staff. In addition to providing this mutually reinforcing set of experiences, the TSI program builds new skills from semester to semester. “The first time students take TSI, it’s very classroom-based. There’s a lot of self-paced learning using HP training



The HP ProBook 11 x360 Notebook PC provides features such as a touchscreen and convertible tablet mode—at an affordable cost.

modules,” explains Eric Hatczel, TSI instructor. “At the second level, they start a rotation at the help desk. It throws them into the working environment where they apply their skills. I think that’s what has made it so successful—that mix of classroom-based discussion and reflection, training modules, and technician-supported help desk experience on the devices in the building.”

HP Notebook PCs provide touchscreen functionality, full keyboard

The students are working on 1,485 HP Notebook PCs used by high school freshmen, sophomores, and juniors—soon to become 2,000 PCs when seniors are given 1:1 devices, too. Counting elementary and middle schools, the district has approximately 5,000 HP PCs in its 1:1 program. The most recent model chosen is the HP ProBook 11 x360 G1 EE Notebook PC. “They have all the features and functionality we were looking for: touchscreen, convertible tablet mode, full keyboard—at an affordable cost,” Wilkes says.

The Geneva CUSD 304 technology plan focuses on enhancing the learning environment. It launched its 1:1 program several years ago in a phased approach allowing the district to effectively engage teachers in ongoing professional development, including use of instructional technologies. School year 2018-19 is slated to be the year Geneva CUSD 304 realizes a full 1:1 learning environment. Elementary level students will have access to an age-appropriate device during the school day, and all middle and high school students

will be assigned a device they will be able to take to and from school.

“Our 1:1 program provides the technology backbone to support our students to become self-evolving, adaptive lifelong learners,” Wilkes says. “Creative problem-solving, collaboration, effective communication—by placing 1:1 technology in students’ hands and preparing teachers to integrate it effectively, we support development of these 21st century skills. HP has been essential both to our 1:1 program and the TSI program that grew out of it.”

IT staff pursues security, digital-education initiatives

Geneva CUSD 304 employs 20 IT staff members, some of whom work alongside TSI students. Instrumental in establishing the program was Kate O’Malley, a district technician. The first day TSI students received their tool kits and started disassembling PCs, O’Malley led the hands-on charge to make sure students understood the HP requirements and how to perform break-fix repairs. Now she’s also helping advanced interns like Schmitt support new students coming into the program, building a self-sustaining model while opening up the next level of opportunity.

With students taking on some of the break-fix load, IT staff members have more time to pursue individual projects. O’Malley, for example, is researching Microsoft BitLocker to strengthen district security. Others are exploring new ways to integrate technology into the educational curriculum.

Customer at a glance

Application

Technology Student Intern program as HP Self Maintainer for PreK-12 school district's 1:1 PC program

Hardware

- HP ProBook 11 x360 G1 EE
- HP x360 310 Convertible PC

Services

- HP Self Maintainer Program

The district also is refining the TSI program, based on student feedback, to provide a bit more structure, such as review guides to complement the self-paced material. With word about TSI spreading, the number of students slated to participate has risen to more than a dozen next semester.

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— Michael Wilkes, Director of Technology, Geneva Community Unit School District 304

“From an instructor’s perspective, I think the TSI program is phenomenal,” Hatczel says. “I’m a business teacher by trade. The huge takeaway is that, building on our relationship with HP, we’re putting these students in a position to learn employable skills. They feel like a staff member. That’s the experience we want them to have—whether they use it for college, other internships, or to jump straight into the workforce.”

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