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**Rebecca Wood Technical Support Supervisor for the Wilton School District**

## Tight Integration and Inventory Transparency Are Centerpieces to District’s Enhanced Productivity and Savings

### The Customer

Nestled in the Norwalk River Valley in southwestern Connecticut, Wilton, like many other Fairfield County towns, is an upscale residential community complete with open lands, historic architecture and extensive town services. Although there are a number of office buildings in town, residents commonly commute to New York City, Stamford and Norwalk. Wilton was also rated one of CNN’s top 25 towns to live, boasting an average household income of over \$300,000 per family.

Currently the town of Wilton has over 4,100 students enrolled in its district who attend pre-K through 12th grade. The school district consists of modern facilities including elementary schools Miller, Driscoll (preK-2) and Cider Mill. There is a single middle school, Middlebrook, and one high school, Wilton High, which features advanced placement courses for high achieving students and a broad curriculum of music and visual arts courses and a well-appointed resource center. An innovative language laboratory encourages foreign language studies including French, German, Spanish, Russian and Latin.

### The Challenge

Like many schools throughout the country, Wilton’s school administrators are always on the lookout for ways to more effectively and efficiently run their district by using budget dollars more productively.

One of these challenges, inevitably, comes down to how they can use technology to increase system availability, improve IT accountability, maximize system resource utilization, reduce total cost of ownership and increase response and time to recovery.

In the Fall of 2008 the Wilton School District made a decision to partner with SyAM Software to exclusively focus on energy management. According to Rebecca Wood, Technical Support Supervisor for the District, SyAM -- and this was key -- was also instrumental in helping her team of technicians to unify a broad portfolio of standalone and disparate systems had depended on previously to ensure staff and students’ uptime and overall system-wide availability

“We currently support more than 750 staff and 4400 students, and approximately 2000 PCs,” explained Wood. “Prior to using SyAM we relied on a heterogeneous mix of systems management and diagnostic tools for IT purposes, with purpose-built solutions that rarely scaled and almost never interfaced seamlessly with other systems we were using at the time.”

The Wilton school administrators ultimately purchased a dozen server licenses and 1700 workstation licenses with the primary objective of saving approximately **\$45,000** per year

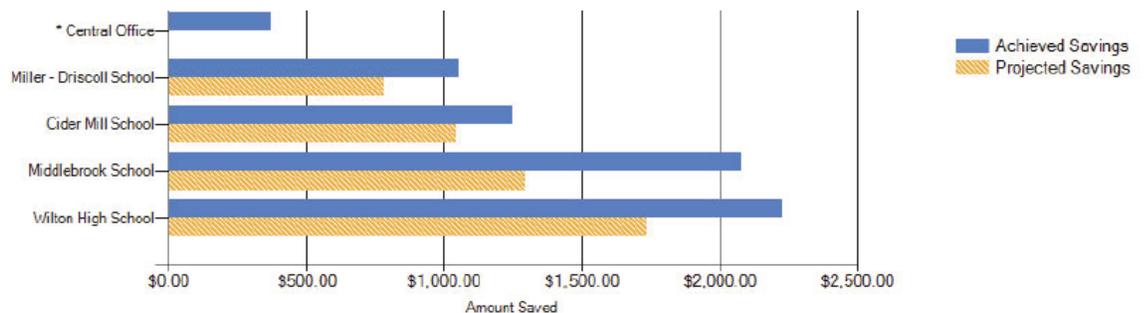


The motivation to change for the district in general and Wood in particular occurred when Michael Mazzariello, Director of Alliances for Integrated Financial Systems (IFS), a SyAM Software technology partner, approached school administrators with a plan to help save the district money by implementing a managed shutdown for its network of PCs.

Armed with a portfolio of proven case studies on schools that had taken a similar path and realized significant savings in energy use and the ability to return precious dollars back into the budget for value-added student services, the administration opted to partner with Mazzariello and SyAM to deploy its Power Auditor solution and to downsize its annual energy costs.

The accumulated total savings, from the period November 2013 through October 2014 is an astonishing **\$92,443**

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## The Solution and Value Realized

At the outset Ms. Wood and her team installed SyAM on all of her district's PCs and used SyAM to not only schedule the shutdown of PCs in order to achieve projected savings to the District, but also used the system for monitoring her entire environment. By taking advantage of SyAM's monitoring and remote access capabilities, Wood and her team were proactively able to resolve as many issues as possible quickly, efficiently and whenever possible, transparent to her users.

As time progressed, Ms. Wood became very proactive in the utilization of the SyAM's Management utility to not only ensure that the SyAM client was installed and operational on all machines, but also used this Management Utility as a mechanism to install many of her third party applications which included applications such as Adobe Reader, Flash, and the Microsoft Office suite. SyAM's Management Utility was also instrumental when Ms. Wood needed to uninstall a specific version of Java that caused issues with other applications installed on district PC's.

The totality of the SyAM solution – both power auditing as well as management oversight – mitigated the disjointed, disparate solutions Wood and her IT team had depended on for so very long.

“Because of the way pieces were added to our infrastructure little by little and often on an ad hoc basis, it was important to us as an IT department to have things work well together,” said Wood. “To partner with a vendor that tried to really embrace our environment, that understood our challenges from our point of view and infrastructure and then to make it as easy to use as possible was important.”

For Wood that visibility translated quickly into the ability to better control her environment, most especially when it came to keeping to its managed shutdown schedule.

As the report below (Figure 1) reflects, the metrics, expressed in terms of savings, are dramatic:

- Kwh Saved: 39998.59
- Cost per Kw/H: \$0.19
- October 2014 savings: \$7,599.73

As the report states, the accumulated total savings, from the period November 2013 through October 2014 is an astonishing \$92,443.62.

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The “Carbon savings” are similarly impressive, mapped to 335.7 metric tons of CO2 emissions. That's the (EPA) equivalent of Wilton schools removing the equivalent of 65.8 cars from the road.

### Achieved Savings Trend

The following chart shows the amount of money saved by month over the last year or the start of achieved savings mode.



Accumulated Total Savings: \$92,443.62

Figure 1

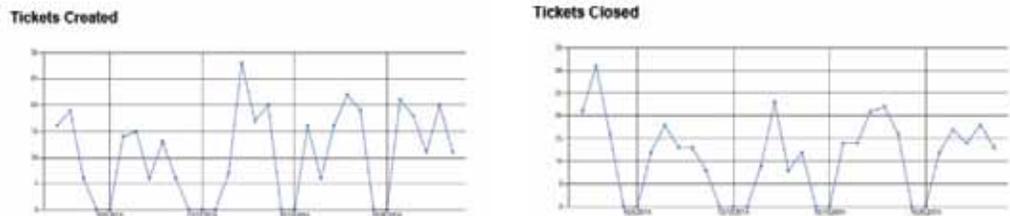
“The Self Service portal has not only improved the look, feel and usefulness of the front end to the support they provide their customers, but as more tickets are submitted through the portal the more rapid the time to resolution as technicians spend more time on fixing problems, rather than just documenting them.”

“Not only was it nice to be able to shut machines down on their own based on pre-determined shutdown schedules, but SyAM also offered us the ability to take advantage of other product features and add-ons such as pushing out software updates,” confirmed Wood. Additionally, Wood has utilized SyAM’s self-service portal to document help desk tickets and accelerate their resolution.

“That was a critical piece for me since I oversee the technicians,” explained Wood. “We were using another product that was very cumbersome to work with. Now that we have folded those pieces into SyAM (e.g. help desk ticketing and visibility into its infrastructure profile district-wide), it’s made it easier for us to work, which has increased the end user’s ability to submit tickets.”

As reflected in the Help Desk Summary below (Figure 2), the report:

- Summarizes how the IT support group has performed;
- Shows metrics on how many tickets were reported and closed, reflecting if and how well the IT staff is keeping up;
- Reflects what type of issues are being reported and from where; And whether end users are reporting issues by themselves using the self-service portal or calling the help desk.



What is also significant about this help desk summary report is that it also illustrates the improved efficiency of her technicians, as they outperformed the closing of many more tickets than the prior system.

By combining SyAM’s Asset Management/Inventory and Help Desk solutions Wood and her help desk team can now see at anytime what issues are happening with specific assets, which in turn helps them to make more educated decisions on asset upgrades and changes.

The Self Service portal has not only improved the look, feel and usefulness of the front end to the support they provide their customers, but as more tickets are submitted through the portal, the more rapid the time to resolution as technicians spend more time on fixing problems, rather than just documenting them.

“It has made us more efficient and made it easier to track a problem because we are able to update each ticket with current status in terms of the progress we are making toward the resolution of the issue; for example, if a technician that is assigned to a problem is having difficulties resolving the issue, it is easier for me to jump in and help them or simply monitor just how far they have gotten in the resolution of the issue ,” said Wood

To illustrate this outcome Wood recalls an instance where one of her internal customers had a program that she desperately needed installed in a lab rather quickly and so opened a ticket on the self help portal. However, the technician in that particular school was inundated with a time-sensitive issue he was working on and so could not immediately respond to the customer’s need or timeline. Within minutes, however, Wood was able to identify the program, download it and ‘push’ it out through SyAM and give her internal customer the program she needed.

Figure 2

SyAM's ability to quickly and efficiently push out software products and updates has enabled Wood and her team to perform tasks that previously took many hours of manual labor to complete. She was able to create utility jobs that were able to power up specified classroom PC's on scheduled Saturday mornings, perform the Office upgrades and upon completion, remotely turn those PC's off.

"SyAM' ticketing capability enabled us to identify the program quickly and more easily, and in conjunction with SyAM' asset inventory solution and deployment capabilities, we were then able to identify which machine the customer needed the program pushed to and we then quickly deployed the program. SyAM was an integral part of this process from start to finish," said Wood.

SyAM's ability to quickly and efficiently push out software products and updates has enabled Wood and her team to perform tasks that previously took many hours of manual labor to complete. For example, Wood recently upgraded over 1300 systems districtwide with Microsoft Office 2013. She was able to create utility jobs that were able to power up specified classroom PC's on scheduled Saturday mornings, perform the Office upgrades and upon completion, remotely turn those PC's off. "Using SyAM, we're able to push out about 90% of our updates automatically, rather than spending hours updating district PC's individually, which is a huge savings in time as well as resources," said Wood.

"Given the number of updates pushed out by Microsoft," she continued, "the technicians are often overwhelmed by the time-consuming task of updating each computer in their respective schools. It takes a minimum of twenty minutes per machine every time updates take place. This translates to an average of 433 man hours to update 1300 computers in the district."

## SUMMARY

In continuing to transition her environment from a group of disparate pieces to a unified, cohesive management view, Wood recognized that while it's not easy to change out from one system to another, at the end of the day the journey to SyAM has more than proven its worth.

"We are continuing to build on it and its meeting everything we need right now and as we continue to use it SyAM becomes more and more beneficial," said Wood.

The ticketing piece, in particular, is fast-tracked to becoming the entire district's New Help Desk application with the intent, of course, of furthering the district's mission of delivering the best customer service. In fact, Wood has not only embraced the application, but also provided significant technology recommendations and improvement ideas to SyAM, many of which have since been incorporated into the application.

It's that cumulative value of the SyAM solution that has impacted Wood and how she approaches her day to day responsibilities.

"When we first rolled this out it was used exclusively for the power piece and at the time that was what we needed, but it wasn't until I began working with Michael and the entire SyAM team that I could really start to see the benefits to be had that it really became valuable, even indispensable," observed Wood. "The ticketing piece alone has really helped us to build a beneficial knowledge base as well as working with and understanding the needs of users better."

And while Wood's environment continues to be heterogeneous in makeup, in terms of management everything is now in one place.

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**SUMMARY continued..**

“Now that we have inventory, ticketing, managed power shut downs and the ability to push out all of our updates using a single application, the benefits to our technicians has been immense. My technicians have found it to be much easier to work with, rather than a jumble of disjointed parts,” confirmed Wood.

To date Wood has seen a significant increase in the usage of the Self Service portal by administration, faculty and staff to report issues so that the IT team spends less time taking calls and more time resolving the issues.

Wood also knows that if ever she needs help to do anything, SyAM support is close by.

“The availability of the people at SyAM has been tremendous,” said Wood. “If I find I have a need they respond immediately to it, which is very important to me. And with each passing day, week, month and year, SyAM helps us to get a better hand on intelligent deployment, not only knowing where each machine is, but also how often it’s used and by whom. It’s a very holistic solution.”

As a result of this inventory transparency, Wood is also able to identify what the district’s needs are from a technology perspective each summer when equipment for the following school year is ordered and then deployed.

“SyAM is meeting a lot of our needs in one place and for me that’s been key. Being able to work with SyAM and having them really address the needs of the customer has been wonderful. Nick calls me up regularly to let me know he’s making adjustments, asking me what I need and what I’d like to see happen and we talk it out,” said Wood.

She added, “The interest SyAM in general and Nick and Michael in particular take in understanding what our needs are and how they can better address them, is unique, refreshing and gives us confidence in their continuing ability to deliver useful and responsive solutions on behalf of our entire district community.”

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