asset panda™

Muskegon Area Intermediate School District Saves 100 Hours a Year with Asset Panda

Summary

Since 1962, students in Muskegon, Oceana, Ottawa, and Newaygo county public schools have depended on the services of the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District (MAISD) in Muskegon, Michigan. Supporting the achievements of their students and educators is at the core of MAISD's mission and long-term goals. For MAISD, utilizing technology is a key component to the success of their vision "To be the premier source for quality educational leadership, programs, and services." So, when the district's new IT Director analyzed the Technology Services department's inefficient asset tracking system – which primarily consisted of numerous spreadsheets scattered across multiple departments – he realized the department was hemorrhaging time and lacking a sufficient tool to enable his team to enforce accountability for their expensive IT equipment. It was unanimously decided that it was time for an upgrade.

After implementing Asset Panda, MAISD's Technology Services team experienced:

- Major productivity boosts and time savings from having all their asset information in one place.
- Empowerment in their asset decision making and accountability enforcement.
- Better understanding of disposal requirements by tracking funding sources.
- Efficiency in reporting, auditing, and enhanced compliance.
- Easy and timely access to historical records for transfers and repairs.

MAISD saves 100 hours a year

The Challenge

The responsibility of managing MAISD's 15,000 active user accounts, data center, technical support programs, network services and the assets associated with those services rests on the shoulders of the district's Technology Services team.
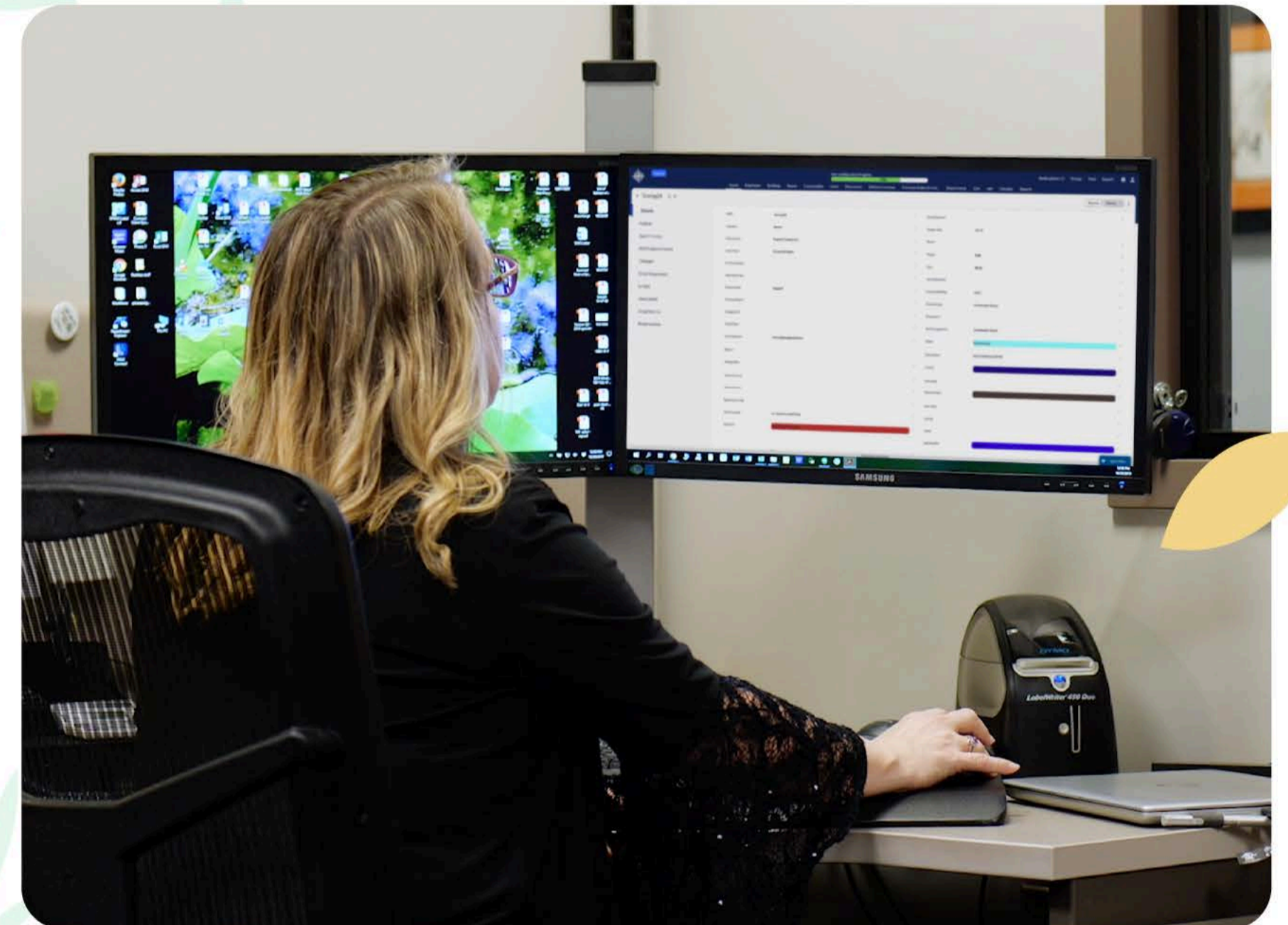
Tracking software and hardware history was the biggest challenge for Departmental Administrative Assistant, Jennifer Carlson, who would spend hours painstakingly sifting through spreadsheets for essential information related to computer equipment. "There was no searchable, complete list of all the necessary information," said Carlson. This system made it difficult to reference when warranty or purchase information was requested, and it was challenging to enforce accountability when expensive items were damaged or missing. This led to frustration and lost time.

"When we serviced equipment, it used to be a big pain to figure out where it came from, who had it and what funding source actually purchased that equipment," said Tim Brown, Director of Technology Services. "Our administration knew we needed something better. An Excel spreadsheet isn't an asset inventory system."

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The Solution

The team created a rubric to help narrow the search for the right solution and cost and customization were the two most important factors. "For K-12 schools, cost is always a big concern for any product we look at," said Brown. "Being able to customize the product is really important to us because we have lots of different data streams coming into the product. We have to know the different funding sources, different districts that are going to be using it and having a condominium sort of build where other districts can have access to the product is also very important."
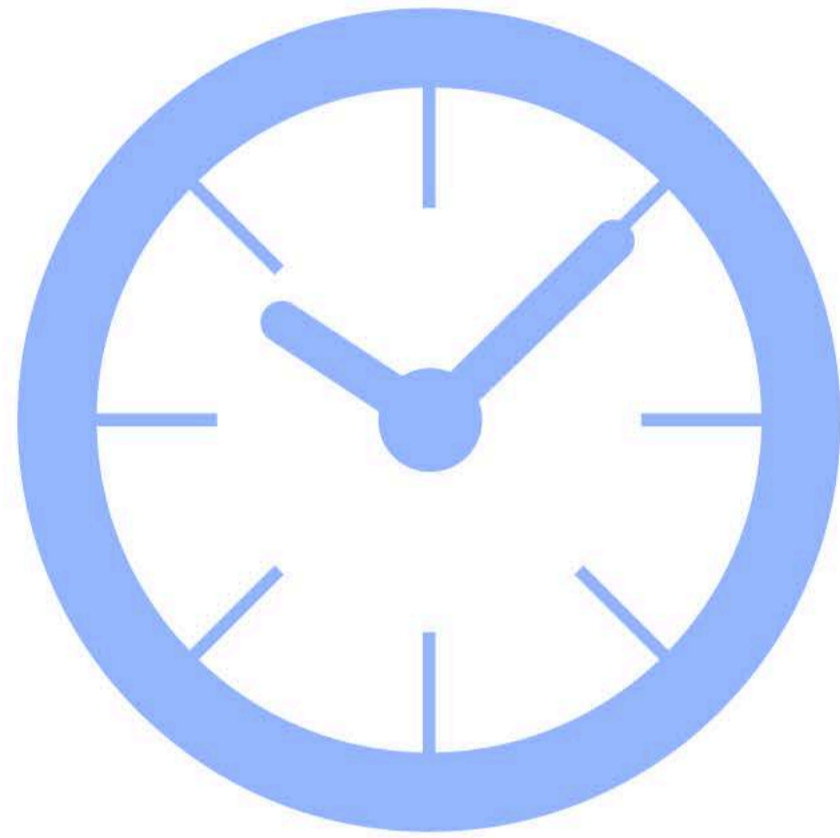
Asset Panda ultimately came out on top. "It was a pretty easy sell." Brown continued. "We were surprised by how customizable it was. We were able to pick and choose what we wanted to do with the system."

Jeffry Potts, PC Technician, commented on the smooth transition from spreadsheets to Asset Panda. "It really wasn't that hard to transition from spreadsheets to the Asset Panda program," he said. "It's ridiculously easy compared to spreadsheets. With spreadsheets, you're constantly trying to edit and modify and change tables and modify everything and with Asset Panda it's already there, all you have to do is just put it in and say 'go'. I don't even think about it."

Carlson also valued the efficiency and empowerment provided by the Asset Panda support team. "I've had other products where it takes 2-3 days to get an answer from support so I really appreciate the speed in which [Asset Panda Support Team members] reply." She said. "I also really like that they teach me how to do things instead of just saying 'Here, I did it for you.'"

The Results

The MAISD Technology Services team started seeing results shortly after implementing Asset Panda. Here are a few of the improvements the team mentioned:

Time Savings

The widespread benefit expressed by the team was the amount of time they saved with Asset Panda.

"Timewise it's a huge savings," said Potts. "I'm not looking at 15 different spreadsheets, I'm looking at one spot."

"We're saving about 100 hours a year with using Asset Panda." said Carlson "The ease of finding information is critical in my role, when someone asks me how old their equipment is or when someone asks me about a staff member who is leaving, it is so easy to be able to pull that information up quickly, where before it would take me a long time to have to dig it up."

Substantial ROI

For many IT Directors, having a solution that not only saves them money but also doesn't cost them a lot of money is the ultimate investment. "Switching over to Asset Panda saved us thousands of dollars over what we were doing before. It's streamlined our process and made it really easy for our end users to know where our assets are," said Brown. "The cost is a huge benefit for us, the product pays for itself. [Asset Panda] is very cost-effective when you think about the amount of assets we're actually tracking."

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Confident Decision Making

MAISD has thousands of assets purchased at separate times through various funding sources, and each of those funding sources has specific directives on how to handle, replace and dispose of those assets. Without accurate information from a trustworthy source, making decisions can be nerve-wracking.

"It's nice to be able to keep track of the different funding sources and different accounts because with certain grants we are required to dispose of things in a certain way," said Carlson. "It's good to have the funding source right in there so we know for sure how to dispose of it."

"Everything has its lifetime and knowing when it's time to replace an item gives us justification to our board when it's time to replace it," said Brown.

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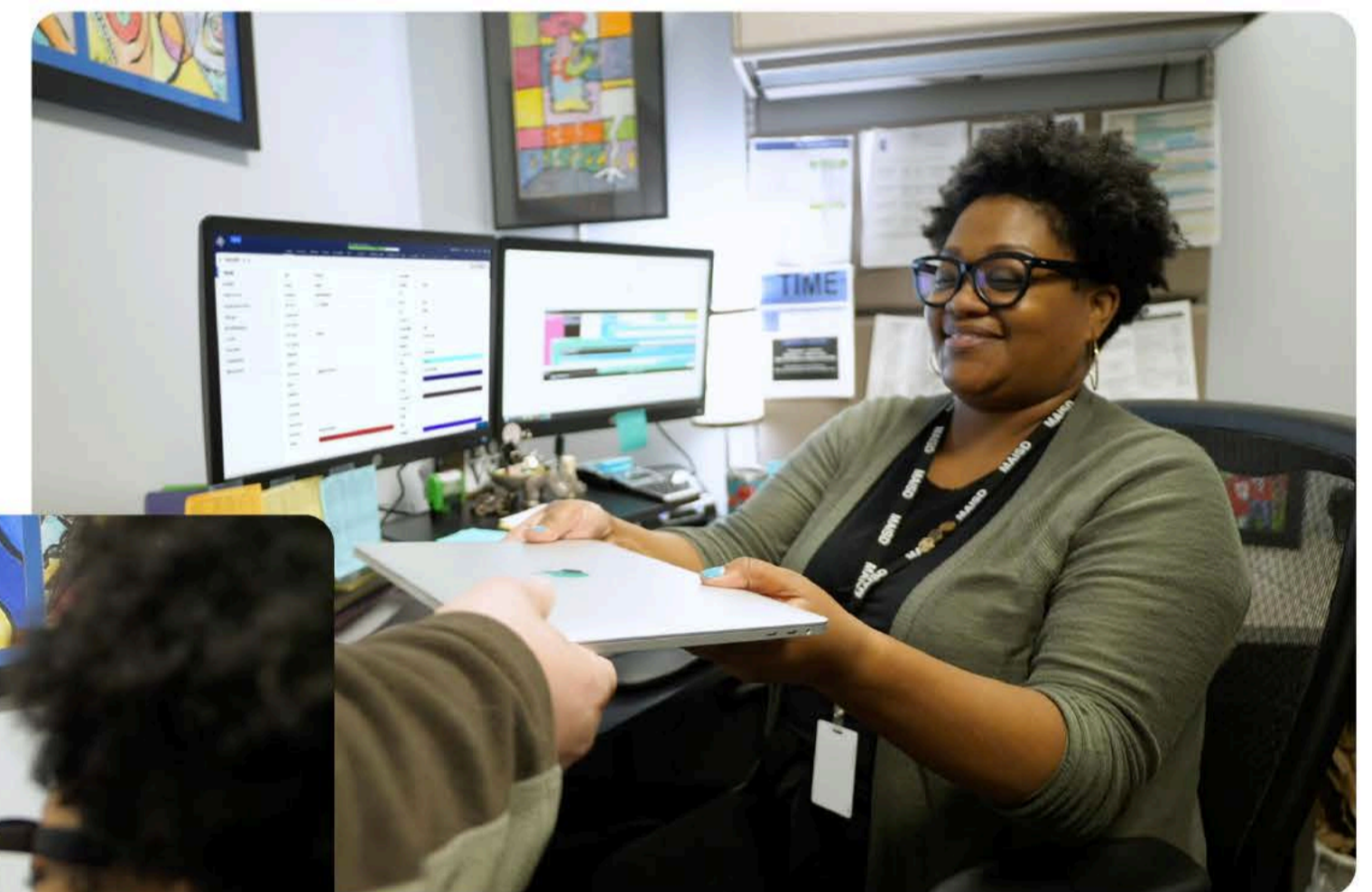> **- Jennifer Carlson, Departmenta Administrative Assistant**

Efficiency Through Data Centralization

As the primary person responsible for purchasing IT equipment and tracking warranty information, Carlson expressed how much easier it's been for her to organize warranty data. "Asset Panda has been great as far as looking up the information for the warranties because I have all the information right in one place. I have the purchase order, order confirmation and the invoice all right there attached to the item. So, when someone has a problem with their device, we can look it up quickly, we know when it was purchased, who the vendor was and what kind of warranty we had on that particular product." she said. "Previously I would have to go through each year's spreadsheets for whatever department it was, and I would have to dig through sometimes multiple years because we didn't have a track of which year it was actually purchased in. So, it would take me probably a half-hour to an hour to dig through old information to find the information that I needed."

Accountability and Reliability

Brown expressed his relief with having a reliable system that he and his users can depend on as a source of truth for managing the district's assets.

"Being able to have a trusted source of where our assets are is very important to me," said Brown. "Knowing what we have and where it is, allows us to better utilize equipment. It's a no brainer." He also conveyed how Asset Panda has benefited their workflow. "It streamlined the whole process. This has really been a carrot to those users to allow us to really dig in deep as to what we're tracking and who we're tracking it for and they're starting to rely on it, which is exactly what we wanted to happen."

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Conclusion

MAISD is only beginning to scratch the surface of the potential impact Asset Panda can provide in the long-term. Seeing what they've been able to accomplish with their IT equipment has inspired the team to expand to facilities maintenance. "Eventually we want to track all our maintenance like for our boilers. So that's our next step," said Carlson. They are now in the process of adding all assets that are worth $500 or more like furniture and other non-IT equipment.

Potts is looking forward to setting up a repair action on the mobile app to help him track screen repairs especially in the early childhood classrooms where he sees the highest turnover rates. "I have repeat offenders!" he exclaimed. "This could be great because I have a principal who really wants me to track screen repairs because we have to budget for them every year."

"We want our users to get the best performance out of what they have and [Asset Panda] helps us do that," said Brown. "As time goes on and we bring more people into the fold, for us to eventually keep track of everything is really important."

Are you inspired by the possibilities these results can offer to your ISD, school or business? Sign up for a FREE guided tour of Asset Panda. You can also call one of our specialists at 855-898-6058 and they can show you how Asset Panda can benefit your unique needs!