CASE STUDY

Optimizing Tax Dollars and Better Serving the Community: How the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning Scaled and Saved with Nerdio

Uncover how a Georgia state government agency increased productivity, improved security, and optimized cloud resources, saving upwards of $30,000 to-date to reallocate to children and families served

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) has a vitally important job ensuring the childcare and early education needs of the state's children and their family are met. The department also oversees federal nutrition programs that put the funds into the hands of facilities that will best serve the children of Georgia. While this is an incredibly important mission, operating in the public sector dictates that DECAL needs to be judicious about how the budget is allocated.

In 2021, the department undertook a digital transformation to migrate from on-prem VMware to Microsoft Azure in an effort to cut costs. With the increase in DECAL remote staff and third-party contractors, the total cost of ownership and total cost of operations to maintain an on-prem footprint no longer made sense.

"WITH THE RAPID SHIFT IN STAFFING, WE NEEDED TO BE ABLE TO SECURELY SCALE FASTER AND HAVE GREATER CONTROL OVER THE ASSETS BEING ISSUED TO CONTRACTORS," SAID FAROUK BAKSH, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY, GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CARE AND LEARNING. "WITH RESOURCE SHORTAGES AND SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES, IT WAS BECOMING PROHIBITIVELY DIFFICULT TO QUICKLY PROVISION NEW CONTRACTORS AND EQUIP THEM WITH THE NECESSARY HARDWARE WHEN WE WERE ON-PREM."

SECURITY AND SAVINGS

DECAL worked with Managed Service Provider (MSP), Dataprise, to transition to Azure and were subsequently introduced to Nerdio Manager for Enterprise. Dataprise truly understood DECAL's business and objectives for the Azure migration. They immediately knew Nerdio had the platform to help DECAL succeed leveraging Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD), Microsoft's cloud VDI service.

"Even during the proof of concept stage, it was obvious how much easier management with Nerdio and AVD was compared to our previous setup," noted Baksh. "We could spin up resources for employees so efficiently while also taking care of security, patch management, and provisioning."

Once the POC was fully deployed with approximately 100 users, DECAL was able to truly experience the Nerdio difference.

To begin, the autoscaling feature was a huge game changer for the department. As DECAL grew, IT was able to ramp up and deploy resources and pools quickly, but also securely, which was of vital importance to its Chief Security Officer.

"NERDIO ENABLED US TO FOCUS SIMULTANEOUSLY ON BOTH OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND THE SECURITY AWARENESS OUR CSO DEMANDS," ADDED BAKSH. "DATA PRIVACY IS VITAL FOR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES LIKE OURS, AND WITH NERDIO MANAGER IT'S NOW SO MUCH EASIER TO PATCH AND HAVE CONTROL OVER SECURITY PROTOCOLS IN A REMOTE ENVIRONMENT COMPARED TO ON-PREM. PLUS UNLIKE MANY PLATFORMS, NERDIO MANAGER IS NOT SOMETHING WE HAVE TO BE HANDS-ON WITH EVERY DAY."

Furthermore, DECAL has found the user-friendly Nerdio Manager interface to be invaluable. As an executive, Baksh isn't regularly using the tool, but can still take a look at the platform's dashboards and see what's going on at scale. He can also track costs for the month and identify opportunities for additional cost savings if a particular resource isn't being consumed.

BETTER SERVING THE COMMUNITY AND STAFF

In the public sector, efficient utilization of resources is imperative. Not only is DECAL accountable to the taxpayer for how it spends money and distributes assets, but the more savings they're able to reap with Nerdio, the more services they're ultimately able to deliver to the children and families of Georgia.

"Every month, Dataprise is able to run reports in Nerdio to continually optimize for DECAL," Baksh marveled. "Of course there were upfront costs to get started with Nerdio, but ultimately we've never paid a penny for it because of the savings the platform provides."

Currently, Nerdio's autoscaling capabilities provide DECAL with an estimated annual savings of more than $30,000, which can then be reallocated to better serve the community. Plus, DECAL is also able to leverage Nerdio directly in delivering new funding sources to the department. Oftentimes in these cases, the team is working with a third party vendor and Nerdio Manager can easily provide them access to the necessary DECAL resources to facilitate the transfer.

On top of the savings, Nerdio has also provided the DECAL team with peace of mind and happier, more productive employees.

"I CAN SLEEP SOUNDLY KNOWING THAT WE COULD GET A NEW PROJECT TOMORROW WITH 500 CONTRACTORS, AND I COULD CONFIDENTLY AND SECURELY DELIVER A NEW POOL AND SCALE IT UP QUICKLY," SAID BAKSH. "AND EVEN BETTER, I NO LONGER HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ACQUIRING NEW LAPTOPS IN THE MIDST OF SUPPLY CHAIN SHORTAGES OR TRACKING ALL OF THE PHYSICAL ASSETS WE ONCE USED TO DEPLOY."

With Nerdio Manager, mission critical contractors can quickly be issued a desktop with the right permissions and access. The process is much more seamless and minimizes the delay on any given project.

This makes the service desk team excited not to have to mess with physical laptops, and operational techs get to benefit directly from using Nerdio and streamlining a lot of their administrative duties.

 "I've gotten positive feedback through every layer of staff that touches Nerdio," concluded Baksh. "And as our department looks to the future, it's clear that Nerdio will be a pivotal part of our IT strategy as the number of remote workers continues to grow in the new normal."

ABOUT NERDIO

Nerdio adds value on top of the powerful capabilities in Azure Virtual Desktop, Windows 365, and Microsoft Intune by delivering hundreds of features that simplify management, ensure efficient operations, and lower Azure compute and storage costs by up to 80% via automation. Enterprise IT professionals can deliver and maintain a wide range of virtual Windows endpoints and Windows applications across hybrid workforces with ease and fine-tune end-user computing (EUC) approaches for maximum effectiveness using powerful monitoring and analytics capabilities.

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