

# Greater Southern Tier BOCES Meets Goals by Improving Retention and Backup Times with ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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**Glenn Hanratty**  
Network Administrator  
Greater Southern Tier BOCES

## Customer Overview

Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) exist in New York State to help school districts better serve their students. School districts throughout New York State depend on BOCES to meet their educational and financial goals by developing shared programs that serve children from all districts regardless of enrollment, income or size of tax base. By focusing on collaboration and cost containment, BOCES help to relieve some of the financial burdens increasingly placed on local taxpayers. Greater Southern Tier BOCES serves 21 school districts in New York with a wide range of programs, including instructional services, instructional support services and management services.

## Limited Retention and Long Backup Windows with Tape

The IT staff at Greater Southern Tier BOCES is responsible for providing end-to-end connectivity for workstations and application support for the school districts it serves. The organization backs up approximately 15TB of data each week but found that retention and long backup times were becoming more and more of a problem as its data continued to grow.

"We have differentiated retention policies for our data, but generally speaking, we like to keep information for between three to eight weeks. We were having difficulty meeting our retention goals and we were going through lots of tape," said Glenn Hanratty, network administrator at Greater Southern Tier BOCES. "Also, our backup times were extremely long, and it was taking close to 70 hours to complete a full backup to tape. We began looking at data deduplication products in an effort to reduce our backup times and our reliance on tape," said Hanratty.

## Post-Process Data Deduplication Provides Average Ratio of 15:1, Backup Window Reduced from 70 to 48 Hours

Greater Southern Tier BOCES selected ExaGrid's disk-based backup system with data deduplication. "ExaGrid's approach

to data deduplication really stood out from the other vendors we considered. We compared products that used in-line data deduplication with ExaGrid's post-process approach and were easily convinced that post-process was the way to go. We felt that the ExaGrid would give us faster backup times because the system writes the data out to disk and then deduplicates it after it hits the landing zone," said Hanratty. "We've been extremely pleased with our backup times and with our data deduplication ratios. The system works very efficiently."

Hanratty noted that since installing the ExaGrid system, the organization has experienced data deduplication ratios averaging 15:1, and backup times for weekly full backups have been reduced from nearly 70 hours to 48 hours.

The ExaGrid system works along with the organization's existing backup application, Symantec Backup Exec. ExaGrid combines last backup compression along with data deduplication, which stores changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies. This unique approach reduces the disk space required by a range of 10:1 to 50:1 or more, delivering unparalleled cost savings and performance.

ExaGrid delivers extremely fast backup performance because data is written directly to disk, and data deduplication is performed postprocess after the data is

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stored to reduce data. When a second site is used, the cost savings are even greater because ExaGrid's byte-level data deduplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

## Easy Installation and Management, Responsive Support

Hanratty said that installing the ExaGrid system was an easy process and that the IT team has been able to reduce the amount of time they spend on managing and administering backups. "The ExaGrid system deduplicates our data at the byte level, so it's extremely effective.

"Installing the ExaGrid system was simple. We unpacked the unit, racked it up, hooked up the cables and then worked with ExaGrid's support team to configure it. After we powered it up, we had it up and running in less than two hours," said Hanratty. "Also, we've found the ExaGrid very easy to administer and maintain. It's relatively maintenance free, doesn't require babysitting, and it notifies us by email if there are any issues that we need to be concerned with. All in all, it's kind of 'set it and forget it.'"

The ExaGrid system was designed to be easy to set up and maintain, and ExaGrid's industry-leading customer support team is staffed by trained, in-house engineers who are dedicated to individual accounts. The system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

"We've had a wonderful experience with ExaGrid's customer support team. They are extremely responsive. I can normally get an answer to any question I have within minutes via email or phone," said Hanratty. "The ExaGrid system makes it a lot easier for me to sleep at night."

The system can be easily expanded to handle more data as the organization's backup demands increase. ExaGrid's GRID computing software makes the system highly scalable, and when plugged into a switch, different sized configurations can be mixed and matched into a single GRID system with

capacities of up to a 100TB full backup plus retention. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

"The ExaGrid system has taken the hassle out of our backups," said Hanratty. "The restores are lightning-fast, our backups now run much faster and more smoothly and we're able to meet or exceed our retention goals," said Hanratty. "When you put those results together with top-notch support and a system that's incredibly easy to operate, it's a no-brainer."

## ExaGrid and Symantec Backup Exec

Symantec Backup Exec provides cost-effective, high performance and certified disk-to-disk-to-tape backup and recovery – including continuous data protection for Microsoft Exchange, SQL, file servers and workstations. High performance agents and options provide fast, flexible, granular protection and scalable management of local and remote server backups.

## Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid is a cost-effective, scalable disk-based backup solution that replaces tape in your nightly backup process, enabling faster and more reliable backups at a price comparable to a new tape library. ExaGrid offers the only disk backup appliance with data deduplication purpose - built for backup that leverages a unique architecture optimized for performance, scalability and price.

The ExaGrid system is a plug-and-play disk backup appliance that works with existing backup applications. ExaGrid's patented zone-level deduplication technology minimizes the amount of data to be stored by storing only the unique bytes across backups instead of storing the redundant data. This unique approach reduces the amount of disk space needed by a range of 10:1 to as high as 50:1 or more, delivering unparalleled performance in a cost-effective solution.

**For more information about ExaGrid, please visit us at [www.exagrid.com](http://www.exagrid.com) or call us at 1-800-868-6985.**

## About ExaGrid Systems, Inc.

Customers worldwide depend on ExaGrid Systems to solve their backup problems—effectively and permanently. ExaGrid's disk-based, scale-out GRID architecture adjusts to increasing backup demands due to constantly growing data volumes. It is the only solution that combines compute with capacity as well as a unique landing zone to permanently shorten backup windows and eliminate expensive forklift upgrades. Learn more at [www.exagrid.com](http://www.exagrid.com).