



School District Stays With ExaGrid-Veeam Solution Due to 'Rock-Solid' Backup Performance

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Bob Bozek
Technical Support Specialist

Customer Overview

School districts and taxpayers statewide depend on the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) to meet their educational and financial goals. There are 19 school districts that are components of Erie 1 BOCES in Western New York. Those districts are able to enroll in a variety of instructional and non-instructional services offered by Erie1 BOCES. For more than 60 years, Erie 1 BOCES has been helping area school districts further contain costs by assisting them with district office functions such as cooperative purchasing, health insurance benefits, policy development and technology services.

Switch to ExaGrid Eases Backup Administration

The IT staff at the Kenmore School District have been backing up data to ExaGrid Tiered Backup Storage for many years. Prior to that, the IT staff used to back data up to LTO-4 tape drives using Veritas Backup Exec. The school district decided to switch to a disk-based backup solution as tape can be difficult to manage. "The backup window with tape was very long. In addition, I had to spend time rotating tapes and had transport the tapes to a disaster recovery (DR) site," said Bob Bozek, technical support specialist for Erie 1 BOCES, assigned to the Kenmore School District.

Bozek attended a Tech Fest held by Erie 1 BOCES where he looked into other backup solutions and decided to switch to ExaGrid and Veeam, which he had heard about through word of mouth from other IT professionals. "Once we had implemented a disk-based solution, it made backups and DR so much easier to manage, and restoring data became a very easy process," he said.

"We've been using the ExaGrid-Veeam solution for years now and it's been rock-solid the whole time. The backups have been so reliable that I really don't have to worry about them," said Bozek. The combination of ExaGrid and Veeam's industry-leading virtual server data protection solutions allows customers to utilize Veeam Backup & Replication in VMware, vSphere, and



Microsoft Hyper-V virtual environments on ExaGrid's Tiered Backup Storage. This combination provides fast backups and efficient data storage as well as replication to an offsite location for disaster recovery. Customers can use Veeam Backup & Replication's built-in source-side deduplication in concert with ExaGrid's disk-based backup system with Adaptive Deduplication to further shrink backups.

No Backup Issues on Mondays

Bozek backs up a large amount of data for the school system, including domain controllers, print servers, student records, SSCM databases, a time clock system, a school lunch system, and the transportation busing system, to name a few.

The data is backed up in daily incrementals and a weekly full. One of the major issues that the ExaGrid-Veeam solution resolved was that the weekly full used to exceed the weekend backup window when the tape

Key Benefits:

- Switching to ExaGrid from tape simplifies backup management
- Weekly fulls no longer exceed weekend backup window
- Deduplication one of ExaGrid's 'most important benefits'
- ExaGrid-Veeam solution provides fast backup and restore performance
- IT staff appreciates working with the same assigned ExaGrid support engineer over the years



solution had been in place. “When we used tape, our weekly full backup jobs used to run all weekend, and there were times that I would come in on Monday, and the backups would still be running until Monday afternoon. With ExaGrid and Veeam, I start the weekly full on Friday evening and it is finished by Saturday night. The daily incrementals are very quick too and usually only take two to three hours.”

ExaGrid writes backups directly to a disk-cache Landing Zone, avoiding inline processing and ensuring the highest possible backup performance, which results in the shortest backup window. Adaptive Deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups so that an RTO and RPO can be easily met. Available system cycles are utilized to perform deduplication and offsite replication for an optimal recovery point at the disaster recovery site. Once complete, the onsite data is protected and immediately available in its full unduplicated form for fast restores, VM Instant Recoveries, and tape copies while the offsite data is ready for DR.

ExaGrid-Veeam Combined Deduplication Saves on Storage

Bozek has been impressed with the deduplication the ExaGrid-Veeam solution is able to achieve. “The deduplication is very helpful. It’s been one of the most important benefits to using the ExaGrid system,” he said.

Veeam uses the information from VMware and Hyper-V and provides deduplication on a “per-job” basis, finding the matching areas of all the virtual disks within a backup job and using metadata to reduce the overall footprint of the backup data. Veeam also has a “dedupe friendly” compression setting which further reduces the size of the Veeam backups in a way that allows the ExaGrid system to achieve further deduplication. This approach typically achieves a 2:1 deduplication ratio.

ExaGrid is architected from the ground up to protect virtualized environments and provide deduplication as backups are taken. ExaGrid will achieve up to 5:1 additional deduplication rate. The net result is a combined Veeam and ExaGrid deduplication rate of upwards to 10:1, which greatly reduces the amount of disk storage required.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides tiered backup storage with a unique disk-cache Landing Zone, long-term retention repository and scale-out architecture. ExaGrid’s Landing Zone enables the fastest backups, restores, and instant VM recoveries. The retention repository offers the lowest cost for long-term retention. ExaGrid’s scale-out architecture includes full appliances in a scalable system. Learn more at www.exagrid.com.

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Proactive ExaGrid Support Keeps System Well-Maintained

Bozek considers ExaGrid’s customer support model one of the best features that ExaGrid provides. “I spend little to no time on backups, which is important as this frees up my time for other tasks. If I have a question about our backups, I am able to call my assigned ExaGrid support engineer. He’s an expert on how Veeam integrates with ExaGrid, which is very helpful,” he said.

“ExaGrid support is so proactive—for instance, if there’s been a drive failure, my support engineer immediately sends me a new drive, I don’t even have to call in. Whenever there is an update available, my support engineer let me know and works on it remotely. I’ve been working with the same support engineer for years, since installation, and I appreciate the consistency and the fact that we’ve been able to build a relationship. That type of support really differentiates ExaGrid from other vendors I’ve worked with such as Dell or HP,” said Bozek. “Over the years we have evaluated our backup environment, especially as I work with different solutions in other school districts, and I always choose to stay with ExaGrid because of the exceptional support I receive.”

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 level 2 engineers who are assigned to individual accounts. The system is fully supported, and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.



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