

Bay Area School District Supports Educators with Faster, More Dependable Operations

Mountain View Los Altos High School District partners with Nutanix to ensure that key services remain available and performing at their best

The Mountain View Los Altos High School District (MVLA) reflects the diversity, ambitions, and spirit of innovation of the Silicon Valley. Serving the communities of Mountain View, Los Altos and Los Altos Hills, it is comprised of two high schools, an alternative high school, an adult education center, the Freestyle Academy for Arts & Technology, and Middle College. As its legacy infrastructure approached end of life, the District migrated to the Nutanix Cloud Platform to improve performance and reliability, while keeping its most critical services dependable and running smoothly with robust disaster recovery.

Challenges

Serving more than 4,500 students, MVLA is committed to providing learning and growth opportunities to empower each of them to reach their full potential. Like most educational institutions, the District depends on its infrastructure to support its key data center operations.

“Our infrastructure serves all of our students, as well as our staff of 700,” said Bob Fishtrom, Director of Information Technology Services, Mountain View Los Altos High School District. Our most important servers reside there, as well as our domain controllers.

When MVLA’s existing VMware platform began to show its age, Fishtrom and his team knew that it was time to migrate to a more modern virtualized infrastructure platform.

“Our VMware and servers were outdated, and we were running out of storage and memory,” said Fishtrom. “Everything was maxed out at full capacity, so we were in dire need of a new infrastructure environment. We wanted to have something that would be cutting edge, from a leader in the industry.”

Industry

Education

Location

Mountain View, CA

Website

www.mvla.net

Key Benefits

- Flexible hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI) empowers small IT team to support critical district services.
- Migration from VMware environment reduces costs and streamlines management.
- Advanced DR maximizes availability of key education services.

Products

- Nutanix Cloud Platform
- Nutanix Cloud Manager
- AHV
- Nutanix Move

Applications

Linux servers

Solutions

Working closely with its system integrator Portola Systems, MVLA chose the Nutanix Cloud Platform featuring Nutanix Cloud Infrastructure (NCI) with Ultimate licensing configuration. This provides a full suite of capabilities, including advanced disaster recovery (DR), full stack security, support for unlimited managed Kubernetes clusters, and more.

“Nutanix was the perfect choice with the technology it offered, its redundancy, and also the support they provide,” said Fishtrom. “We use Nutanix for all of our virtual infrastructure, and all of our servers are stored on it.”

Deployment was smooth and trouble-free, thanks to the support provided by Portola Systems and the Nutanix account team.

“We met up with the Portola team and they spec’d out the servers that we needed for our infrastructure,” said Victor Escatel, Systems Analyst at Mountain View Los Altos High School District. “Once we had all the hardware in place installed and configured, we then used Nutanix Move to migrate from our VMware servers to Nutanix, and the process was fairly simple. For the most part, all of our low-impact servers were migrated within hours.

The IT team found Portola especially effective in helping personalize the new environment to support its specific servers, minimizing any service interruptions.

“We had some initial issues with Linux servers, but we’ve been working with Portola to just spin up new servers on Nutanix and migrate all that information over,” said Escatel. “Overall, it was very simple, which made us happy because we thought it was going to be a long, intensive process to cut everything over—and it really wasn’t.”

Customer Outcomes

Since moving its operations to the state-of-the-art Nutanix Cloud Platform, with HCI as the foundation, MVLA has unlocked better performance, as well as more dependable operations.

“Everything was maxed out on our old infrastructure, and we were starting to struggle with it,” said Escatel. “With Nutanix, everything is much faster. We’re able to spec out our servers to maximum capacity—or to whatever we want—without really affecting performance. For example, one of our servers that our administrators use was running fairly slow, since many people had to log into it. Now everyone has noticed great performance speed using that server.”


The redundant architecture supported by Nutanix is also ensuring resiliency and nonstop availability.

“We have three servers in our data center and three servers in one of our high schools, and a power interruption took the high school offline,” said Fishtrom.

“We realize tremendous cost benefits with Nutanix, and we expect that it will pay us dividends in the future as well, by providing a scalable backbone that will continue to support our needs.

Bob Fishtrom
Director of Information Technology
Services, Mountain View Los Altos
High School District





“However, because of Nutanix’s software and technology, we were able to replicate the data on our three servers at the data center and no one was affected. Performance stayed basically the same and nothing went offline from our end.”

Budget is always a concern for public school districts, and MVLA is dramatically reducing licensing expenses by moving from its VMware hypervisor to the native Nutanix AHV hypervisor.

“When we did the cost analysis for going with Nutanix AHV, it was far better than VMware and the hypervisor stuff we had in the past,” said Fishtrom. “Our account team set up a three-year licensing model with us, which was really favorable, and five years on the hardware side. So we’re really happy with that and Fishtrom and his team are also happy with the training they are receiving, which helps them build in-house knowledge to better support the platform.

“We trained with Nutanix University and it was week long,” said Miguel Calvillo, Network Administrator at Mountain View Los Altos High School District. “Our instructor basically showed us all the ins and outs of Nutanix, and it was really helpful.”

Next Steps

With its Nutanix Cloud Platform in place, the District is now working to strengthen its resiliency with a new disaster recovery (DR) initiative.

“We are using our instance in Nutanix, and we’re contracting now with another company that’s going to help us with proper data replication using the 3-2-1 model—three total copies; two on-prem; and one in the cloud, with guaranteed services to get us backed up within three hours,” said Fishtrom. “We are using the same service that the University of California system uses, so it’s really reputable. In this day and age of cybersecurity advanced threat actors, we feel really good about the decisions we’re making, and Nutanix is a huge part of that.”

Learn more at www.nutanix.com

Partner/Customer

Founded in 1994, Portola Systems continues to evolve as a leading computer Network Engineering and Information Technology Consulting firm. The firm focuses exclusively on computer network support, computer network administration, systems engineering, and LAN, WAN and Enterprise Network design and implementation for small, medium and large organizations. Portola Systems’ staff dedicates countless hours to improving the quality and value of the information technology service offerings provided.

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