

## HOWARD - SUAMICO SCHOOL DISTRICT

### DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



**HOWARD-SUAMICO**  
S C H O O L D I S T R I C T  
SERVING • LEARNING • ACHIEVING – TOGETHER

### HOW DID THE DISTRICT DECIDE ON THE TECHNOLOGY DEVICE?

To help guide our decision on which device would help meet the District's *Digital Transformation* goals, a team of educators researched a variety of options.

During the process HSSD analyzed the success of one of the most acclaimed 1:1 laptop district in the nation, Mooresville-Graded (MG) School District located in suburban Charlotte, NC. Similar to the Howard-Suamico School District, Mooresville Graded is high achieving and low spending.

The HSSD *Digital Transformation* is working to further transform instructional practices by integrating the tools of technology to better prepare students with the 21st century skills of collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking / problem-solving, and digital citizenship.

By equipping students with 21st century tools, the District can better promote college and career readiness in the global knowledge and information age. Ultimately, students will utilize these 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in the workforce and through this initiative we will help them become innovative problem solvers.

As the District continued to review its device options, our team analyzed many factors including the functionality, efficiency, ease of use, and reliability. Based on research, our past history with Windows based PC products, and internal discussions concerning the goal of transforming the teaching and learning process, a decision was made to move forward with the MacBook Air laptop.

### WHY THE MACBOOK AIR?

The December 2012 edition of *Consumer Reports* (widely regarded as an objective third party source of information on consumer products) ranks the MacBook Air as the “Best Thin-And-Light Laptop.” It says, “This thin-and-light Mac laptop was an excellent performer. Battery life was very long, providing well over a workday’s worth of

juice...Features include a 128 –gigabyte solid-state drive, which uses less power and accesses data more quickly.”

The overview indicates that “Apple was among the most reliable desktop brands and had the best technical support.” It accentuates the point saying, “It’s hard to generalize about computer brands for several reasons, including the fact that the configuration, or the components a specific model has, determines a computer’s speed and performance. Both of those factors are heavily weighted when we figure a model’s score. ***Even so, one brand stands out as the best all-around choice: Apple. Year after year, its laptops and desktops have done very well in our tests, which have led us to almost invariably recommend Apple models.*** Apple also excels in tech support. For reliability, its laptops have been comparable to Windows-based PCs, and its desktops have had fewer repairs. Though Apple has had consistently high scores, we’ve found more variation in performance among Window-based PCs. (note: highlighting, italics and underscoring added for emphasis).

Tech support in general is among the lowest-rated services in all of the surveys conducted by the Consumer Reports National Research Center. *But that doesn’t apply to Apple*, which beat all the makers of Windows-based PCs covered in our most recent survey.

Apple solved user problems 73 percent of the time, compared with 61 percent for its nearest competitor, Dell. Apple also had higher marks for phone and online support. Apple continues to offer unlimited free support at Apple Stores after its 90-day free phone support runs out.”

In addition, the District utilized information from studies on the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO). According to a study conducted by the VDC Research Group, which is a market research and strategy consulting firm, “To determine “true” TCO, it is imperative to consult both hard (direct) and soft (indirect) costs. Hard costs consist of hardware and software costs...Soft costs are more difficult to determine and include expenses associated with operating and maintaining any mobile solution. VDC’s research shows that over 70% of the cost of owning a mobility solution can come after the initial purchase. This underscores the significance of taking a long-term view during the initial selection process.”

By analyzing various research and device options we were able to make an informed decision. As the VDC study noted, “Having a full view of the cost of a mobile computing deployment over its lifetime provides insight into the type of solution that needs to be deployed.”

In short, the District is confident that the Mac book Air will meet performance expectations and provide the reliability and functionality needed to achieve the District's mission of "ensuring that our students have the knowledge and skills to succeed in a changing world."