Network Services – Active Directory Services Reorganization Q & A (Feb 2004)

Q: What is the active directory reorganization project and why is it taking place?

A: There are currently two separate forests in the Miami-Dade County Public
Schools (MDCPS) active directory environment (MDCPS and Dadeschools.net).
When Win 2000 school location domains were initially formed they were placed
into the MDCPS forest as "child domains" and separate sites. This was done due
to certain technical limitations (at the time) as well as to accommodate
management philosophies also in-force at the time. The Dadeschools.net forest
was setup as a single domain forest for e-mail and future expansion

The technical limitations have been eliminated with the "NAT at the core"
conversion. This provides us with the required technology by which we can
now reduce or eliminate the number of child domains, reorganize these domains
into organizational units (OU's) within a single domain.

In effect, all sites currently defined in the MDCPS forest will be migrated to
the single domain "Dadeschools.net" forest.

Q: How long will it take to migrate all schools and other locations?

A: There are many, many different events that must take place. We have many
sites to convert. The projected time-frame is over the next few years.

**Q: Will all schools have to undergo this transition? If so, how will I know when
my school is ready?**

A: Yes – all schools (as well as administrative sites – Transportation etc.) will
be scheduled to undergo this transition.   Every "candidate site" will have
to meet certain "pre-qualifying" conditions. These conditions will be covered
in detail below. When a site has met these conditions – ITS staff will work
with the site's computer technician to perform the transition.

**Q: If I am going from a "child domain" (in MDCPS) to an "organizational unit"
(in Dadeschools), am I losing control of my school site network?**

A: Absolutely not!!! Once your site has made the transition, you will continue to
maintain control over your site network and servers. This will include all data,
file sharing and application (computerized instruction, web server etc) servers.
Because all sites will now be part of the "same domain", ITS will be responsible
for managing all **EMPLOYEE ACCOUNTS.** These will be created, moved and
deleted "automatically" by ITS to reflect changes in personnel at your site.

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Q: Why is ITS taking control of the employee accounts?

A: Our official Email system is now "network based". To better manage all employees access to this system, a centralized management philosophy is required. In addition, other application systems will be deployed in the future that will be made available to school site personnel using the Dadeschools.net forest as a foundation. Access to these new applications will be controlled through your Dadeschools employee account.

Q: Is ITS ready to begin to assist sites in migrating to Dadeschools.net?

A: Yes. The server infrastructure at ITS required to facilitate the migration has been installed and is operational. All new schools (2 scheduled for March 2004) will automatically be placed into the Dadeschools.net forest.

Q: What must take place at my school for my site to be ready to be migrated to the Dadeschools forest?

A: Your school must satisfy certain "candidate site" conditions as follows:

- Acquire an ITS controlled GC/DC server.
  This is a "special server" designed to function as the Global Catalog (GC) and Domain Controller (DC) for your school site. This server will be managed and Controlled by ITS staff. **New servers for 90% ERATE (5) schools have already been funded and are expected to be available 1st quarter of 2004.** ITS will work with your school staff to suggest other ways of funding or obtaining a server to meet this need if you did not qualify via ERATE 5. ITS is working with server hardware vendors to provide a "fixed low price" for a suitable server that your school can purchase to fill this need.

- Prepare ALL school Win 9X (95 & 98) desktops by downloading and installing the Microsoft "active directory services client". This is a **FREE** program that facilitates Win 9X desktops working in an active directory environment. You can download this program directly from Microsoft's website, or from the Windows 2000 Server CD. In addition, ITS staff will be offering alternate ways for you to obtain this program. Also, you should rename your desktop PCs with the 1st four characters being your school location code ie. 0041-XXXXXX………. This will help both you and ITS staff identify your workstations and place them under your control in the appropriate OU.

Once the above major conditions have been met, ITS can move quickly to schedule your school site to be moved into the Dadeschools forest.

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Q: What will happen during the migration process?

A: During the migration ITS will DCPROMO down your domain controllers out of the MDCPS Forest. All servers will then be added as member servers to the "DADESCHOOLS.NET" domain and placed in a OU under your control.

Q: What will I (site technician) need to do after the migration?

A: After your site has been migrated to "DADESCHOOLS.NET" the technician at the school will need to do the following:

- Modify access to shared resources, e.g. mailboxes, printers and file shares.
- Windows 95/98 machines must be re-configured to logon to the "DADESCHOOLS" domain.
- Windows 2000 and XP machines will need to join the "DADESCHOOLS" domain.
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Q: How will the ITS – school site coordination take place? Who will be my main Contact with ITS?

A: ITS Region Project Managers and the Region Technology Coordinators will work together with K-12 sites to ready the school for migration.

Q: What about active directory policies? Will I be forced to conform to policies that may not be suitable for my users?

A. Group policies will be developed by a committee of interested site technicians and ITS staff. Multiple policies will be developed which will deal with the vast majority of end user requirements. Once established existing policies can be modified based upon the approval of the committee members.

Q: If my site will be an OU in Dadeschools, will I be forced to follow a specific OU model?

A: ITS will setup four "strategic" OU containers in the Dadeschools.net domain; District Users, Groups, Computers, and Students. Staff at the school site will be given control over the school's Groups, Computers and Students OUs. They will be given limited   access in the District Users OU. The local tech can further sub-define those OUs that they control accordingly. In other words, the OU model at the school site can be as simple or complex as the site tech wishes.

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Q: Will I have to "give up" my school site Exchange server?

A: NO!!! If you provide Email to students – you should continue to use your schools site Exchange server for this function. YOU MUST REMEMBER THOUGH, THAT THE OFFICIAL DISTRICT EMAIL FOR ALL EMPLOYEES (INCLUDING TEACHERS) IS DADESCHOOLS.NET.

Q: If my site does NOT expect to obtain a server via the ERATE program, what are some of my other options for acquiring a server that can be used as my GC/DC?

A: If your site does not qualify for an Erate 5 server, here is what you will have to do:

Arrange funding to purchase the required server. As mentioned above, your ITS Region Project Manager and Region Technology Coordinator have been briefed on how to help the school site purchase the required server. Server specs are available from them if you wish to view the particulars. ITS staff will be attending "special site technician" assembly meetings scheduled for late February 2004 to provide "one more" overview of the migration process and answer any remaining questions. Information on how to purchase this server will of course be covered.

Q: What if I have additional questions that have not been answered in this Q&A, who can I contact?

A: Send an Email to ADREORG@DADESCHOOLS.NET. A reply will be sent ASAP.