

MMS Keeps Data Secure When Disaster Strikes

“Your school is on fire.”

It’s the phone call that no school administrator wants to get, but this was the one that Trina Jones, Director of Operations for Global Leadership Academy Charter School received on the morning of January 9, 2011. By the time she reached the site in the west part of Philadelphia, the building where she spent her working days for the past five years was fully engulfed in flames.

Although the school personnel regularly conducted fire drills and were well practiced in evacuating the building in only a matter of minutes, they were grateful that classes were not in session when the fire broke out. “It was a blessing that no one was in the building at the time,” said Jones, who watched as firefighters worked in wintry conditions to extinguish the five-alarm blaze.

The fire had begun somewhere in the basement and quickly spread through the building with such intensity that it forced the firefighters to retreat to the ice-covered street, lest the building collapse on them. By the end of the day, the building was deemed a total loss.

“There was nothing left, no desks, not even the floor,” said Jones upon inspecting the remains of the building. While it would be difficult enough to relocate the school and replace the books, furniture, and materials lost in the fire, the retrieval of student data was one headache that Jones did not have to suffer.

Global Leadership Academy’s student information is hosted off-site at Computer Resources’ data center. “Oh my goodness! Having Computer Resources host our MMS data was the best decision we ever made,” said Jones. Although computer equipment was lost in the building that burned, Jones could access all the information she needed with her own personal computer. The physical building was gone, but the student data and records remained intact in the cloud.

Jones then used the information from the database to keep students and parents informed about the school’s status. “We eventually had to perform some reconstruction of paper documents that were saved locally, such as contracts and employee files,” said Jones. “But had we not used Computer Resources’ hosting service, all our student data would have been destroyed.”

A hosted MMS solution provides peace of mind, keeping your student data in a state-of-the-art secure data center. In addition to providing reliable uptime, data center security features include redundant climate control, fire suppression, multiple entrances for diverse fiber optic connectivity, separate pathways for interconnectivity to upstream carriers, security system and video monitoring, 24/7 monitoring of all connections, uninterruptible power supplies, and a back-up generator for prolonged outages.

The School District of Philadelphia rented one of their buildings to Global Leadership Academy Charter School as a temporary location for the 330 students who were displaced by the fire. This freed the Global Leadership Academy’s administrators to search for a new home for their school. Incredibly, classes resumed only ten days after the fire. Students had accrued enough classroom instruction time, so they didn’t even need to make up for the lost days at the end of the school year.

This fall, Global Leadership Academy Charter School will be moving into a brand new building with their student database intact. The staff will be looking at their catastrophic emergency plan with the wisdom of experience. “Our safety committee has already discussed what changes we may want to implement so that everyone will know how to react in case of another emergency.”

Using Computer Resources to host your MMS student information system is just one way that we can help you with your school’s disaster preparedness plans. Hopefully none of our clients will experience the same loss as the Global Leadership Academy, but it is reassuring to know that your data is secure, should you get the phone call that no school administrator wants to get.



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