

## MMS Training Makes an Impression

The MMS training announcement arrives via email, as usual. Sometimes you forward it to an interested colleague, but more often, it gets ignored along with the other notices that fill your inbox during the school year. The notification about training opportunities for you and your staff may be an intangible benefit offered by your Student Information System provider, but it can make your student data management a whole lot more effective. The question is - will you send it to the virtual recycling bin with the click of the mouse, or will it make a difference in how efficiently your school manages a crucial component of its operations?



After spending a week at MMS Summer Camp in Grantville Pennsylvania, Dr. Joe Petrosino grabs his water bottle and drags himself to the exit.

"There's no more room left in my brain," he says, at the end of another day where the technological side of state reporting, assessments, scheduling, and competencies have taken a front seat.

"I needed this training," he says. "I needed to know all of this for my job. I'm putting in proposals for more MMS software as soon as I get back to the office. I want it all."

Although Petrosino has only recently been appointed to the position of Somerset County Vocational and Technical School's Director of Pupil Services, he has been using MMS for the past six years.

"I had no idea about the functions MMS was capable of doing, no idea how powerful it was," he remarks, amazed by his training experience.

According to those who field support calls for MMS, attending intensive sessions, such as those offered at Summer Camp, ensure that schools get the most out of their student information system - a system that longtime users often take for granted, and a system that new users may find unfamiliar at first. All too often, administrators assume that they are using the software to its fullest capacity, and that their skilled staff and new hires are well-trained in the use of the latest technology.

"Clients who are knowledgeable and informed have untold abilities to manage their data in the ways that it best benefits them," says Beth Elliott, a MMS training specialist who both answers the support line, and provides hundreds of training webinars and conferences to MMS clientele across the country. MMS training professionals want all MMS users to be aware of the system's capabilities, the same way that they know their own personal electronics like a cellphone or an iPod.

For the past decade, Beth has been a part of the MMS staff that has offered extensive week-long training experiences, such as Summer Camp, held at venues within the geographical regions served by Computer Resources, developers of the MMS Student Information System. The Barrington, New Hampshire company offers comprehensive training for its products in the form of conferences, webinars, on-site, or virtual instruction, almost every day of the year. Summer Camp represents only one of their many opportunities to learn more about managing student data.

"The conference is only part of the training," says Petrosino, who spent six years running the Special Education Department before being promoted into his new position. "You come there to work. There's no suit and tie, we are dressed as civilians. This allows for an increased level of comfortable interaction with the trainer. Our trainer, Beth Elliott, tied herself into knots to fulfill our requests for training in the topics in which we needed training. I liked the way she made us feel at ease."

Beth sees an increase in the level of skilled MMS use when clients attend an intensive week-long training. "They're using the software to take advantage of the ways it can help them the most. Sometimes, they may not notice when an enhancement has been added to the software. Through intensive training sessions, they can learn how those enhancements can increase their capabilities to plan new data driven projects and improve the accuracy of existing projects in their school or district."

When schools invest in training their people, the opportunities for using the software and adding new modules becomes clear. New possibilities become evident. Administrators can achieve more if they use their student data more efficiently, even in a time when budget cut-backs threaten to disrupt data driven planning. Efficient data management can help districts realize savings in both dollars and in time.

"I was uncertain from the start," says Petrosino, regarding his skepticism at attending a week-long training, "After all, teachers make the worst students sometimes. But the trainer took our individual situations, and made it happen."

MMS's personalized customer service makes their extended training so successful. While the training covers all major functions of student information management, it can be customized to the individual's needs, with one-on-one attention from the trainer, if necessary. Following a rigid agenda might be easier for the trainer, but it doesn't allow for the kind of personalization that makes MMS training stand out from the crowd - another reason why you shouldn't ignore those MMS emails when they arrive.

Attending an extended MMS training session does more than get you out of the office for a week, it gives you the keys to finding out what your school's strengths and weaknesses are with regard to data management, the data that you can use to reach your current goals and to formulate new ones. Will you be as thrilled as Dr. Petrosino? There's only one way to find out. When that training announcement arrives in your inbox, you have a decision to make. Sign up and get the most out of your MMS.

From our Fall 2010 MMS  
Newsletter



Computer Resources, LLC