MMS

A case study about the value of academic continuity

Student Information for Academic Continuity

Information Technology professionals are the backbone of school operations, responsible for all aspects of data management from attendance to state reporting. However, they are only human and can be affected by traumatic life events through no fault of their own. When catastrophic events strike these personnel and the data they manage, MMS offers valuable guidance and comprehensive planning so school administrators can effectively regain and maintain control over their student information.

Contents

Student information for Academic Continuity

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David Evon
Berlin Public Schools
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Your school is on fire

Trina Jones, Director of Operations for Global Leadership Academy Charter School, received the call on the morning of January 9, 2011. By the time Jones reached the site in the west part of Philadelphia, flames had fully engulfed the school.

Although the staff regularly conducted fire drills and practiced evacuating the school, Jones was 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," Jones said as she watched as firefighters work in wintry conditions to extinguish the five-alarm blaze. By the end of the day, the building was a total loss.

"There was nothing left, no desks, not even the floor," Jones said, 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 problem that Jones did not have to solve.

Global Leadership Academy's cloud-based student information, MMS OnLine, sits in a secure data center, allowing school operations to continue despite the fire. "Having Computer Resources host our MMS data was the best decision we ever made," Jones said.

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. Jones was able to communicate with the students to keep them informed about the school's status. "Had we not used Computer Resources' hosting service, all our student data would have been destroyed."

Managing flu season

Every winter, the cold and flu season affects students, teachers, and administrators alike. There's nothing like a school environment with germ-laden door handles and computer mice to help spread a virus. Keeping sick students and personnel at home is the best way to prevent the spread of disease, but even this isn't perfect. The spread of flu can decimate a school's attendance on any given day. Without attending regular classes, students can fall behind on schoolwork, diminishing their own achievements and their school's measure of success.

MMS Web Portals provide a link of communication between teachers and their students to maintain academic continuity. When absent students remain in contact with their teachers, they can keep up with classwork and retain their subject knowledge. Teachers can post assignments, school bulletins, progress reports, and announcements to keep absent students informed about the curriculum. With the MMS Parent Portal, parents enjoy convenient Internet access to real-time information about their student's missed classes.

According to Mark Gerchman, principal of Susquehanna Community School, "The MMS Parent Portal provides secure self-service access for all stakeholders who need to be informed about a student's progress. I would tell anyone considering MMS that it's a no-brainer."

Improved communication is an important goal for Gerchman and his colleagues as they strive to make good use of technology to communicate with parents and students, especially during the flu season.

Critical staff support

No matter how critical a role is in a school, people can find themselves faced with serious health challenges at any time. Computer Resources has supported a number of our users through critical times, thankfully with many happy results. In many of these cases, it's our sales team that provides first point of contact.

"The server had gone down on the same day that the database administrator was trying to deal with this life-changing medical issue. In the midst of the crisis, the school's database suffered from a networking problem that no one at the school could resolve," Pickens said.

While frantic stakeholders struggled to bring the school online, Pickens orchestrated a plan to transfer the student eved an external hard drive that contained the school's data.

The Computer Resources staff went to work, uploading the data and converting the student information system to an online version. In less than 24 hours, the new version of the student information system was running smoothly, freeing the client to focus on a journey back to wellness and enabling the students to continue uninterrupted learning.

For the long term

Information technology personnel often develop an intrinsic sense of ownership over the data they manage. Many of these personnel have served their schools for decades, long before the computerization of student information. While they have the respect of their colleagues and a legacy of superior performance, they are not immortal.

In the United States, school districts rely on information technology specialists to keep their schools running smoothly. Every necessary school function, from daily attendance to sending transcripts, passes through the student information system every day. A trained staff can only do so much to mitigate the interruption of data flow in the event of the sudden death of a key staff member.

"That's where the MMS support department comes in," said Patrick Grace, Director of Services at Computer Resources. "There's no guarantee that your current school staff will be able to take the reins of a long-term information technology specialist overnight, but the MMS support team can help your school make the transition to new personnel."

The Computer Resources staff is committed to providing the support services needed for managing student information. They will do everything in their power to oversee the resolution of a school's technology crisis. According to David Evon of Berlin Public Schools, "MMS has the best support and customer service I've encountered in the database industry." Computer Resources offers all levels of support to keep your student information system operating at peak levels, even when your school loses key personnel.

The MMS solution provides peace of mind, keeping your student data safe and accessible

With online hosting and a dedicated team, the MMS student information system allows you to continue the work of running your school, no matter what the crisis or tragedy.

Since 1978, Computer Resources has been servicing the educational community and has earned an outstanding reputation for providing powerful and reliable school management software. They have been meeting the needs of public school districts and private, independent schools with secure, easy to use, and feature-rich software using the most advanced Microsoft technology. The company's team of dedicated professionals, including former educators, specializes in meeting your school's needs. They believe that focusing on quality, reliability, innovation, and complete customer satisfaction through outstanding personal service is the best way to help their clients serve their constituencies.