



Wilson School

CompleteCloud tested with school fire

Background:

For more than 100 years, The Wilson School has been an innovative and vital component in the educational landscape of St. Louis. The small, private elementary school itself occupies a historical building in the suburb of Clayton, Missouri.

Through its commitment to innovation and education, The Wilson School's students consistently rank in the top 10th percentile in testing nationally.

Problem:

While ahead of the curve in educational standards, The Wilson School had suffered from using outdated technology. They lacked several components to help the school and its staff function more efficiently:

- A shared file storage system for all business and education documents
- A modern education registrar system and database
- Upgraded accounting software to move operations in-house instead of outsourced
- Remote access to technology
- Updates to hardware and Microsoft Office licenses
- A disaster and continuity plan

In assessing their own technology needs, The Wilson School found that the capital investment required would be extensive and their next major capital campaign was still a couple years away. Upgrades would have to come from operating funds and The Wilson School found themselves at a crossroads — until they looked into CompleteCloud, a solution that would have to soon be put to the ultimate test.

Solution:

The CompleteCloud's Utility Model allowed The Wilson School to upgrade all of their hardware and software, created a centralized SharePoint server and hosted the new registrar and associated database. The teachers and staff could now access their computers from anywhere because the entire technology platform was secured in an enterprise data center. All of their goals were accomplished with no capital investment, making it a huge victory for The Wilson School.

"We made a strategic decision to move onto CompleteCloud and start leveraging technology instead of being frustrated by it. That decision, along with the hard work of the staff and the support and patience of our families in the aftermath of this fire, has led to this tremendous success story here at Wilson."
- Head of School, Thad Falkner





Put Into Action: The Wilson School Recovers From a Devastating Fire

Not long after their decision to rely on CompleteCloud, The Wilson School was forced to put their new technology and disaster plan into place. On the verge of their centennial celebration, the Head of School awoke to an alarm and found the building filled with smoke. The next morning, a significant portion of the school was in ruins.

Because The Wilson School's entire technology was now in the cloud, none of their functionality, data or computing power was lost. The school's phone was immediately rerouted to the Head of School's cellphone to speak with anxious parents. Teachers had access to their computers remotely and were freely able to communicate with parents and fellow staff.

While The Wilson School's historic building was being repaired, temporary locations were found to continue the school year. Because the staff had very little to do to setup their technology solutions and business operations, they could focus on creating a welcoming experience for children and parents — their technology just kept working. Through the transition, they did not lose a single file or document. They simply plugged in new Thin Clients and picked up right where they left off.

Over the course of the nine months, the team continued to leverage the CompleteCloud as they bounced from their replacement location and their construction site during the rebuild. It was a critical time for The Wilson School staff as they were entering their 100th year and had been planning the most significant capital campaign the school had ever executed. They were planning a new technology wing that would put them in the forefront of all private schools in the nation. A fire would not impede their progress.

Future:

Less than one year after the fire, The Wilson School opened its doors again to its students, families and staff. Every single student enrolled at the time of the fire walked back through those reopened doors. Because of a successful capital campaign, the new technology wing opened along with the rest of the rebuilt and remodeled school. The pride of the Technology wing is its Immersion Wall, 24 feet by 7 feet of monitors (18 of them in all) curved on a nine-degree radius. Students can now do PowerPoint book report presentations in front of their class and Skype researchers at NASA.

A decision five years ago to upgrade its technology has this small, private elementary school positioned to be a leader in education for the next 100 years. Head of School Thad Falkner reflects, "This could have easily been the story about how a small school closed its doors after 100 years. Instead it's about a school that's poised for the next 100 years."

