PowerSchool

RESTING EASY IN THE CLOUD:

Lake Highland Experiences Lasting Benefits with PowerSchool Hosting

After using on-premise servers to store data for several years, Lake Highland decided it was time for a change.

Lake Highland Preparatory School in Orlando, Florida, is an academically rigorous pre-K-12 private school that prides itself on achievement. The school, which serves 1,950 students, offers 27 AP courses in a well-rounded learning environment.

The school utilized on-premise servers to store data until June, 2017, when it switched to PowerSchool Hosting; the move helped cut costs (to the tune of an expected $20,000-plus over five years), save dozens of hours of staff time, and improve data reliability.

On-Premise Hosting Stressed and Disrupted Staff

Lake Highland began to explore cloud hosting after growing frustrated with frequent software crashes on its current servers. The school's on-premise infrastructure couldn't keep up with the system requirements and improvements to its SIS software, and administrative staff and students paid the price.

"It was going down at least once or twice a month, if not more," says **Carolyn Stewart**, Lake Highland's technology manager. **"It would just crash and stop working, sometimes during the school day.** Other times it would crash during the night. When that happened, we'd have to restart and try to get it going before the teachers and students arrived, which usually took an hour. You couldn't leave the office until it was up and running. Sometimes we had to restart it several times because it wouldn't always come up the first time."

AT A GLANCE

Challenge

Frequent software crashes; Rising costs; Demands on administrative staff; Time-consuming manual updates

Decision

PowerSchool Cloud Hosting

Results

Significant cost savings; Fewer disruptions to students and educators; Less stress on tech staff; Better data security; Improved reliability

Planned updates didn't always go smoothly, either. They were so time consuming, that tech staff sometimes had to work on off days to avoid disrupting school operations.

"Updates were generally performed after hours," Stewart says. "If it was a big update, we would install it on a weekend or during the summer."

That sort of headache, which pulled IT staff from other important projects, wasn't the only problem with self-hosting. Lake Highland also faced a hefty price tag for a new server, which, coupled with ongoing maintenance and security costs, was a significant expense.

An Easy Move to Cloud Hosting

Lake Highland was initially hesitant to switch from on-premise to cloud hosting due to security concerns. The school takes its responsibility to protect sensitive student and employee information seriously, and decision-makers were worried that moving to the cloud would increase the risk of exposure.

"I was not comfortable with putting our data where other people could possibly get it and gather information," Stewart says.

> "PowerSchool can provide better security than we can."
>
> **CAROLYN STEWART**
> Technology Manager,
> Lake Highand
> Preparatory School, FL

But PowerSchool's commitment to security—hosting customers are backed by a dedicated security team that adheres to the industry's highest security standards—caused the school's administrators to reconsider.

An analysis of the total cost of on-premise hosting compared to the cloud also contributed to Lake Highland's choice.

"For a private school, it just became too costly," Stewart says. "We felt like going hosted would be cheaper all the way around. We were able to remove the server in our office, which allowed us to eliminate our extra AC unit. This made our office quieter and gave us more room."

Lake Highland began migrating its data from an on-premise server to the cloud at 8 a.m. on Thursday, June 1. With the help of PowerSchool's implementation team, the school exported all of its data by 9:41 a.m.

"It went very well," Stewart says. "The PowerSchool team did everything. They took the data and completed the migration smoothly and efficiently." Lake Highland received a letter officially welcoming it to PowerSchool Hosting later that same day.

Numerous Improvements

Nearly a year has passed since Lake Highland made the move to the cloud, and the school continues to reap big benefits.

"It's been great," Stewart says. "We have PowerSchool set to do automatic updates, which frees us to do other projects."

"Having that burden off our plate is wonderful. I don't have to think about it anymore. We don't spend any time managing it and we don't have to do any server updates."

Improved efficiency hasn't sacrificed performance, either. From strong security to fast data access, Stewart has been pleased with how PowerSchool Hosting handles data.

"It's very reliable," Stewart says. "I feel the security is good and I have not had any issues or complaints. I feel like the data is more secure than it was here."

Lake Highland has also benefited from a sizable boost to its bottom line.

The school expects to save north of $20,000 over a five-year period because it no longer foots the bill for on-premise hosting expenses, such as:
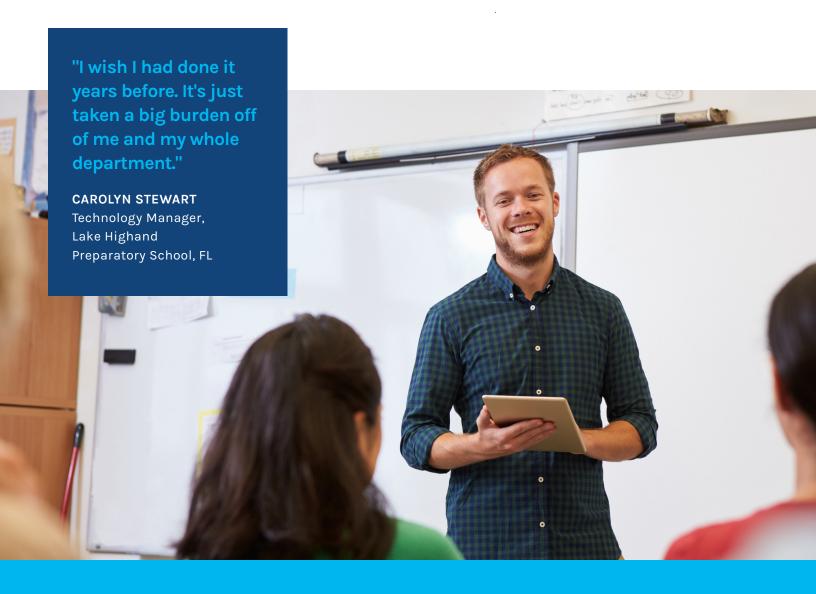
- **Server upgrades**
- **Cooling and power**
- **SSL/TSL Certificate**
- **Next-generation firewall/DDoS protection/antivirus protection**
- **Client-access license fees**

The Right Move

After seven years of hosting student and staff data in on-premise servers, Lake Highland Prep made the move to the cloud in June, 2017. It hasn't looked back since.

Staff no longer has to put in dozens of hours outside of the normal school day on SIS updates, the school's data is more secure, and Lake Highland has increased its technology ROI.

The school's only regret? That it didn't make the move sooner.

> "I wish I had done it years before. It's just taken a big burden off of me and my whole department."
>
> **CAROLYN STEWART**
> Technology Manager,
> Lake Highand
> Preparatory School, FL

At PowerSchool, we believe in the simple truth that every student deserves the best opportunities in life.

That's why our mission is to power the education ecosystem with unified technology that helps educators and students realize their potential, in their way. From the back office to the classroom to the home, PowerSchool helps schools and districts efficiently manage instruction, learning, grading, attendance, assessment, analytics, state reporting, special education, student registration, and Finance/HR/ERP. Today, we're proud to be the leading provider of K-12 education application technology **supporting over 30 million students in over 70 countries.**

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