How Data Center Solutions Gave One of Texas' Largest School Districts Peace of Mind

The Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District Tapped CyrusOne to Provide an Industry-Leading Colocation Data Facility and Redundancy Support

CyrusOne

CASE STUDY | How Data Center Solutions Gave One of Texas' Largest School Districts Peace of Mind

The Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District (CFISD) needed a strategic colocation provider that could seamlessly support the growth and evolution of its IT infrastructure.

The Company[1]

The CFISD educates nearly 115,000 students, from kindergarten to 12th grade, who live near Houston, Texas. One of the largest school districts in Texas, the CFISD connects more than 100 campuses and operates the third-largest communications network in the state.

CFISD's Technology Services department is the nerve center for the district, processing millions of payroll and accounting transactions and managing more than a 1,900% increase in internet usage, along with 6,600 phone lines and 14,000 email accounts. It provides the infrastructure and access to student information systems that contain grade reports, schedules, medical records and career-readiness plans – as well as the district's financial and human resources records, security and video, and telecommunication and operational controls.

The Challenge

Due to the district's growth and age, CFISD's Technology Services team recognized that its data storage capabilities were nearly maxed out, and its limited backup system would soon be incapable of meeting future demands. An internal assessment also found that the district was unable to provide the technology and support needed to prepare its students to become 21st century global leaders.

The district needed to upgrade everything from standard classroom technology and computer labs, to phone systems with fiber-optic connectivity, to power and air conditioning. The CFISD also wanted to put a new infrastructure in place to better support high-speed wireless access, network electronics, enterprise communication networks and its data centers. The district recognized a need for a standards-compliant data center to house its mission-critical infrastructure and servers to ensure business continuity at all times as a necessary component of the upgrades.

The Solution

CyrusOne leaned on its extensive experience of serving more than 175 customers from the Fortune 1000, proposing a specific colocation solution for the CFISD that would enable them to back up their critical IT infrastructure with guaranteed 100% uptime, while also assuring additional space and power as the district continued to grow. The company's distributed redundant power configuration could provide 2N primary and backup power to keep the district up and running during power outages or natural disasters.

CyrusOne's physical security and network-redundancy capabilities were attractive to the CFISD as well. Dual internet service providers could ensure schools had web access all times.

"From their reputation in the market to their convenient geographical location, we knew that CyrusOne would be an ideal fit for Cypress-Fairbanks to grow beyond its current in-house capabilities," said Frankie Jackson, CFSID's chief technology officer.[2]

After the CFISD decided to distribute its IT capabilities and infrastructure among three facilities, it began planning to upgrade its two on-site data centers and move the most critical elements to CyrusOne.

The two organizations collaborated for nearly a year to design and migrate their mission-critical infrastructure to the new space, which houses many of the district's servers, vaults, and internet and phone connectivity infrastructures.

The Results

CyrusOne's proximity to the school district made it convenient to meet, plan and migrate its IT services and infrastructure. The expertise of its staff has benefited CFISD Technology Services as well.

"CyrusOne's rigorous security standards, high capacity, reliable availability and disaster preparedness have provided the district with an added level of confidence," Jackson said. "We feel our mission-critical systems and applications will be safe, secure and accessible. They also meet the demands of our students, teachers and administrators not only today, but for years to come."

Due to its 100% service-level agreement (SLA) for power availability and numerous options for connectivity, the district's network reliability has improved, as has its server availability and system sustainability. As part of CyrusOne's National Internet Exchange (IX) platform, the CFISD's data center can connect with other CyrusOne data centers in Texas and around the country as well.

District leaders are sharing best practices and lessons learned from the technology transformation with members of the Consortium for School Networking, a professional association for U.S. education technology leaders who are working to transform learning. The CFISD has also partnered with other U.S. districts to develop a blueprint for K-12 public schools to design and sustain a reliable IT architecture to prepare for next-generation education technologies.

[2]*Source: CyrusOne news release*

About CyrusOne

CyrusOne specializes in highly reliable enterprise-class, carrier-neutral data center properties. The company provides mission-critical data center facilities that protect and ensure the continued operation of IT infrastructure for hundreds of enterprise customers, including notable Fortune 1000 and cloud computing brands. CyrusOne's data center offerings provide the flexibility, reliability, and security that enterprise and cloud customers require, and are delivered through a tailored, customer-service-focused platform designed to foster long-term relationships. CyrusOne's National IX platform provides robust connectivity options to drive revenue, reduce expenses, and improve service quality for enterprise, content and telecommunications companies. CyrusOne is committed to full transparency in communication, management, and service delivery throughout its global footprint of world-class data centers.