

# 10 Reasons Why Your District Needs Document Management

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Many school districts have come to the realization that they are sitting on a volcano that is ready to erupt: the management (or lack thereof) of files and electronically-stored information (i.e., Word documents, emails, etc.). For many districts, it is not a question of **if** the time bomb goes off, but **when**. Invariably, it seems the **when** happens as a result of an audit, a lawsuit, or a regulatory issue — and never at a convenient time.

A typical school district can handle tens, if not hundreds of thousands of documents and electronic files over the course of the year. This myriad of documents may include student records and transcripts, human resource forms, payroll-related forms and documents, teacher certifications and evaluations, state and federal educational standards compliance records, student health records which must be managed in compliance with HIPAA regulations, and curriculum records. This list does not even begin to address other records, such as facilities-related documents, food service files, or transportation and vehicle maintenance records!

The hard costs associated with the maintenance and storage of these records, along with the lost productivity resulting from manual, paper-intensive processes can eat up thousands of dollars a year — money that could go toward higher teacher salaries, a better educational experience for the students, or long-overdue building and facilities improvements.

Call us after you peruse this white paper; we'd be happy to schedule a demo to show you how we can help!

## #10: Bolster Your Disaster Recovery Plan



When a disaster strikes, a good system backup lets you restore your data, and your insurance replaces the lost property. But what replaces your physical documents, records, and files? According to the Association of Records Managers & Administrators (ARMA) **70% of entities never fully recover from a disaster** — and the loss of records is the primary reason.

## #9: Eliminate Lost Files

A centralized document repository means that your district's documents and electronically-stored information (ESI — i.e., word processing documents, Excel® spreadsheets, Outlook® emails, PDF, MPEG, MP3 or WAV files, etc.) are always in the proper place at all times. No more lost files, no more long drawn-out searches for a missing form, no more paper chase! According to ARMA, between 1% and 3% of all documents are misfiled and potentially lost forever — whether we are aware of the misfiling or not. If and when you do become aware of the misfiling (i.e., when you can't find what you are looking for), according to a recent University of Texas study, it takes an average of 8 hours to find and/or the misfiled document, if it can even be done at all.

## #8: Boost Staff Productivity

Even when documents are properly filed, quickly getting your hands on the document or file is not always a guarantee. How many times have you gone to the file cabinet only to find that someone else has the file, document, or report? How many times have you spent an unacceptable amount of time scouring the network for a PDF file, or combing through all of your Outlook® folders trying to find an email? It is not uncommon for multiple staff members to need the ability to access the same documents. A document management system (DMS) maintains all documents and ESI in a centralized, indexed repository, with the documents always available to any staff member with the proper security to access those records — whether that staff member is in your office, in the building next door, or on the other side of the district. Documents and electronic files can also be linked to the appropriate student, curriculum, or teacher record within your Student Information System (SIS) for easy, single-click access.



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## **#7: Reinforce Regulatory Compliance Policies**

Few industries have to deal with as much regulatory scrutiny as does education. The requirements always seem to get more and more complicated and the penalties for non-compliance seem to get more costly and onerous. These regulations sap valuable productivity from already-strained systems and already-overworked staff. Federal regulations such as the Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA) dictate that certain health-related documents can be viewed only by certain staff members, which in a manual world, requires multiple files per student — all kept in different locations. A document management system (DMS) secures these sensitive documents so that only the proper staff members can view them, and without the need for multiple student files.

Other state and federal records management rules mandate that student records be kept for a specified amount of time. Some regulations, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), dictate that certain types of documents be retained virtually indefinitely, while other regulations require other types of documents be maintained for shorter periods of time. Without a DMS to manage these disparate life cycles, how is a district to purge files of those documents which should be purged, while retaining those documents whose life cycles are not yet complete? In many cases, it can be as bad, or worse, to retain a document longer than legally required as it is to dispose of a document earlier than legally allowed. A DMS allows a you to monitor the exact age of every document, as well as when each document should be destroyed.

Regardless of whether a document, form, or electronic file comes under the purview of HIPAA, FERPA, or any other regulation, a DMS can help your district maintain a higher level of compliance more confidently, more efficiently, and at a lower cost.

## **#6: Reduce Legal Exposure and eDiscovery Costs**

Unstructured data is stored in unmanaged repositories, across multiple platforms, with no documentation as to each repository's contents, and without any cohesive policy for retention or destruction. Because multiple staff members regularly need access to the same documents, multiple copies of said documents are maintained in convenient places by each staff member requiring access. Emails are forwarded back and forth, as is conducive for doing one's day-to-day work, and multiple copies of these emails are stored in each staff member's Outlook® in various conveniently named folders. Word processing documents, spreadsheets and other electronic files may be stored on a central server, but work-in-progress versions are stored on individual staff members' local hard drives — which may or may not be included in a daily backup. Some employees may bring files in, or take files home on a USB drive to facilitate working from home.

In addition to the countless legal exposures and regulatory compliance issues in this scenario, the electronic discovery (eDiscovery) costs associated with **one single lawsuit** could bankrupt your district. Yet this scenario, extreme as it may sound, is precisely the state of email and document storage in many school districts today!

Consider that: 1) Restoring uncatalogued email messages can cost roughly \$2 per message (Source: Vedder Price Kaufman & Kammholz); 2) Each staff member in an typical district sends & receives an average combined total of 52.5 emails per day (13,650 per year) (Source: MessageGate); 3) The cost of having attorneys review only 2,500 documents during a recent litigation cost \$400,000 (\$160 per document) (Source: Wall Street Journal Law Blog); 4) The cost of restoring, processing, converting to readable TIFF/PDF format, and reviewing the contents of backup media can exceed \$6,000 per GB (Source: Digital Mountain); and 5) Each employee in the average organization generates between 1 and 2 GB of backed up information each year (Source: Deloitte Financial Advisory Services). One does not need a math teacher to see how the cost of just one lawsuit could cripple or bankrupt a district.

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## ***#5: Automate Manual Processes, Create Audit Trails, and Manage Versions***

Districts with paper-based file systems tend to be mired in inefficient, paper-based workflow processes. Files are passed around, documents are physically transferred from one staff member to another for approval, and electronic documents (i.e., PDF files, spreadsheets, etc.) are often emailed back and forth for review or approval. This is arguably better than physically passing documents back and forth, but it typically results in multiple copies (or versions) being stored on different PCs, in different Outlook® folders, etc. Remembering the prior reason, which file can be considered the legally-mandated “official record” and which ones are to be considered copies? A DMS can bring automated efficiencies to these manual processes. Customizable to each department’s unique needs and with each action allowed or disallowed based on an individual’s security permissions, your DMS will also create an irrefutable audit trail, logging when a document was brought into the system (and by whom), if & when a copy was printed or downloaded (and by whom), and even if a document was simply viewed (and by whom). Your district regains complete control over every document and electronic file — creating accountability and supporting your regulatory compliance initiatives. With version control, your DMS can also track which documents were edited, by whom, when, and in what order. Each version is retained and can be re-activated if needed.

## ***#4: Secure Your Documents and Records***

Whether due to regulatory requirements or simple business rules, not every document should be able to be viewed by every employee; it is that simple. In a manual, paper-based environment, this can be particularly challenging. Even with an established policy, prying eyes, “shoulder-surfing”, leaving one’s computer logged in while visiting the restroom, accidentally leaving a cabinet or door unlocked, or simply leaving a sensitive document on one’s desk are all actions that can sabotage a district’s privacy policy. Worse yet, they can result in lawsuits or crippling regulatory fines.

With a document management system (DMS), each department within your district can create business rules within the DMS that control who has access to what documents and under what conditions. These rules can be as simple or as intricate as your district needs, securing documents based upon employee, department, school building, or type of document. You can even factor in the student to which a document pertains — creating different rules for specific students (or groups of students), if necessary.



## ***#3: Free Up Valuable Real Estate***

With school districts growing at an unprecedented pace, space within the school buildings is at a premium. Exacerbating this problem is the ever-expanding ocean of paper that plagues any district that maintains physical, paper-based files. In addition, with regulations that mandate many sensitive documents be retained for 10, 20, 30 years or longer, files cannot be simply boxed up in a storeroom. According to the Association of Records Managers & Administrators (ARMA), average storage costs exceed \$1,400 per year per file cabinet (real estate cost of floor space, supplies, etc.). Could your district put \$1,400 per cabinet per year to better use? Could you put that wasted space to better use?

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## #2: Reduce Operating Costs

Reduce or eliminate paper and photocopying expenses, faxing, postage, and courier costs by electronically routing documents, or even entire files when a student transfers. Simplify the processes and reduce the costs associated with third-party audits. Streamline the workflows and reduce the costs associated with RFP, contracting, and budgeting processes. Better manage the grant-writing processes, track your applications, and secure funding more easily. According to a recent IDC study, content management adoptees report an ROI of over 400% within 5 years — but a Nucleus Research study reports that the ROI is actually 612%.



## #1: Manage ALL of your documents and files—Not Just Student, Curriculum, and Teacher Documents

With a document management system, your district can streamline processes and manage documents that belong to **every** department within the district — not just those that pertain to students or curricula:



- Human Resource / Payroll Records, Certifications and Performance Reviews
- District Financial Records and Day-to-Day Accounting Documents
- RFPs, Contracts & Budget Records
- Grant Applications and Awards
- Accounting and Vendor-Related Documents & Contracts
- School Board Meeting Minutes
- Food Service Documents, Contracts, & Health Department Inspection Records
- Facility Maintenance Files, Permits, & Code Compliance Documents
- Asset Inventory Logs & Records
- Athletic Department Files, Game Photos & Videos
- Booster Club Records or Files for Other Clubs & Organizations
- Transportation Department and Vehicle Maintenance Records

The list can go on, and on. The only limitation to what can be managed by a DMS is your imagination. Every document can be secured with its own unique business rules — with no reason to worry about privacy or having documents seen by unauthorized people. Further, complete audit trails are kept on every document, enabling you to maintain complete control over your processes, document accessibility, and security.

## About

*Bull Valley Software, Inc. is a premier provider of automated capture and document management solutions to companies in numerous verticals, including K-12 and higher education, healthcare, financial services, manufacturing & distribution, and more. BVS' flagship product, DocumentLOK™, can integrate with virtually any Windows® or web-based CRM or other application to maximize a company's existing technology assets and provide immediate, single-click access to all of their documents and electronic content from within their line-of-business application(s). DocumentLOK™ combines secure document and content management, compliance management, and unsurpassed security in one application, delivering the power and flexibility to adapt to the ever-changing regulatory and technological landscape of today's global information environment.*



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