

Rediker Software Helps Catholic Schools In The Wake of Hurricane Katrina

A POST-KATRINA LETTER FROM ARCHBISHOP RUMMEL HIGH SCHOOL

February 2, 2006

To Rich Rediker and All at Administrator's Plus

Archbishop Rummel High School, a long-time Administrator's Plus client, is located in Jefferson Parish, a suburb west of New Orleans. The campus is a couple miles west of the now world famous (infamous, that is) 17th Street Canal. The school, and all of Jefferson Parish, suffered mightily from Hurricane Katrina's attack. The first look we had at the building came during the Labor Day weekend. As our principal put it "It looked like a bomb went off in the building." Damage was extensive, but work began immediately. We made plans to open some time in mid-October.

A plan for displaced Catholic School students

In the meantime, many (in fact, all) Catholic high schools in Orleans Parish weren't so lucky. They had no chance to re-open any time in the foreseeable future. Catholic school administrators met in Baton Rouge the next week. Our student populations were scattered to the winds. Families couldn't return unless their kids had a place to go to school. Catholic high schools outside of New Orleans proper all volunteered to take on as many students as they could, and a couple of the devastated schools set up satellite campuses in Baton Rouge. We knew that wouldn't be enough. So, we at Archbishop Rummel began discussing an idea that would enable as many families as possible to move back to town and have their children resume their education.

By then we knew that we might lose 200-300 students from our population of 1,300; that's the 200-300 we could take in from other schools, no problem. If we started the day earlier and ended it earlier, we could run a second school of equal size in the afternoon! We floated the notion on our website and got 4,000 inquiries that week!

Between Aug. 29 and Sept. 17, ARHS administrators stayed in touch first via text-messaging, then via e-mail and land line telephones. We were all in different cities. We met for the first time on Saturday, Sept 17. We created an admissions form for our "transition" school. We set Oct. 3 as our opening date.

By Thursday, Sept. 22 things were going well. We got our 10th-12th graders "registered", though applications kept rolling in by fax. However, that afternoon we all had to hunker down. Hurricane Rita was rolling in to the west of us. We lost 3 work days we didn't have to spare. Friday's assembly was postponed until Mon., Sept 26. After that assembly we felt like we were in over our heads. We had about 1,800 handwritten applications with course requests. We separated them by grade level, school

(14 different schools, public, private and Catholic) and began tallying by course requests. We made the decision to bring 8th and 9th grade boy applicants (over 300) into our morning school, and schedule everyone else into the afternoon school.

This is where Rediker Software comes in

We had previously contacted you to explain our plight and describe what our plans were. You donated an entire Administrator's Plus suite for the establishment of the Archbishop Rummel Transition School. You did not hesitate. Your exact words were, "Whatever you need." I know this product is worth thousands of dollars. No other textbook or school supply company stepped forward for this effort the way Rediker Software did. Not only that, but you provided critical (and courteous, and patient) technical support.

"Ours was the largest single effort to educate suddenly displaced students in American History. No other school supply company stepped forward for this effort the way Rediker Software did."

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We began scheduling the 300+ 8th and 9th graders into our morning schedule. We added 13 new sections of 8th and 9th courses – really hard to do on the fly, as you know. The scheduling program allowed us to move sections and students around all over the board until we found what worked best, without screwing up what we had so painstakingly done over the summer. We finished this task, complete with rooms and a couple of new teachers, on Sunday, Oct. 2.

In the meantime, we had to also oversee the building of the Transition School data base and master schedule. We spent the week before opening entering student data and course requests. Hiring was turning out to be more difficult than we thought. One month after the storm, teachers were getting scarce. We needed a master schedule with course and sections on it so we could finish hiring. Friday, Sept. 30 became our “drop dead” date. We called, panicky, at 6 PM (7 eastern), and again sometime after 9 PM (10 eastern). Each time, a Rediker support technician talked us down off the ledge we were standing on and solved our problem. (Though 3 of us were rather experienced with A+, none of us had ever tried to build a new school from the ground up – certainly not in under a week.) At 10 PM we thought we had our course and sections entered correctly. We closed our eyes, crossed our hearts, and clicked “Perform Scheduling”. Et Voila! Master Schedule! 66 course, 297 total sections, on an A/B block.

Scheduling is ready when students return

On Mon., Oct. 3 ARHS students returned. We had new schedules printed for them with our new daily rotation grid at the bottom – a rotate 6 / drop 1 that began at 7 AM and ended at 12:30 PM.

On Wed., Oct 5, 1,800 students (300 in the AM, 1,500 in the PM) from 14 different schools, with no place else to go, often with no uniforms or school supplies, showed up and received a correct schedule. By Friday, Oct 7, the mists really parted and they were completely settled in. **Magic!**

“We owe getting Rummel and the Rummel Transition School open on time, and in an orderly manner, to Rich Rediker and the folks at Rediker Software.”

What I want all of you at Rediker Software to understand is this: On Tuesday, Sept. 27, the Archbishop Rummel Transition School was a two-foot high stack of paper. A week later, it was ready to open! We owe getting Rummel and Rummel “T” (as the students called it) open on time, and in a relatively orderly manner, to Rich Rediker and the folks at Rediker Software. Our Superintendent has told us that ours was the largest single

effort to educate suddenly displaced students in American History. Thank you all for making it possible.

An unforgettable experience for everyone

Rummel T was designed to last one semester. It closed on Jan. 13, and students returned to their schools, if they were ready. Others enrolled full time here or in one of the re-opened schools. What happened in between is a great story about what a school can be. The students and teachers who were part of it will never, ever forget it.

Sincerely,

Michael Mahoney

Academic Assistant Principal

Archbishop Rummel High School