Veeam helps the Arizona Department of Education protect critical

Azure workloads calculating dispersal of $6.5 billion in school funding

"Veeam protects any workload anywhere, and for us that includes native backup to Azure and backup in Azure. Veeam is simple to use, making it easy to manage everything under a single pane of glass."

— Chris Henry,
   Infrastructure Manager,
   Arizona Department of Education

The business challenges

The mission of the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) is to ensure every child has access to an excellent education. One of the ways ADE fulfills this mission is through a comprehensive technology initiative that supports education transformation, academic growth and accountability.

The technology initiative includes a new data management system called Arizona Education Data Standards (AzEDS). ADE's IT team created it to simplify, automate and expedite tracking and reporting of student data. AzEDS is the first of its kind in the nation and serves as a model for the rest of the country. It processes up to 3 million transactions each day from 13 student information systems in 650 school districts.

Every school in Arizona is required to track and report thousands of data points. AzEDS collects and processes the data for several purposes including annual dispersal of $6.5 billion in school funding. Funding is based on criterion such as the number of students per school and the number qualifying for free or reduced-price meals.

"Protecting AzEDS is a top priority," said Ed Block, head of production services at ADE. "Our challenge was legacy backup. AzEDS is in Microsoft Azure, but legacy backup wasn't Azure-friendly. Backup and recovery were slow and complicated."

Industry

Education

Company

The Arizona Department of Education oversees and administers the state's K-12 public education system — the 14th largest in the United States. Arizona has 1.1 million students in 2,380 public schools and employs nearly 51,000 teachers.

ADE faced a second challenge. The IT team had deployed Microsoft Office 365 but was concerned about a retention policy limitation.

"After users delete an email or any item in Office 365, Microsoft deletes it permanently 30 days later," said Chris Henry, infrastructure manager at ADE. "That doesn't work for us because state law requires long-term retention of public information. We have to have complete access and control of Office 365 data."

The goal was to find one solution to protect Office 365, AzEDS and workloads on-premises. Henry said the ideal solution would provide a single pane of glass so the IT team could manage everything in one place. Eventually all workloads will be in Azure, so flexible, portable licensing was a necessity too.

ADE found what it needed in Veeam® Cloud Data Management™, a platform providing unmatched data management and protection across any environment.

The Veeam solution

Veeam protects any workload anywhere, including AzEDS in Azure, while also providing deep visibility and insight to assess the health and wellness of backups. Veeam increases recovery speed by 99% , supports legal compliance, provides flexible, portable licensing for workload mobility and offers immutable backups, which ADE is considering for additional protection against ransomware.

Veeam Availability Suite™ and Veeam Agent for Microsoft Windows back up 16 TB across 319 virtual machines on-premises and in Azure. Veeam Backup for Microsoft Office 365 backs up SharePoint Online, Exchange Online, One Drive for Business and Microsoft Teams, giving ADE total access and control of data for legal compliance.

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In addition to calculating data for state funding, AzEDS calculates data for federal funding. The Child Nutrition Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, reimburses schools for providing nutritious meals to children whose families can't afford the cost.

"Federal regulations require us to test our DR strategy each year and provide evidence it works successfully," said Robin Lowe, information specialist at ADE. "With Veeam we spin up a new server, recover data instantly and get the reports we need for evidence."

Lowe is referring to Veeam DataLabs™, which creates isolated environments for Instant VM Recovery® — one reason recovery speed increased by 99% . The other reason is Veeam Direct Restore to Microsoft Azure, which restores on-premises workloads to Azure in minutes.

Challenge

The Arizona Department of Education adopted a cloud-first technology initiative featuring a new data management system that automates tracking and reporting of student data. The data is used for several purposes including dispersal of $6.5 billion in school funding each year. The new system is in Microsoft Azure, but legacy backup didn't offer native Azure backup, so data protection was slow and complicated. A second challenge arose after deploying Microsoft Office 365. Microsoft's data retention policy didn't align with Arizona's law mandating long-term retention of public information.

Solution

- Veeam Availability Suite

- Veeam Agent for Microsoft Windows

- Veeam Backup for Microsoft Office 365

Results

- Protects any workload anywhere while also providing deep visibility and insight

- Increases recovery speed by 99% and supports legal compliance for public data

- Provides portable licensing and immutability for additional ransomware protection

Fast recovery is vital, particularly for legal compliance. Veeam aligns with Arizona's law protecting public information by giving ADE total access and control of Office 365 data. The IT team uses eDiscovery to search archives and recover exactly what is needed.

Veeam provides flexible, portable licensing too, enabling ADE to protect workloads on-premises and in the cloud. When ADE moves all workloads to Azure, Veeam licenses will go with them. And, since Veeam sends backup copies to Azure Blob Storage, ADE is considering immutable backups for additional ransomware protection. Veeam uses object lock technology provided by S3-compatible providers to prohibit data changes in backups.

"Veeam makes data management easy, wherever it is," Henry said.

The results

- **Protects any workload anywhere while also providing deep visibility and insight**
  "Veeam helps us protect student data required for state and federal funding," Block said. "Veeam also provides reports required as DR evidence that we're protecting public information."

- **Increases recovery speed by 99% and supports legal compliance for public data**
  Instant VM Recovery and Veeam Direct Restore to Microsoft Azure reduce recovery time from days to minutes. Veeam also provides comprehensive access and control of Office 365 data through unlimited data retention and advanced search capabilities.

- **Provides portable licensing and immutability for additional ransomware protection**
  Veeam's flexible licensing enables workload mobility and IT agility. Agility is key as ransomware threats continue to rise, so ADE may use Veeam to create immutable backups that can't be updated or deleted.

About Veeam Software

Veeam® is the leader in Backup solutions that deliver Cloud Data Management™. Veeam provides a single platform for modernizing backup, accelerating hybrid cloud, and securing data. With 375,000+ customers worldwide, including 82% of the Fortune 500 and 67% of the Global 2,000, Veeam customer-satisfaction scores are the highest in the industry at 3.5x the average. Veeam's 100-percent channel ecosystem includes global partners, as well as HPE, NetApp, Cisco and Lenovo as exclusive resellers. Veeam has offices in more than 30 countries. To learn more, visit https://www.veeam.com or follow Veeam on Twitter @veeam.

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