



Case Study

Longmeadow School District

“Covisia expertly obtains the proper infrastructure knowledge and has the experience to deploy effective telecommunications solutions. In our case, the design of consolidating all of our voice circuits into one centralized system using Cisco technology will save us thousands of dollars in phone bills.”

Kevin Warena, Technology Manager, Longmeadow School District

THE CHALLENGE

The Longmeadow Public Schools, consisting of a high school, two middle schools and three elementary schools, prepares students for learning in a technological world to help them achieve their educational and workplace goals. The school views technology as an effective tool capable of enhancing communication and the productive capacity of the school community. As part of this mission, the school system sought to upgrade its internal telecommunications system, beginning with the phone system at the district administration offices.

The district office previously relied on an aging Lucent Partner II Phone System with a DuVoice Voice Mail module. “But the entire system was unreliable and was past its estimated useful life,” said Kevin Warena, Technology Manager of the Longmeadow School District. “The system often had to be reset by powering it off- and-on.”

Users also experienced substantial cross-talk in the lines, which often resulted in phone conversations being heard on other calls and created significant confidentiality concerns. Additionally, the other phone systems across the school district were showing their age and would likely need to be replaced in the next few years.

Since the district had recently upgraded its IP data network to handle converged communication services, it also wanted to consider a telecommunications solution that would take advantage of the investment. “We wanted a solution that would allow us to scale and centralize voice services across the district as other systems were replaced,” Warena said. “And because we have a limited IT staff, we were also looking for a solution that would allow us to easily add, move and make changes to the voice equipment as users change.”

The final requirement for the Longmeadow School District was a solution that would allow for integration with building-control systems, overhead paging, and unified communications.

THE SOLUTION

In looking for a solution provider, Warena turned to one he had interacted with during a previous job. “I worked with Covisia on a virtualization project and was impressed with their experience, so we turned to them for the telecommunications project,” Warena said. “After conducting a successful pilot project and infrastructure assessment involving Citrix technology, we became convinced that we could trust Covisia to deliver on their promises.”

Key Benefits - Covisia Cisco Unified Telecommunications Solution

- Provides a process for school systems to roll-out new technology gradually to comply with budget limitations
- Saves thousands of dollars in phone bills by consolidating all voice circuits into one centralized system
- Permits IT staff to spend more time on other IT initiatives by offering an easy-to-manage system
- Eliminates unforeseen bills for hardware replacements
- Allows for easy extension of solution to other school departments
- Derives increased value from the IP data network by converging it with voice services

Covisia demonstrated its knowledge of the school system's infrastructure by recommending and implementing an advanced telecommunication solution involving Cisco technology. This confirmed Warena's belief that Cisco was the leading provider of telecommunications hardware and software, so he decided to keep using Cisco for the primary network components. Covisia also coordinated a day-long product showcase that included Cisco experts at the Cisco briefing center in Massachusetts.

"This approach provided the opportunity to interact directly with Cisco and to see first-hand the wide range of Cisco solutions that Covisia could implement to meet our short-term needs in the district office as well as the long-term needs across the entire school system," Warena said. "Interacting with Covisia and Cisco in this setting convinced us even further that the two companies offered the combined technology and expertise we needed."

Following the visit to the Cisco solutions center, Covisia successfully implemented a new Cisco IP telephony system for Longmeadow that included a Cisco 3845 Voice Bundle Router with voicemail for 50 users, Cisco Unified IP 7942 phones, and a Cisco Catalyst 3560 switch.

"This configuration met all of our requirements," Warena said. "And Covisia helped overcome the challenge of configuring the new system to work with the existing phone systems at the various schools."

The configuration included integration with a Centrex calling system and off-premise dialing, which allows personnel in the district buildings to dial each other by extensions. "Integrating with these systems required specific module cards that Covisia engineers researched and recommended," Warena said. "This is a good example of how to overcome the challenges that inevitably emerge during any deployment."

THE BENEFITS

"The integrated Cisco solution has worked like a charm – we can rely on the system to properly handle phone calls all of the time," Warena said. "And working with Covisia was a major benefit because they have the ability to obtain the proper infrastructure knowledge as well as the experience to engineer and deploy required solutions."

The new system is easy to manage on a day-to-day basis, which allows Warena's staff to spend more time on other IT initiatives. And with a Cisco service contract that covers the new system, the school district won't see any unforeseen bills. "The system is also completely scalable, so as we replace other telecommunications systems at the schools, we will see significant savings on the replacement costs," Warena said.

Warena added that the Longmeadow School District is also getting better value from its investment in the IP network by converging it with voice services. "Eventually we will consolidate all of our voice circuits to a centralized system, which will save thousands of dollars in phone bills," Warena said. "We will also be able to utilize this technology to support disaster recovery and business continuity once the entire district has been switched to an IP-based system."

Another benefit for the school district is that it now has a telecommunications solution that allows for future integration with building-control systems, overhead paging, and unified communications. "Covisia Solutions and Cisco Systems technology combine to offer benefits that school systems can take advantage of right away, but more importantly, they also offer solutions that set the stage so schools can take advantage of new technologies down the road," Warena said. "We now have a telecommunications solution that will evolve as our needs evolve."

Warena added that Covisia is extremely creative in designing solutions that fit within tight school budgets. "In the current economic climate, schools face slim budgets along with major cut-backs from the Commonwealth," Warena said. "But we were able to overcome the toughest financial times in many decades by working with Covisia as a true partner that showed us how to roll-out the solution in gradual phases."

In Summary

The Longmeadow School District needed to upgrade the internal telecommunications system at its administration offices to provide users with reliable and secure phone services. The school district also wanted to deploy an advanced telecommunications platform to establish an infrastructure that would enable the eventual replacement of other phone systems across the school district showing their age. All of this had to be accomplished under the limitations of a tight budget. To answer the challenge, the district turned to Covisia Solutions and technology from Cisco Systems. The new telecommunications solution allows the school district to converge voice services with the recently-upgraded IP data network and has generated several benefits: the eventual savings of thousands of dollars in phone bills; the ability to allow the IT staff to spend more time on other initiatives; the elimination of unforeseen bills for hardware replacements; and the ability to easily extend the solution to other school departments.

