



Education

Daily Use

- Deployed 2100 to every teacher in 54 schools district wide

Solution

- Polycom® SpectraLink® 6000 Wireless Telephone System

Results and Benefits

- Complete coverage of entire campus; both inside and out buildings plus playing fields and parking lots
- Eliminated dead zones that occurred with Richardson's previous system
- Improved school security with complete coverage and access for all teachers
- System integrated with existing PBX saving school district from extensive telecommunication upgrade
- Improved teacher efficiency

Texas Public Schools Go Wireless, Connecting Teachers to the World

Background

Teachers need to be able to communicate with the outside world, but they are often hampered by the unusual demands of their workplace and the limited technology solutions available to them. Due to their range and accessibility limitations, traditional telephones are unable to respond adequately to the physical and logistical challenges faced by teachers every day. Constantly on the go and often working out of different classrooms throughout the day, teachers are frequently unable to get to a central area to make calls or check messages via standard means of communications.

In addition, traditional telephones are also ineffective in the classroom environment. With limited coverage and disruptive ringing, traditional wired phone systems are proving to be inadequate. For example, wired phones do not provide a method for tracking down a teacher who is between classes, on another area of the school grounds, or in a different classroom than usual. Walkie-talkies are even noisier and more disruptive than traditional phones, do not provide privacy for the people communicating, and are unable to contact people outside of the school property.

The Richardson Independent School District (Richardson ISD) in Richardson, TX has solved this communications problem with the Polycom® SpectraLink® 6000 Wireless Telephone System. This system allows teachers and campus administrators to be in touch and available wherever they are on school grounds. Richardson uses approximately 2100 of the lightweight, durable handsets, providing one for every teacher in each of its 54 schools. The SpectraLink 6000 system was provided by Inter-Tel, one of Polycom's resellers.

Upgrading to Complete Wireless Coverage

Richardson ISD had previously used another wireless communications solution, but it had outlived its useful life.

"Our coverage wasn't anywhere near 100 percent in the schools," said Allen McDaniel, director of technology project management for the Richardson ISD. "Many schools had large dead zones and some of them in areas where students congregate. With the SpectraLink 6000 system, we have complete coverage in every one of our schools, both inside and out, including the playing fields and the parking lots."

Having 100 percent coverage throughout a school is more than a convenience; it is crucial to improving school security. A common misconception is that only classrooms need to be accessible during the school day. However, according to a 1999 Harris teacher's poll,

"The feedback from our teachers has been extremely positive. The full coverage area makes them feel safer. They appreciate the greatly improved signal quality, and the small size and weight of the handsets make them easy to carry."

“Our teachers’ ability to communicate with each other and with the rest of the world has improved tremendously, and this is very important for them.”

Allen McDaniel, Director of Technology Project Management for the Richardson ISD

89 percent of school accidents take place outside of the classroom. Thus, adequate communications coverage of all of the school grounds is critical. Teachers need to be able to summon a school nurse or resource officer from anywhere a crisis may occur. They may also need to call for emergency personnel outside the school. With the SpectraLink 6000 system, calls can be made and received from the basement, stairwells, or hallways, as well as outside the school campus. Without complete coverage, a teacher might have to send a student runner to deliver a message if an incident occurred in a “dead zone” or, worse yet, be forced to leave an injured student’s side in order to summon help.

Improving Education Through Improved Communications

The SpectraLink 6000 Wireless Telephones have quickly become a part of the daily life of the Richardson ISD and an invaluable tool improving the education of their students and has significantly improved parent-teacher communications. Teachers are able to call parents to resolve a variety of issues — from missing homework to scheduled doctor’s appointments — with the option of having the student present. Teachers also find it easier to provide positive feedback and good news to parents with their SpectraLink Wireless Telephones. Having instantaneous access with the handset means that teachers are not relegated to making calls when they have spare time and can get to the teachers’ lounge. Calls can be made and received while walking between classes, and without waiting for a phone to become available.

“The feedback from our teachers has been extremely positive,” said McDaniel. “The full coverage area makes them feel safer. They appreciate the greatly improved signal quality, and the small size and weight of the handsets make them easy to carry. Our teachers’ ability to communicate with each other and with the rest of the world has improved tremendously, and this is very important for them.”

The SpectraLink 6000 system integrates with each school’s existing PBX, saving the school the cost of an extensive telecommunications upgrade. This system consists of a network of Base Stations, about the size of smoke detectors, that are strategically located throughout the campus to relay calls between the Wireless handsets and the PBXs. Each Base Station handles multiple simultaneous telephone calls, which are handed off from one unit to another as a user walks throughout the facility and school grounds. Because all calls are routed through the existing PBXs, no airtime charges are incurred when using the SpectraLink Wireless Telephones.

Opening the School Doors to Better Communications

Richardson ISD is dedicated to providing their students with the

safest, most effective learning environment possible. SpectraLink 6000 system provides the improved communications necessary to enhance school safety and efficiency. Teachers are more in touch with each other, with parents, and with the world outside the school. With it in place, they know that they can stay in control of any situation while being able to get any support they need and has opened the classroom to improve overall school safety, increased communications between teachers and parents, and ultimately creates a more effective learning environment for the students.

Learn More

Visit polycom.com to find out more about Polycom SpectraLink Wireless Telephones and other Polycom solutions and services.

Polycom Worldwide Headquarters
4750 Willow Road, Pleasanton, CA 94588
1.800.POLYCOM or +1.925.924.6000
www.polycom.com

