



Industry

K-12 Education

Daily Use

- Teachers, staff, and administration, use wireless telephones in 11 of the district's schools in the classrooms and stairwells, on the athletic fields, and in parking lots to stay in touch with each other and the outside world

Solution

- Polycom® SpectraLink® 6000 Wireless Telephone System

Results and Benefits

- Improved responsiveness in the case of accidents, injuries, or emergencies
- Scalability to accommodate Arlington's rapidly growing school district
- Communication coverage in outlying temporary classrooms

Arlington, Texas Schools Use Wireless Telephones to Improve Communication & Safety

Schools today face many new challenges including the serious need to improve school safety and security and the problems associated with rapid school growth. One of the major factors in these issues is inadequate communication. A teacher that is unable to react quickly and effectively to a minor problem could see it balloon into a major crisis. Should that teacher be cut off from the rest of the school in a temporary classroom or the parking lot, the problem is greatly exacerbated. Rapidly growing school districts have to deal with these problems while keeping within their strict, ever-tightening budgetary guidelines.

How One School Addresses the Challenge

The Arlington Independent School District (AISD) in Arlington, Texas has solved these problems with the installation of the Polycom® SpectraLink® Wireless Telephone System in 11 of their schools. The SpectraLink system allows the teachers, staff, and administration of AISD to keep in touch with each other and the world outside of the school walls. No matter where a user is in the school—from the classroom, to the stairwells, to the athletic fields and parking lots—they are able to make and receive calls freely. By keeping their teachers in touch, AISD is keeping their teachers safer and making them more efficient as well as creating a better environment for learning.

Learning to Grow

AISD was faced with a problem. The district found itself quickly outgrowing their current telephone system due to several growing schools. "New teachers were going without telephones, and we couldn't have that," said Jim Wren, director of telecommunications for AISD. "We had reached capacity on a number of the systems and were still growing. We needed a system that we couldn't outgrow."

A committee of top administrators was formed to select a new system. The SpectraLink system was chosen for its cost effectiveness, comprehensive area coverage, high voice quality, and the system's scalability of up to 3200 users. The SpectraLink system is connected to the schools' existing PBXs through a Master Control Unit, which sends incoming calls out to the SpectraLink Wireless Telephones over a series of overlapping Base Stations situated throughout the school building and its grounds. Overlapping ensures that there are no "dead zones" where calls could be lost.

An important bonus is that we can install a new Wireless Telephone ourselves instead of having to call in a technician every time we hire a new teacher. I rarely hear complaints about the Polycom SpectraLink handsets—that's how I know it's working so well."

Jim Wren, director of telecommunications for AISD

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“We are very pleased with the SpectraLink system,” says Wren. “The voice quality is excellent. The handsets are able to take the day-to-day usage with no problems. An important bonus is that we can install a new Wireless Telephone ourselves instead of having to call in a technician every time we hire a new teacher. I rarely hear complaints about the SpectraLink handsets, that’s how I know it’s working so well!”

Due to rapid growth and budgetary constraints, AISD operates a number of temporary classrooms. Teachers in these structures are even more cut off from the rest of the world. Without easy access to other teachers or staff members, teachers in outlying buildings are more vulnerable and less able to deal with emergencies or unforeseeable situations. SpectraLink Wireless Telephones easily connect outlying buildings into the rest of the school’s telecommunications system, saving money on wiring and making sure that teachers have a crucial lifeline to the rest of the school.

Wireless Telephones + Teachers = Safer Schools

One of the greatest worries in any school is an accident or injury to a student. This is made worse when that accident takes place outside the classroom. From twisted ankles on the athletic fields, to slips on the stairs, students are regularly getting into trouble out of the range of any traditional wired telephone. Being out of range can mean delays and complications in providing necessary help and care. A teacher might have to send a student runner or even leave a student’s side in order to get help. What’s more, many standard wireless solutions aren’t as useful as they could be. Cell phones can have spotty coverage and are not usable in many basements or stairways. Walkie-talkies have reasonable reception, but don’t allow for private communication and are unable to contact 911 or parents in case of emergencies. Someone using a walkie-talkie must contact someone near a telephone, explain the situation, and have that person place the phone call, losing valuable time in a serious situation.

Now, when any teacher or staff member at AISD comes across a situation requiring outside assistance, he or she can handle it immediately with their SpectraLink Wireless Telephones.

The school nurse can be summoned, parents notified, or emergency personnel can be called from the SpectraLink Wireless Telephones without leaving the student’s side. The SpectraLink system provides complete coverage of the school area so there is no place from which a teacher is unable to summon help. This level of security provides a real sense of safety to both the teachers and the students.

The Wireless School

Arlington Independent School District is a thriving and rapidly growing school district, but even the most well-managed district will still encounter growing pains. Outgrowing an expensive telecommunication system is one of the worst fears of any IT manager. The Polycom SpectraLink system is designed to grow so it can work with up to 3200 individual users, which makes outgrowing it a near impossibility. The SpectraLink system also easily expands to include outdoor areas, annexes, and temporary classrooms, helping to ensure that every teacher is in touch no matter where they are on the school grounds throughout the school day. Polycom has improved the growth process for AISD as well as its overall ability to communicate, making their schools safer, more secure, and better places to teach and learn.

About Polycom

Polycom is the global leader in standards-based unified communications (UC) solutions for telepresence, video, and voice powered by the Polycom® RealPresence™ Platform. The RealPresence Platform interoperates with the broadest range of business, mobile, and social applications and devices. More than 400,000 organizations trust Polycom solutions to collaborate and meet face-to-face from any location for more productive and effective engagement with colleagues, partners, customers, and prospects. Polycom, together with its broad partner ecosystem, provides customers with the best TCO, scalability, and security—on-premises, hosted, or cloud delivered.

For more information, visit www.polycom.com, call 1-800-POLYCOM, or contact your Polycom sales representative.

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

