

California School District Graduates to Improved Communications Platform



Monterey County School District Tackles Reliability, Safety Issues

For school districts nationwide, choosing a phone system isn't simply about having dial tone when you lift the handset. It's about the deployment of a collaboration platform that connects the entire community and integrates with other platforms to help keep students, staff and faculty safe.

Christina Jimenez is Senior Director of Technology for California's rural South Monterey County Joint Union High School District (SMCJUHS). The district's four schools serve 2,500 students and employ 120 staff.

Jimenez recently undertook the process of evaluating and deploying a new phone system for the district. She chose Avaya IP Office™ Platform.

"Our switch to Avaya IP Office has given us a full-featured and reliable communications solution," says Jimenez. "We're light years ahead of where we used to be."

Reliability and Features

SMCJUHS deployed Avaya solutions across its four sites, including IP Office, 200 Avaya 9600 series IP phones, Avaya Voicemail Pro and a third-party E911 solution.



Challenges

- Poor reliability of communications systems
- Insufficient safety measures for the district's campuses
- Inadequate communication platforms for district employees

Value Created

- Improved accessibility and productivity of staff
- Reliable access for community members to the district and its resources
- Fully integrated E911 solution to help keep staff, students and faculty safe

Jimenez reports that users at all campuses are seeing the difference and are pleased with the new solution.

The mobility of district employees has been improved by the addition of IP Office to the network. The district's reception staff is delighted with the Avaya wireless headsets, which allow them to pick up calls while walking around. The IP Office mobile twinning feature is proving valuable to district employees like Jimenez, who are often away from their desk phones.

The caller ID functionality has been well received, as users now know who is calling before they pick up the phone, for both internal and external calls. The ability to dial an extension directly anywhere in the district, instead of calling a specific school switchboard and then dialing an extension, has been a significant time saver.

Avaya IP Office has alleviated the district's serious voicemail struggles with its previous voicemail system. These included callers being cut off in the middle of leaving a message; messages being misrouted; and multi-day lag times in recipients receiving their voice mails. Users also now receive notifications when they have a voicemail with a message waiting indicator on the desk phone, and it's easier for users to retrieve their messages and to play back messages.

"Now when any member of our community calls, someone will answer," says Jimenez. "If they have to leave a message, we know it will reach the intended recipient, it's not going into a black hole."

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“Avaya IP Office is a great communications solution for school districts, it has all the features we need, and the reliability and cost can’t be beat.”

– **Christina Jimenez**, senior director of technology, South Monterey County Joint Union High School District

Safety First

SMCJUHS D recognizes the critical importance of safety in the education environment. Having a flexible, reliable and capable communication platform that integrates well with different campus safety applications is a ‘must’ for the school district today.

The district adopted a third-party E911 solution that integrates with the IP Office. It was put to use almost immediately.

“Previously, we had no idea who was calling 911 from our campuses,” Jimenez explains. “The day after we installed the IP Office E911 solution, we had two separate 911 calls. It worked great, it let us know who called and their locations.”

Choosing a Partner

In choosing a VoIP solution, a robust set of features, affordability and ease of use were deciding factors. But most important to Jimenez was reliability.

“I didn’t have any prior experience with Avaya products,” say Jimenez, “but when we compared several vendors and their demos, we saw that Avaya’s were the most reliable.”

“Communication with the community is very important to us,” she adds. “We feel much more comfortable now that we have a reliable communication platform in place.”

Jimenez attributes the successful implementation of her phone solution to Avaya Platinum Partner, VOX Network Solutions.

“VOX has been a great partner to us,” she says. “They came out to our district to demonstrate the products. There were other vendors who weren’t even willing to come see us. VOX was very good after the purchase. They trained us and they made sure everything was on track and taken care of.”

A Solution to Build On

Jimenez appreciates having a knowledgeable technology partner in Avaya, one who understands K-12 environments, both in terms of what is needed today, and what will be needed in the future.

“Avaya IP Office is a great communications solution for school districts, it has all the features we need,” concludes Jimenez. “The combination of reliability and cost can’t be beat.”

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Solutions

- Avaya IP Office Server Edition
- Avaya 9608 IP Phones
- Avaya 9611 IP Phones
- Avaya Voicemail Pro

About South Monterey County Joint Union High School District

South Monterey County Joint Union High School District, located in the heart of California’s Salinas Valley, is a progressive academic learning community committed to life-long educational success. The School District serves some 2000 students in grades 9-12. It seeks to inspire and empower all students with the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve their full potential as responsible, productive citizens.