



Oswego Community Unit School District 308



Illinois School District Achieves Digital Transformation Goals Despite Budget Head Winds

For years there was one word associated with Illinois' Oswego Community Unit School District 308 (SD 308): growth. In a span of 15 years the district saw both its student population and its number of school sites double. Today, SD 308 is a high-performing public school system that serves more than 18,000 students in 24 schools and employs 2,700 staff and faculty.

But in recent years, growth has slowed, and the main challenge has been shrinking budgets.

"We have had a real struggle with budget issues, and in the middle of recent cuts, our communications system started to fail," explains Allen Clasen, SD 308 director of technology. "Safety is important to us. Students and staff aren't safe if we don't have a reliable and capable communications system."

Clasen had no intention of waiting for a more favorable budget environment to deploy a new communications system. So, he laid out his requirements: a solution that would meet communication needs well into the future and boost campus safety. All at a cost the district could handle.

Avaya stepped up, doing what it does best: allowing Clasen to invest in digital transformation in the way that made the most sense for his organization. He cost-effectively replaced the entire infrastructure with a modern, feature-rich communications solution that supports the district's school-safety initiatives. Oh, and did we mention the Avaya solution is saving the district tens of thousands of dollars every month?



Challenges

- Upgrade to latest unified communications solution despite severe budget constraints
- Access latest productivity, efficiency and safety applications
- Ensure student, staff and faculty safety with reliable communications platform

Safety First

Every school site and building within SD 308 was migrated to Avaya IP Office™, and Avaya 9600 series IP telephones landed on 2,500 desks. Clasen reports that the implementation was “seamless,” thanks to Avaya and its partner Integration Partners. That translated into very happy end users.

As for the support from Integration Partners, Clasen couldn't be more pleased.

“Due to our budget constraints, we're lean staffed,” he explains. “We use Integration Partners' monitoring services to make sure the systems are up and running 7 by 24 by 365. They really are a partner with us.”

24/7 availability is key to supporting the district's stated goal of implementing a comprehensive school safety and security plan. In addition to monitoring services, Clasen implemented a high-availability feature within the phone switches. If one data center goes down, traffic switches to another data center in a matter of seconds.

“If we lose one of our two data centers, we still maintain call functionality across the entire district,” says Clasen. “From a safety stand point, it's absolutely critical.”

IP Office is built to integrate with the latest third-party school-security applications to boost campus safety. In the case of SD 308, that means 911 calls made from within its schools are monitored, quickly directing emergency services to exact locations.

The importance of 911 integration with the Avaya solution cannot be overstated: “There isn't a day that we don't have a 911 call made from a school in our district.”

“We’re saving tens of thousands of dollars per month, and that’s no exaggeration.”

– **Allen Clasen**, director of technology, SD 308

Value Created

- Monthly cost savings in the tens of thousands of dollars
- Repurposing of an entire IT position
- Improved campus safety
- Efficiency and effectiveness boost for staff and faculty

Cashing In

The district is realizing significant cost savings seemingly at every turn. Great news for the budget-challenged organization. The implementation of SIP circuits alone is saving \$3,000 every month.

SD 308 also rolled out an accurate, standardized menu for calls coming in throughout the district that has produced the biggest cost savings to date. Previously, the district had a dedicated switchboard operator at each school answering every call. With IP Office, the need for all of those positions has been eliminated.

“We’re saving an additional tens of thousands of dollars per month, and that’s no exaggeration,” reports Clasen

As an added bonus, parents are happier because they don’t have to wait on hold. Calls are routed immediately to the correct department or person via the automated attendant, courtesy of Avaya IP Office.

Features for days

Avaya knows people don’t want to miss important calls. Clasen refers to the Follow Me capability provided by the IP Office as “a real game changer,” and credits it with enabling even more cost savings. Before Follow Me, the process for coordinating teacher moves was extremely time consuming.

“We used to spend the entire summer coordinating moves for teachers who were assigned to new classrooms in the upcoming school year,” he recounts. “We’re seeing significant cost savings here too, we were able to repurpose an entire IT position thanks to Follow Me.”

Follow Me isn’t just saving the IT department time and money, it’s also empowering teachers to communicate more quickly and intelligently. A teacher can use Follow Me on the fly, transferring his or her extension to any phone on the network.

The integration of an Automatic Call Distributor (ACD) system with the IP Office for intelligent call routing has freed up some serious time at the district’s transportation center as well.

“At the start of school, we have a huge number of parents calling in to find out their bus routes. In fact, it takes a 10-person team to handle the volume,” says Clasen. “Now with the IP Office call routing, parents quickly and efficiently receive answers to their questions and my team doesn’t have to set up complicated back-end systems. We can better manage the significant number of calls received.”

Avaya integrates messaging as well. So, Clasen can now offer his end users voicemail-to-email functionality, saving them time and streamlining communications.

Avaya’s got your back

As the district’s budget challenges persist, Avaya IX Workplace will help solve a looming problem. In the near future, the way the district handles provided cell phones will change. This means some staff may be using their personal phones on the job to remain accessible when they’re not at their desks.

“I have complete confidence in showcasing Avaya as an ideal solution for schools.”

– **Allen Clasen**, director of technology, SD 308

Solutions

- Avaya IP Office™
- Avaya 9600 series IP phones
- Avaya Professional Services

“We’re going to start using Avaya Equinox for mobility,” he explains. “That way, our leaders won’t have to reveal their personal cell phone numbers when they make or receive calls. It gives them a presence without having to be at their desks.”

Clasen has the opportunity to connect with peers in districts throughout the region. He’s noticed that SIP solutions are a popular topic of conversation, and he champions the Avaya-based solution thanks to his recent positive experience.

“SIP is fast replacing PRI, it’s on everyone’s radar,” he says. “I have complete confidence in showcasing Avaya as an ideal solution for schools.”

About Oswego Community Unit School District

Oswego Community Unit School District 308 serves more than 18,000 students in pre-school through grade 12 and programs to support special education through age 21. It is the seventh largest public school district in Illinois. The student population is extremely diverse.

While much of the area underwent a housing crisis, enrollment in School District 308 continued to grow—more than doubling since 2003. The district covers about 68 square miles, serving students in Oswego, Aurora, Joliet, Montgomery, Plainfield and Yorkville.

SD 308 is proud of its tremendous faculty, staff and leadership team members. The entire community comes together to improve student achievement—the district’s first priority. Measures in achievement include its top scores on state and national tests, its leadership in countless areas such as technology, curriculum, career-technical education and food services. District 308 has experienced phenomenal growth over the past decade, and a continued pursuit of world-class instruction ensures students are always ready for the future.

About Avaya

Businesses are built on the experiences they provide and every day millions of those experiences are built by Avaya (NYSE:AVYA). For over one hundred years, we’ve enabled organizations around the globe to win—by creating intelligent communications experiences for customers and employees. Avaya builds open, converged and innovative solutions to enhance and simplify communications and collaboration—in the cloud, on premise, or a hybrid of both. To grow your business, we’re committed to innovation, partnership, and a relentless focus on what’s next. We’re the technology company you trust to help you deliver Experiences that Matter. Visit us at www.avaya.com.