

Covington Elementary School Uses Polycom® SpectraLink® Wireless Communications

Industry

K-12 Education

Daily Use

- Teachers, staff, and administration, use 50
- Polycom® SpectraLink®
- Wireless Telephones 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® 8000 Wireless Telephones

Results and Benefits

- Teachers get their jobs done more efficiently and have direct communication with parents and the community
- Converges voice on the school's existing Wi-Fi network and integrates with the district's Nortel Meridian PBX
- Push-to-talk feature allows for instant communication one-on-one or with group broadcasts

Teacher communication just got faster, stronger, and more direct at Covington Elementary School in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Parents are no longer subject to an arduous game of phone tag to exchange information about their children with teachers and administrators. Parents are benefiting from open communication channels with the elementary school as teachers now carry wireless handsets throughout their workday. Covington Elementary School deployed 50 Polycom® SpectraLink® Wireless Telephones among teachers, administrators, and staff to make them more accessible throughout campus as they travel through the hallways to classrooms, the library, cafeteria, gym, or remote areas of campus, previously lacking in effective communications.

“Now that teachers can more directly communicate with parents and the community, the school regards the SpectraLink Wireless Telephones a critical asset that enables teachers to get their jobs done more efficiently,” says Steve Riethmiller, Director of Technology Covington Elementary's school district, Indiana Southwest Allen County Schools.

“A wireless telephone may not eliminate phone tag altogether, but it sure cuts down the number of times you miss someone. Teachers just take their handsets everywhere with them,” Riethmiller says. “From a professional accountability standpoint, we have an important tool—the very best—in the hands of our teachers.”

Always on the Move

District officials knew they wanted to give their schools voice mobility after witnessing the benefits of wireless data when Covington Elementary installed its Wi-Fi network in 2002. With the success of the Wi-Fi network implementation under his belt, Riethmiller began to look at ways to combine voice and data onto the network. This spurred him to find a wireless telephony solution for its newly constructed elementary school, slated to house 400 students.

Riethmiller considered several options in offering voice mobility to Covington Elementary teachers and staff. He reviewed walkie-talkies for their immediate communications, cellular telephones for their ability to make external calls to parents and the community, and pagers for discreet messaging. While the features from all the devices were desirable for effective school communication, none rivaled the combined voice and data capabilities that the Polycom SpectraLink Wireless Telephones made possible. When the final decision was made, the school purchased the system through Polycom's partner, Verizon.

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Covington Elementary officials found exactly what they were looking for. SpectraLink Wireless Telephones offered teachers mobility and unique features. For instance, teachers using the Wireless Telephones' text-messaging broadcast feature are able to communicate meeting alerts and student disruption alerts with one another without disrupting the classroom. The handsets' push-to-talk capabilities also allow security personnel to instantaneously communicate with teachers and coaches out on the field for early dismissal alerts or campus event coordination.

“We don't want to alarm kids by broadcasting sensitive information over an intercom,” Riethmiller says. “We have a great amount of flexibility with the SpectraLink handsets.”

The SpectraLink Wireless Telephones have met the school's goal of offering employees more options and a better way of doing their jobs, Riethmiller says.

You Win

Covington's SpectraLink system provides school staff with 100% coverage on campus with approximately 25 Symbol access points installed throughout the building and campus. The SpectraLink Wireless Telephones integrate with its remote Nortel Meridian PBX, which connects to its Nortel telecom infrastructure housed in the district's central communications building.

Teachers and staff put their new SpectraLink Wireless Telephones to use after just one hour and a half of training. They were delighted, Riethmiller says.

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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.

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