



Education

Daily Use

- Teachers, support staff, and administration equipped with Polycom wireless telephones in nine schools

Solution

- Polycom® SpectraLink® 6000 Wireless Telephone System

Results and Benefits

- Improved safety and security for students and staff
- Increased communication with parents and administration
- Enhanced learning environment for the highest quality education possible

Sweetwater Union High School District Uses Polycom® Wireless for Safer, More Efficient Learning

Background

In addition to today's heightened awareness of overall safety and security in schools, there are other important reasons for safety awareness on school grounds. Falls in the stairwells, injuries on the playing fields, or other student and staff emergencies needing the immediate attention of school administrators are regular events at any school. However, most schools don't have the ability to properly handle these problems, as well as more drastic incidents. If there are wired phones in the classroom, they are usually out of reach during times of crisis or need. Even if school personnel have two-way radios, delays will occur when attempting to reach assistance outside of radio contact. As a result, teachers and administrators are constantly looking for new ways to improve their onsite communications.

The Sweetwater, CA Union High School District (Chula Vista, California) is a model school district that doesn't have to worry about this lack of communication and the possible consequences of being out of touch. The teachers, administration, and support staff in nine of their middle schools are now equipped with Polycom® SpectraLink® 6000 Wireless Telephone Systems. The SpectraLink wireless telephones are six-ounce, durable handsets that give teachers the ability to stay in touch not only with their colleagues, but also with students, parents, and most importantly, with administrators and staff authorities in case of an emergency. These devices ensure that school staff is constantly in reach of people inside and outside the school walls—at all times—no matter where they are on campus.

The Key to Safety

Improving school safety and security was the key issue in deciding to install a wireless telephone system. No longer will Sweetwater teachers have to rely on a student runner to get help for an injured student or, even worse, leave the student's side to get help. With this system, if a student is involved in an accident in the classroom or on the school grounds, the teacher can contact the school nurse, a parent, or even 911 for any school emergency. Critical situations can be handled swiftly when teachers and administrators have constant access to a wireless telephone everywhere on campus.

"We saw the SpectraLink wireless telephones as a way to improve safety for our students and teachers, increase communications with parents, and to better the overall learning environment of our schools."

Jim Clark, Energy and Telecom Manager, Sweetwater, CA Union High School District.

“We wanted our teachers to know that when they closed the classroom door, they weren’t losing their ability to communicate with school staff and the rest of the world”

Jim Clark, Energy and Telecom Manager, Sweetwater, CA Union High School District

“The Sweetwater District has always been a pacesetter in creating partnerships that benefit students, both in academics and in safety,” said Jim Clark, Energy and Telecom Manager for the Sweetwater, CA Union High School District. “We wanted our teachers to know that when they closed the classroom door, they weren’t losing their ability to communicate with school staff and the rest of the world. We saw the SpectraLink wireless telephones as a way to improve safety for our students and teachers, increase communications with parents, and to better the overall learning environment of our schools.”

Improved safety isn’t the only benefit of the system. Having SpectraLink handsets has improved the way the school can communicate with the outside world on other issues as well. For example, the school nurse can call parents to let them know of any problems. Principals can take important calls while roaming the hallways. Teachers often use their SpectraLink handsets to call a student’s parents to give them a progress report about the student’s academic performance. Teachers can easily resolve issues of missing homework or other student needs by contacting the parents immediately from the classroom with the student present.

Installation Easy as A-B-C

Sweetwater had previously used another wireless product with poor results. “We had real problems with dropped calls with the other system,” Clark said. “The voice quality wasn’t good and there were several large areas with very poor coverage. Since we installed the SpectraLink system we haven’t had any problems.”

Sweetwater was undergoing an upgrade of their communications systems when it chose this system to integrate with their Nortel Option 11 PBXs. Each school has approximately 70 of the lightweight, durable handsets. Every teacher carries one of the handsets, as well as school administrators, security guards, and other support staff.

The Polycom SpectraLink 6000 system consists of Base Stations about the size of a smoke detector, that are placed strategically throughout the school and its grounds to relay calls between the wireless telephones and the PBX. Unlike cellular phones, each call over the SpectraLink system is routed through the existing PBX, eliminating expensive airtime charges.

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A Wireless Education

The Sweetwater, CA Union High School District is dedicated to providing its students with the highest quality education possible. The Polycom SpectraLink 6000 Wireless Telephone System allows school staff to stay in touch no matter where they are on the school grounds. Teachers are able to communicate more easily with parents about school issues and know they can stay in control of any issue. By improving the communications of their teachers and other staff, Sweetwater has improved school safety, parent-teacher communication, and created a more efficient and effective environment for learning.

