

Why Voice Matters in K-12 Education

A Mitel Positioning Document

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Mitel's solutions for K-12 Education help schools and school districts improve communications, maximize operating efficiencies, enhance school safety, improve parental and community involvement, empower teachers and principals, and improve educational outcomes for students.

At Mitel, we've made understanding and satisfying the requirements of K-12 Education a special focus for over three decades. Today, we remain committed to providing you not only with solutions that will help you meet and exceed your educational goals and objectives but also the tools to help you secure funding and measure the impact of your investment.

The responsibility of caring for and educating today's youth is undeniably one of the most difficult jobs. In a time paradoxically marked by increased funding shortfalls and heightened stakeholder expectations, whether you work in an Urban, Suburban or Rural school district, you are undeniably feeling the effects of having to do more with less. Increasingly, this is the dilemma that schools are asking us to help them solve.

While the tendency is to look at technology as yet another issue or challenge to be tackled, at Mitel we view technology as a change agent; a way to positively impact educational outcomes. At Mitel we strive not only to understand your technology needs but also your educational needs. It is with this understanding that we work with our K-12 customers to define and defend solutions to help them succeed.

Technology in K-12

Education professionals have worked diligently to bring computers and the Internet into their schools. In less than a decade, schools across the nation have gone from virtually nothing to achieving metrics that, in some cases, distinguish them from some business and government entities. Yet despite these massive investments, many schools are struggling to realize the return on their investment. Why? There are three reasons:

1. **The Digital Divide:** Not all stakeholder groups are capable or comfortable using computers and the Internet. National studies indicate that nearly half of households in the U.S. do not have Internet access and despite on-going efforts, many teachers continue to report a lack of advanced technology skills.
2. **Data is not always the most appropriate communications medium:** This is both a function of how people are naturally inclined to communicate as well as the type of event provoking the communication (e.g. emergency situations, disciplinary problems).
3. **A lack of meaningful and relevant applications:** Despite massive investments in computers and wiring, studies indicate that the majority of schools are still using the Internet for non real-time, non bandwidth-intensive applications.



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Technology in K-12 ... What's VOICE got to do with it?

'What's voice got to do with it?' To most schools, the answer to this question is very little. And this is no surprise as both the cost of wiring and maintaining a voice network has traditionally been cost prohibitive for schools. Further, the telecom industry has failed to provide schools with a compelling reason to invest in voice technology. After all ... 'what is so interesting about dial tone?'

Unfortunately there are considerable drawbacks to this model (limited voice capabilities) including poor communications and collaboration, slow response times and heightened security risks, administrative inefficiencies, limited parental involvement, and limited technology adoption.

As an education professional, what can you do to help overcome these challenges in your school or school district?

Welcome IP Telephony: What is it and what are the benefits to my school or school district?

IP Telephony – the ability to use the Internet Protocol (IP) to place voice calls over the data network – is increasingly the technology of choice for business and government entities and, as a growing number of schools can now attest, is what is enabling them to make voice part of their technology mix. Specifically, IP Telephony yields the following benefits to K-12:

1. **Lower total cost of ownership:** IP Telephony lets schools leverage their existing data infrastructure to drive network costs down and cost effectively deploy telephones in classrooms. IP Telephony also allows schools to lower network management and maintenance costs by moving them to a single network environment. Lastly, IP Telephony gives schools the ability to share applications across the network thereby cost effectively enabling features and functionality, which were not previously available or affordable.
2. **Improve staff productivity and morale, improve district-wide operating efficiencies and reduce costs:** Relevant and intuitive applications such as Unified Messaging and Integrated Messaging enable teachers and principals to be more productive and responsive to time sensitive inquiries. These applications also yield hard cost savings to schools by reducing fax machine, cartridge, paper, and fax toll expenses. Messaging, IVR, Outbound Dialing, and Speech-Enabled applications, for example, greatly increase administrative office efficiencies and simultaneously help to improve parental notification and involvement.
3. **Outreach:** IP Telephony solutions help schools reduce the digital divide by ensuring notification of, and access to, critical information in a language and form that all parents can understand. IP Telephony solutions also help to facilitate parent/teacher communications as well as intra and inter-district communications and collaboration.
4. **Enhance School Safety:** IP Telephony solutions allow school administrators to proactively disseminate critical information to staff and parents during an emergency. IP Telephony also allows school administrators to communicate with teachers and staff anywhere on school grounds thereby dramatically improving response times and improving outcomes during emergencies.
5. **Accelerate the Adoption and Utilization of Existing and Future Systems and Applications:** IP Telephony helps schools achieve a higher return on existing system and application investments (e.g. online content including events calendars, lunch menus, emergency closures, etc...) by enabling users to access the information using voice as the interface.



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IP Telephony is not only allowing K-12 to make voice an affordable part of the technology mix in schools but is also helping them to improve operating efficiencies, save money, reduce the digital divide, improve communications, enhance school safety and accelerate the adoption and utilization of existing and future systems and applications.

Why partner with Mitel?

With a growing number of IP Telephony vendors in the market, why should you partner with Mitel? Consider the following four compelling reasons:

1. Core competencies in real-time communications and applications

Unlike data vendors who offer IP Telephony as an add-on to existing data platforms, Mitel does not view voice as yet “another” data application. Mitel believes that real time communications requires a solution (hardware and software platform) that is reliable (fully operational under failure scenarios), secure (limited exposure to hackers) and capable of integrating with legacy platforms (VMS/UM, Pagers, LAN/WAN). Mitel has developed leading solutions that offer more than 600 voice IP features that can be deployed and managed in a meshed environment (K-12 environment). Furthermore, Mitel has integrated its offering with other real-time communications solutions for K-12 including video monitoring, distance learning and video-audio collaboration (conferencing). All our solutions are designed to operate over packet-based networks (LAN, WAN, MAN) with added resiliency to packet loss, delay, delay variation, and video-audio synchronization. Lastly, our solutions are completely interoperable (tested and deployed) with leading IP infrastructure vendors including Cisco, HP, Foundry, Extreme and Enterasys.

2. IP Telephony at Your Pace

With the rapid emergence and adoption of IP Telephony, school districts are faced with a myriad of choices and possibilities for their next-generation communications needs. While IP Telephony is undeniably the technology of the future and schools stand to recognize compelling benefits over time, Mitel recognizes that each school and school district is unique and that a single migration solution is therefore not feasible or appropriate. As such, Mitel offers its K-12 clients the ability to move to IP at a rate that is right for them thereby allowing them to further leverage their existing investments while laying the foundation for new application development and allowing for future growth.

3. Tools to Help You Measure the Financial, Operational and Strategic Impacts of your Investment

How do you determine when the time is right for you to move to IP and what type of solution is best for you according to your educational needs and objectives? In addition to providing our valued K-12 clients with industry leading voice networking solutions, Mitel’s K-12 Education and ROI groups have teamed up to develop an ROI tool tailored to measuring the financial, operational and strategic benefits that matter to you. Not only do our K-12 clients tell us that the ROI tool is invaluable for helping them determine their optimal solution mix, but also for helping them communicate their technology needs to non-technical stakeholder groups and also for assisting them in securing project funding. For further information on the Mitel K-12 ROI tool, please contact a Mitel sales representative.



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4. A Technology Partner and Not Simply a Vendor

At Mitel, we do not simply view our role as that of a vendor, and this is especially true for us in K-12 Education. Because we understand the challenges you face in bringing new solutions into your schools, we recognize the need to support you not only in defining and selling your vision to the board but also in securing funding to make your vision a reality. For further information on Mitel's funding assistance programs please contact a Mitel sales representative.

Beyond IP Telephony: Mitel Offers K-12 a Comprehensive Solution Portfolio

In addition to our voice networking solutions, Mitel offers a wide variety of applications and tools that further assist schools in enhancing school safety, improving parental and community involvement, empowering teachers and principals, and improving educational outcomes for students. For information on these solutions from Mitel, please visit www.mitel.com or contact a Mitel sales representative.



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