



CASE STUDY:

CATTARAUGUS-ALLEGANY BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES (CA BOCES)

At a Glance:



Situation:

- CA BOCES was facing high costs for an overprovisioned communications system that didn't fit their needs
- In addition, they needed an integrated emergency notification system for school safety

Solution:

- Mitel Revolution Mass Notification System
- Mitel MiVoice Business PBX system
- Mitel 6900 Series IP phones

Results:

- Reduced communications costs with a right-sized VoIP switch solution
- Implemented a state-of-the-art security system across three CA BOCES centers using Mitel Revolution mass notification system
- Established seamless integration with third-party security products including security towers and paging systems
- Shifted from an outdated security plan to a leading-edge solution that serves as a model for other school systems

Summary

In an age when school districts face unpredictability both in terms of budgets and safety issues, Mitel delivered a solution to both challenges with its MiVoice Business VoIP platform and Revolution mass notification system. Today, the CA BOCES helps its school districts save money and save lives with Mitel technology.



About CA BOCES

The Cattaraugus-Allegany Board of Cooperative Educational Services (CA BOCES) provides a teaching and technical services lifeline to 22 school districts in New York State, ranging from rural areas with hundreds of students in the K-12 system to small cities with thousands of students. One of the primary responsibilities of the CA BOCES is to help school districts select and install IT solutions.

Situation

Public schools are one of the most essential services that a local government provides its constituents. Yet schools frequently find themselves the target of budgetary cuts that force administrators to continually look for new and creative ways to do more with less. Recently, however, CA BOCES found itself paying more for more than it needed from its telecommunications vendor. Despite the fact that most school districts under CA BOCES' scope are relatively small, its vendor insisted on installing high-density phone switches in every school district. Each switch, they were assured, could support up to 60,000 licenses. To Mike Graf, CA BOCES Information Technology Director, the math didn't add up.

"We represent mostly rural districts," Graf explains.

"Each district didn't need a full-blown switch that could support 60,000 licenses; we could do that regionally and distribute out to them. There were only 30-40 phones in each building."

Graf naturally asked if the vendor could install one main switch in their data center and deploy smaller switches in the school buildings. The answer, surprisingly, was no. So, he and longtime technology partner Rel Comm looked for another vendor, which led them to Mitel. "When I talked to Mitel," Graf recalls, "they said 'Sure we can do it. Come up to Rochester and we'll show you the systems we just put in for Monroe County.' Monroe County had 22 satellites, so we knew it was doable."

Communication, however, wasn't the only thing on the Board's mind. School security had become a growing concern among district superintendents, so Graf convened a security conference and invited Mitel and Rel Comm to sit in. The results were eye opening. Many districts lacked a comprehensive solution to address emergency situations that required a school lockdown. "Each school in our region takes the safety of students very seriously," says Graf. "In addition, our CA BOCES

"Mitel's system had a high level of compatibility and was a budget-friendly solution for mass notification. We didn't find that combination in any other solution. "

**Mike Graf, Information Technology Director
CA BOCES**

facilities director, Dean McKnight, was constantly working behind the scenes to ensure top levels of safety in all our buildings, so there were always separate plans in place in our region to address general emergencies, closings, and fires. The true benefit of the Mitel system is that it brings all these systems and efforts together into a powerful, one-stop solution."

Solution

Mitel had recently launched its Revolution Mass Notification System and was looking for beta partners. After considering several vendors, including one that had a large footprint in the Western New York region, CA BOCES elected to try out Revolution. The decision came down to one of choice and price. "Mitel's system had a high level of compatibility and was a budget-friendly solution for mass notification," Graf notes. "We found they provided the best combinations within the overall solution."

Integration with the Internet of Things (IoT) was especially important to CA BOCES because of the network of IoT devices that they planned to connect in their security systems. In particular, CA BOCES was interested in

connecting the Revolution system to a network of different security devices provided by a third-party security solutions vendor, Valcom. Because Valcom had already integrated their firmware with the Mitel platform, CA BOCES was able to add Valcom's blue light emergency towers, exterior strobe lights, and horns with their interior and exterior paging systems for a state-of-the-art security system.

Initially, this advanced security system was deployed in three CA BOCES centers. Revolution's open integration platform allowed CA BOCES to create a kind of one-stop security shop for all school districts. "The biggest challenge in implementation," Graf shares, "is consolidating multiple systems. With Revolution, we don't need to go through six different machines. It's just one button to say 'Okay, lock us down.'"

In the event of a lockdown, pre-recorded messages are announced through the Valcom towers, strobe lights are activated, both the interior and exterior paging systems alert bystanders to a lockdown state or presence of an active shooter, and text alerts are automatically triggered through a mobile app. "I'm pretty sure you can hear it from a mile-and-a-half away," Graf admits, "but if there's a school bus coming in, you want them to hear it before they arrive."

Results

While worry-free security is a luxury that no school can afford, there is clearly a peace of mind in knowing that your school has a simple-to-use, state-of-the-art emergency and mass notification system in place. Jessica Golley, CA BOCES Marketing, Brand & Communications Coordinator, sees it as one less thing to worry about. "It's something you hope you never have to use," Jessica notes, "and yet there's a comfort in knowing that, should you need to make a split-second decision, the technology that protects you will be easy to use."

"What's great about Revolution is its flexibility and the options it brings to the table. Now, we can handle just about any situation that the school district brings to us."

**Joe Marasco, President
Rel Comm**

CA BOCES knows that more work has to be done to protect its schools and is currently evaluating a third-party shooter intrusion detection system that could track an active shooter on the school grounds. It's another example where Revolution's open integration capabilities may come into play to save lives. "One of the nice things about Mitel," Graf says, "is that they always find a way to integrate what we buy."

Rel Comm's president, Joe Marasco, sees a bright future ahead for Revolution. "What's great about Revolution is its flexibility and the options it brings to the table," he shares. "Now, we can handle just about any situation that the school districts bring to us."

For CA BOCES, Mitel enables them to fulfill their core mission for their customers. "The school districts rely on us to come up with common-sense solutions that are budget friendly," Graf explains. "We're always striving to be the leader that our districts need us to be, and that means staying a couple of steps ahead of the technology curve and making smart choices with taxpayer money."

Saving lives and saving money? Now that's the kind of Revolution the world needs.



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