



CASE
STUDY

Southwest Horizon School Division

Southwest Horizon School Division serves 1,800 students across 6,800 square kilometers of Manitoba along the Canadian border with the United States. The school division supports a professional cadre of approximately 280 full time employees, half of whom are teachers, in nine campuses and two board offices, including five small schools. Southwest Horizon is known for its advanced IT applications supported across the division by a private wireless network that links the schools and provides administrators, teachers and students with information, administrative tools, email, text communications – and now voice. For more information, visit <http://shsd.mb.ca>.

Rural School System Had Strong Wireless Network, Wanted IP Telephony to Leapfrog to Integrated 21st Century Communications

Southwest Horizon Schools Division was Manitoba's first rural-school beta site for high-speed Internet in 2006. Its campuses and 2,000 total users shared a common technology infrastructure and intranet environment called "FirstClass" which provided email, Instant Messaging, and a secure Web portal where teachers post grades and students see test scores and check assignment due dates.

While the schools enjoyed a state of the art data network, their voice support was far behind, challenged by the division's dispersed, rural character. Schools had very small key sets or just a direct line or two, mainly to the principal and the office, and there

was no possibility to add on voicemail. Messages were strictly on hand-written paper slips, and if a ring wasn't answered, messaging was non-existent. Features like conference calling were not used, and expensive, time consuming travel to meetings was the rule. Many connections were billed at toll-call rates. The phones offered no way to dial in or out directly, and a single auto-attendant was the critical link for access to the school division. Luckily, one location had broadband access through Manitoba Telecom.

Unity Telecom Added Avaya IP Voice to Existing Internet Service Provider's Wireless Data Support

The schools division worked with an Avaya Platinum BusinessPartner, Unity Telecom in Winnipeg, which designed and installed a solution that took advantage of the division's wireless virtual network and single point of broadband access as a foundation for IP voice services. The system design included an Avaya S8500 server with Communication Manager 3.0 at a central site with broadband access, linking nine remote sites with S8300 survivable servers. INTUITY AUDIX supported voicemail that the staff could access in a variety of ways: now more than 200 users enjoyed, as appropriate, a deskphone, IP softphone, or handheld wireless phones. Access to IP softphones and handhelds was through Avaya wireless access points throughout the locations. Unity Telecom provided ongoing system maintenance and management.

We helped a highly professional school division leapfrog conventional landline calling costs and constraints in favor of IP telephony over the wireless data network that was already serving their data needs. The value proposition beat anything else hands down.

— Paul Balcaen, Director of Sales, Western Canada, Unity Telecom Corporation



Without Flash Cutting to Costly Wired Infrastructure, Teachers and School Leaders Gained Flexible Voice Connectivity with Messaging, Mobility and Call Management — and Cut Calling Costs, too.

- **Voice access for all, built on effective, in-place data facilities.** For the first time, the rural school division provided convenient phone access to all its teachers and administrators. A school that might have had just two phones was now able to equip as many rooms as desired, and the change did not require digital-grade wiring to be extended at the outset. “The system’s voice features are uniform for all users, which greatly raised effectiveness and productivity,” said Brian Spurrill, the division’s secretary/treasurer.



- **Messaging without paper.** Users who needed them got their own voicemail boxes, accessible from any phone. Voicemail and email alike are displayed in a unified mailbox where users can be alerted to voice messages, then decide to respond immediately or at their convenience.
- **Conference calls instead of disruptive, lengthy road trips.** Drive time could add two hours to a one-hour meeting. Spurrill’s treasury was able to save significantly on the cost of travel to small group meetings.
- **Responsiveness to parents and constituents.** When any parent called, the response had to be prompt, even if the caller at first left voicemail. “Now with call records immediately at hand, I can make use of metrics on how quickly we start resolving a parent’s concerns,” said Spurrill.
- **Constituent satisfaction, quick resolutions from diminished phone tag.** Extension to Cellular added flexibility that further enhanced responsiveness by enabling calls to be bridged automatically from office phone to mobile line or any other station where a user may direct it. “When I’m in frequent meetings with my superintendent, I direct my calls to a phone near him, or even his own line,” said Spurrill.
- **Productivity during snow days.** Extension to Cellular plus the ability of the Avaya softphone to control a digital voice line, such as in the user’s home, enabled administrators and others to work remotely when they couldn’t get to school or office.
- **Reduced costs for voice service.** Trunking and long distance costs were reduced by almost 30 percent.

“With IP telephony we avoided the expense and limitations of upgrading our existing phones. While cost savings were a big plus, the biggest benefit has been from new capabilities. We were able to integrate the new voice system with our existing wireless network. The result is world-class school communications that Manitoba can be proud of.”

— Brian Spurrill, Secretary and Treasurer, Southwest Horizon School Division

- **Extension of current communications investment.**

- The schools had PA systems for routine paging and other roles. Now they were more useful because they could be accessed from any phone without running to the PA microphone in the school office.
- Wireless access points throughout the schools not only supported voice devices but existing laptops as well, so that computers could be moved anywhere for a learning experience, yet always tap into the Internet.

- **More confidence that emergencies can be handled fast.**

Wireless handsets in each school now enabled aides to handle any unexpected situation. Even from the playground, a call to 911 can go out with the necessary location information that enables responders to pinpoint their destination.

- **Continuity at the individual schools.** The Avaya survivable servers at individual schools remain connected to local telco facilities for emergency backup if a school's wireless link to the ISP is impaired.

- **More teachers participating in interactive telecasts.**

The division's video facilities were linked to the Avaya voice network, which allowed voice participation by more teachers remotely, enriching students' understanding of the video experiences.

For more information on how Avaya Intelligent Communications can take your enterprise from where it is to where it needs to be, contact your Avaya Client Executive or a member of the Avaya Authorized BusinessPartner program, or visit “Do Your Research” at www.avaya.com.

ABOUT UNITY TELECOM

Unity Telecom is a full service communications company, providing consulting, design, implementation and support for best of breed IP based business communication solutions. With offices across Canada and in Arizona and a strong partnership with Avaya, Unity Telecom is able to serve businesses of all sizes. A trusted name in the industry, Unity's dedication to excellence is exemplified by advanced technology products coupled with the company's in-house, highest-standard customer service. Unity uses its expertise and a consultative approach to recommend the best solutions for each customer. For more information about Unity Telecom visit www.unitytelecom.net, toll free **1-866-71UNITY**, or email sales@unitytelecom.net.

ABOUT AVAYA

Avaya delivers Intelligent Communications solutions that help companies transform their businesses to achieve marketplace advantage. More than 1 million businesses worldwide, including more than 90 percent of the FORTUNE 500®, use Avaya solutions for IP Telephony, Unified Communications, Contact Centers and Communications Enabled Business Processes. Avaya Global Services provides comprehensive service and support for companies, small to large.

For more information visit the Avaya Web site: <http://www.avaya.com>.

Applications and Services

- Avaya S8500 Server
- Avaya Communication Manager 3.0
- Avaya S8300 Servers
- Avaya G700 Media Gateway
- Avaya G350 Media Gateway
- Avaya INTUITY AUDIX LX voice messaging system
- Unity Telecom installation, maintenance and management services
- Avaya AP8 wireless access points
- Compaq IPAQ WiFi handheld terminals
- Avaya Message Manager
- Avaya Extension to Cellular
- Avaya IP Softphone
- Avaya 2400 Series IP Telephones