Advanced Network Devices

Forest Lake Christian School

CASE STUDY



Challenge

- Need for robust emergency planning
- Out-of-sync bell systems
- Out-of-date phones in classrooms

Solutions

- Advanced Network Devices IP displays to communicate announcements, bells, and safety instructions
- Singlewire InformaCast to manage bell schedules and emergency planning
- JIVE to operate the VoIP phone systems

Results

- Simplified messaging and announcements
- Synchronized bell schedules
- Comprehensive emergency solutions

An Evolving Issue

> *"Our administration is five people, and we are responsible for every single thing happening on this campus. Once this kind of thing is efficient and easy, we can get it off our plate and do better."*
>
> *Andrew Ricabal, Superintendent, Forest Lake Christian School*

At Forest Lake Christian School, the administration needed to upgrade the network in order to expand student choices through online class offerings. With around 370 students of elementary, middle, and high school age - spread across three buildings and two campuses - the school required a system that would enable effective communication with students.

Over many working weekends, the founders had built the initial three-room structure. As the student population grew and new buildings were built, the capabilities of the network and communication system did not grow accordingly. The result was a situation where just a few classrooms had phones for making intercom calls, often static-filled. Plus, a reliance on seventeen different networks, complete with dead spots and the resulting hassle of having to change networks from building-to-building.

In addition, several buildings used different bell systems that were not in sync, therefore making even the simple operations of a school a major challenge. Superintendent Andrew Ricabal recalls, "One building had a bell, and the other had a buzz sounding more like an electrical shock.

Now they can plan pre-recorded messages to call using InformaCast, or they can pick up a phone and do a critical message, live, for the specific situation. For instance, they can warn kids to stay where they are, to avoid a mountain lion.

Flexible, Robust and Scalable

"We are just scratching the surface on what we can do," Ricabal indicates. "Right now, we do live announcements. As we get more comfortable, the students will start recording announcements and using the system. We are getting ready for Christmas season. It will be nice to broadcast Christmas songs... Every season we can change it up to make it more seasonal."

They can also respond quickly to last-minute changes by taking full advantage of the versatility of the InformaCast software, interacting with IP notification devices from AND. One morning, they suddenly realized the PSATs would require a different bell schedule that day. Because of the flexibility of the system, an administrator, located on the other side of town, was able to log in using only a cell phone to change the bell schedule, 10 minutes before school started.

Superintendent Ricabal adds, "Right now we're only using it as a basic level, and so we know we can make it grow. It's the fact that the system can grow with us, as we get better at communication, as we get better at using a system that can do more, it will grow with us."





The Upgrade

In the fall of 2018, the school installed a brand new network, along with a VoIP phone system from JIVE; Singlewire InformaCast mass notification software; and double-sided IP Displays from Advanced Network Devices. Superintendent Ricabal immediately saw the value when, for the very first time, they could play a consistent bell schedule across campuses.

“As basic as it sounds, if you don’t have a system, it’s a nightmare. One group is leaving early, another group is leaving late. We have kids that might be missing the bus… And now those are non-issues. Our administration is five people, and we are responsible for every single thing going on, on this campus. Once this kind of thing is efficient and easy… we can get it off our plate and do better.”