Advanced Network Devices

Northwest Independent School District

CASE STUDY



Built to Grow

How Northwest ISD simplified districtwide communication without slowing down.

NISD serves all or part of **14** cities, towns or communities

Across the growing communities of North Texas, Northwest Independent School District (NISD) stretches across 38 campuses, teaching just over 33,000 students from kindergarten through senior year. For over a decade, the district has added between 1,200 and 1,500 students a year, and is continuing on an upward trajectory.

Growing Pains

Executive Director of Technology Christopher Lee has watched much of the district's growth firsthand. When he joined the district in 2016, NISD looked very different.

"What we came from was multiple different vendors, different products at each building, and each building had to be tackled from a maintenance standpoint or from a usability standpoint as a separate entity," explained Lee.

Communication was scattered between schools, teachers struggled to understand the unique technology, and assistant principals stood in hallways blaring a blowhorn during emergencies. It was made evident that multiple Public Address (PA) systems were inadequate as the district continued to expand.

Because campuses relied on different systems, each came with its own training and troubleshooting requirements, making it difficult to maintain a consistent district-wide approach. Not having a single PA system usually caused issues that could not be resolved solely by the technology team, and would have to be outsourced to vendors.



The Search for Simplicity

NISD began the hunt for a single, districtwide PA solution. With support from their distributor, Superior Fiber Data, and Midwich, the technology team began testing various PA systems. Advanced Network Devices (ANetD) stood out for its focus on network-based management, product variety, and ability to meet the unique needs of different spaces, leading NISD to select it as its districtwide solution.

Northwest ISD has deployed approximately **6,500** ANetD devices across the district.

Standardizing the district's PA system meant NISD no longer had to manage each campus independently. Bells, paging, and intercom functions could operate through a single speaker, while devices could be monitored and troubleshot centrally. At the same time, the variety within ANetD's product line allowed the district to select devices based on the needs of individual spaces rather than forcing one solution into every environment.

Randy Fuller, president and CEO of Superior Fiber Data, saw the benefits of that standardization from a service perspective.



"Once we got the system in, they were able to utilize it for life safety, paging, and bells," said Fuller. "Having every school use the same product, problems can be solved quickly."

"It was a one-stop shop for PA, district-wide," said Physical Security Engineer Ryan Pickens.

What began as an effort to simplify the district's PA infrastructure eventually extended beyond the PA system itself. NISD found opportunities to integrate ANetD products with its existing phone and access control systems, connecting everyday communication with its broader approach to safety and security.

With Room to Grow

Seven years later, NISD has deployed approximately 6,500 ANetD devices across the district. Troubleshooting once meant navigating different systems, limited documentation, and separate vendors, but now issues can be addressed centrally.

“The day-to-day is very relaxed due to the fact that we don’t have so many issues - once you set them [devices], you really forget about them because that’s how good the product is,” says Communication Engineer Xotl Morales.

For NISD, reliability carries weight beyond reducing maintenance and simplifying day-to-day operations. The same system responsible for bells, paging and daily announcements also plays a role in how the district communicates during an emergency. Through integration with the district’s access control system, ANetD devices can extend beyond an emergency alert, simultaneously notifying safety and security personnel and helping initiate a lockdown.

To NISD, the technology ultimately serves a much simpler purpose: ensuring students and staff can trust that they will receive the information they need.

“Reliability isn’t an option, it’s a requirement,” says Chief Technology Officer Cara Carter.

As NISD continues to grow, that requirement remains unchanged. The district expects to eventually serve nearly 100,000 students, making the ability to communicate consistently across its campuses increasingly important.

> *When seconds count - clarity matters.”*
>
> *Cara Carter*

Special Thanks to

Northwest Independent School District



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Ryan Pickens
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