

# DAVID DOUGLAS SCHOOL DISTRICT +SHORETEL

ShoreTel IP phone system makes the grade at David Douglas School District and reduces telephony costs by \$40,000 per year



## Challenges:

Looking to improve communications, primarily with the parents of its more than 9,400 students, David Douglas School District in Portland, Oregon established a goal of outfitting every classroom and every teacher with a phone.

## ShoreTel Solution:

The ShoreTel IP system comprised ShoreTel voice switches and a robust set of UC features.

## ShoreTel Benefits:

- Reduced costs by \$40,000 per year
- Serves four times the users with no additional staff
- Enhanced security
- Improved teacher/parent communications

## Disparate systems cause headaches

The district's existing Centrex phone network consisted of several different types of systems. Some lacked adequate vendor support, while others were slow, archaic, and hard to maintain.

### An IP solution that offered a robust feature set

Recent studies have proven what many parents and teachers already know: When parents get involved in their children's education, children do better in school. Such involvement largely depends on direct communication between parents and teachers about students' progress.

But communication options at the David Douglas School District were less than ideal. Teachers shared a few phones in the office for making outbound calls. For inbound calls, which often came when teachers were in class, office staff took handwritten messages. This consumed much of the office staff's time, forced teachers to leave their classrooms to make calls, and inevitably created delays in connecting with parents.

Though it sounds simple enough to install a phone in every room, the fast-growing district faced some significant costs and challenges. Without phone wiring and jacks beyond a few areas in each school, David Douglas would have to invest substantial time and money to build the infrastructure needed to put a phone in every room.

Wanting to standardize with one system and bring all 800 staff members onto the system, Keith Seher, head of management information systems at David Douglas, called on Structured Communication Systems, a Portland-based ShoreTel channel partner. Though interested in IP telephony, Seher had concerns that the sound quality would not measure up to that of a traditional PBX system. But when Structured presented the ShoreTel IP telephony system, Seher was impressed with the system's quality and chose to deploy the ShoreTel IP system.

### ShoreTel's advanced features streamline communications

The ShoreTel system offered exceptional flexibility to handle the district's changing needs, as well as many advanced features to save staff time and enhance communication.

David Douglas called on Structured to set the model to roll out 15 of the sites from the existing core PBX and other systems. "Structured has superb engineers," Seher says. "They provided expertise in both the data network and IP telephony, so that was a great advantage to working with them."

Today, David Douglas has deployed ShoreTel IP at all 16 locations. The solution includes ShoreTel Voice Switches, which run an embedded, real-time operating system, each ensuring dial tone with 99.999 percent reliability.

### Existing numbers, analog phones ease the transition

David Douglas' unique phone system setup combines IP telephony and traditional POTS lines. The system uses VoIP between switches, but the connection from the switch to the phone is still analog. This enables the district to use its existing analog phones and keep costs down.

Additionally, the district kept its existing POTS numbers for inbound calling, which meant staff and parents did not have to learn any new school numbers, resulting in a smooth transition. The POTS lines also now serve for backup outbound calling if a location is disconnected from the core network.

With ShoreTel, all 800 users now have voicemail, which relieves office staff from having to handwrite messages for teachers and staff. Staff members have their own unique numbers and phones, so calls and messages come directly to them.

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Keith Seher  
Head of Management Information Systems  
David Douglas School District

The ShoreTel system also adds a new level of security for David Douglas. If an emergency occurs in the classroom, the teacher can dial 911 directly from his or her room to get help quickly. Since calls going out on the T1 lines would have a general address, when someone dials 911 out, the system intercepts that call and directs it to one of the POTS lines that provides a specific address.

Other features further enhance the district's ability to serve teachers and parents. Auto attendant plays prerecorded messages to callers after regular school hours and during holidays. With ShoreTel's "Find Me" feature, users can direct their calls to a cell phone or other location.

### Simple administration relieves staff

From an administrator's standpoint, Seher especially appreciates the ease of using the system. In minutes, he can add, move, or change users at the ShoreTel central server. For bigger initiatives, such as setting up new schools or rooms, the modular, rack-mounted system lets him configure a new location in less than a day.

"This is the first year we have served 800 users at the start of the school year," Seher explains. "Without an intuitive system like ShoreTel that is conducive to making these types of changes, we could not keep up. Now we have all these additional features and functions, and we are supporting quadruple the population of users with the same staff."

### ShoreTel IP accommodates four times the users for \$40,000 less

David Douglas accomplished its objective of placing a phone in every classroom, and rolled out voicemail. Though the district grew its user base from 200 to 800 users, it reduced its overall phone costs by \$40,000 per year by using existing data network wiring and analog phones, and minimizing the need for T1 sites. Plus, the district can manage the expanded system with the same staff, and even make system changes more quickly and easily.

The district chose to apply its cost savings toward a maintenance program with ShoreTel, a valuable added benefit that it did not have with its previous PBX system.

**"BECAUSE PARENTS CAN REACH US DIRECTLY, IT OPENS THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION MUCH FASTER AND ALLOWS US TO BE MORE EFFICIENT."**

Derek Edens  
Assessment and Technology Coordinator  
David Douglas School District

"Having our own phones and voicemail has really changed the face of how we do business," explains Derek Edens, assessment and technology coordinator. "Because parents can reach us directly, it opens the lines of communication much faster and allows us to be more efficient."

### ShoreTel. Brilliantly simple business communications.

ShoreTel, Inc. (NASDAQ: SHOR) is a leading provider of brilliantly simple IP phone systems and unified communications solutions powering today's always-on workforce. Its flexible communications solutions for on-premises, cloud and hybrid environments eliminate complexity, reduce costs and improve productivity.

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