

## School District Implements Unified Notification Solution

Los Alamitos Unified School District provides cost-effective way to communicate with students, parents, and the community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p><b>Los Alamitos Unified School District</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• K-12 Education</li> <li>• Los Alamitos, California</li> <li>• 10 schools in the district; 1000 staff, faculty and administrators; approximately 9400 students</li> </ul>
<p><b>BUSINESS CHALLENGE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide cost-effective, uniform process to improve parent notification</li> <li>• Establish districtwide paging, bell, and clock solution</li> </ul>
<p><b>NETWORK SOLUTION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Cisco Unified Communications platform with Notifi-ED partner solutions</li> <li>• Enhance school district communication capabilities to major stakeholders</li> </ul>
<p><b>BUSINESS RESULTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased student attendance rates by .04 percent, equating to approximately US\$25,000 more in state funding</li> <li>• Eliminated several routine administrative tasks, reducing staff requirements by 50 percent in some offices</li> <li>• Decreased overall operating costs and increased staff efficiency by using paperless system</li> </ul>

### Business Challenge

Located in the heart of Orange County, California, Los Alamitos Unified School District (LAUSD) has always believed in high standards for its staff, faculty, administrators, and students. District officials rely heavily on collaboration and communication tools to generate quality education and growth potential opportunities to meet the needs of its students. In particular, LAUSD strives to build partnerships with the leading technology providers to supply the support and resources needed for its students to achieve academic excellence and develop unique talents in preparation for their future goals.

LAUSD had an outdated network and was unable to communicate effectively with key stakeholders, including the parents of its students. With the support of the community, the LAUSD Board of Education implemented a three-year Technology Use Plan to achieve its next level of technology-based curriculum. The plan called for a revamp of the entire network infrastructure, incorporating a solution that would

enable all schools within the district to communicate general announcements, individual student-related information, and emergency broadcasts to parents quickly and efficiently.

LAUSD turned to Cisco and its partners, SchoolMessenger and Singlewire, to accomplish its goals, moving from a decentralized to a centralized solution that provided a robust notification system for all of its schools to utilize across the district.

“One of the school board’s main goals was to adopt new technologies districtwide that improves on our existing communication capabilities, and allows us to continue to improve upon it,” says John Spiratos, director of information technology, Los Alamitos Unified School District. “Cisco’s Notifi-ED solution is a tool that has done just this. It has allowed LAUSD to leverage and meet the goals outlined in our mission not only internally, but also externally reaching our parents in real time.”

### Network Solution

In 2007, LAUSD deployed a Cisco® Notifi-ED solution using the Cisco Unified Communications platform, including 1000 new phones and partner solutions from SchoolMessenger and Singlewire, in just 39 days during summer recess. Notifi-ED provided a dynamic and comprehensive

collaboration platform for LAUSD to improve efficiency, safety, teaching, and learning, and enhanced overall communications throughout the district.

“The implementation went more smoothly than any other of its size in the district, and the level of support since implementation has been unmatched,” says Spiratos.

Since its inception, the new Notifi-ED application has enabled the District to broadcast messages from the superintendent’s office to the community to inform them of the District’s plans to manage the effects on its resources from the statewide budget crisis; alert parents about the District’s response to poor air quality resulting from wildfires in surrounding areas, including instructions regarding school openings and closings, and after-school event cancellations; automatically send messages to parents and guardians when students are marked absent in the District’s Aeries student information system; and distribute school-level updates including testing and event reminders.

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—John Spiratos, Director of Information Technology, Los Alamitos USD

Moving from a manual, paper-based communication to SchoolMessenger’s automated, paperless system for administrative and emergency purposes has helped LAUSD to maximize its network and communication investments by eliminating that costs of multiple, disparate systems. Additionally, the application scales easily as new requirements evolve, saving LAUSD from having to deploy additional technologies in the future to adhere to their growing school base.

“Now faculty and administrators can concentrate on things that are more important than printing papers for students to take home to their parents,” says Spiratos. “Spending less time on administrative tasks allows them to focus on what is important, the education and overall development of the students.”

By integrating Singlewire’s innovative InformaCast application into the larger Notifi-ED solution, LAUSD has modernized its school’s existing paging, bells, alarms, and text alerts to a unified system that is capable of simultaneously pushing audio streams and text messages to IP-based phones and speakers, as well as desktops and overhead paging systems. Administrators can send messages to the entire district or a particular school, utilizing the solution to the fullest extent as a tool for communicating to its key stakeholders.

“Los Alamitos is very pleased with our new Notifi-ED solution,” says Spiratos. “It is managed from a central location at our district office, as opposed disparate systems placed in schools across the district. Already we have seen a reduction in operating costs and maintenance cycles. We were also able to leverage the existing IP infrastructure, another long-term cost benefit.”

## Business Results

In today’s 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment, the ability to communicate the right information to the right people at the right time is essential. LAUSD did just this by implementing the Notifi-ED solution, and has since significantly enhanced its internal and external communication capabilities.

Previously, alerts to parents and guardians regarding student absence were not standardized throughout the District. Four schools were using older, auto-dialers, while the other schools were going through the labor-intensive and inconsistent process of calling home manually. With Notifi-ED, LAUSD standardized its automated absence notification practice, and as a result, student attendance rates have increased by .04 percent. This increase in attendance equates to approximately \$25,000 more in state funding annually, a major accomplishment for the District, especially during a time of economic uncertainty.

### PRODUCT LIST

#### Routing and Switching

- Cisco Core and Edge Switches
- Cisco Integrated Service Routers

#### Security and VPN

- Cisco Network Admission Control Appliance

#### Network Management

- Cisco LAN Management Solution

#### Voice and IP Communications

- Cisco Unified Communications
- SchoolMessenger Unified Communications Bundle with SmartCall
- Signlewire InformaCast Solution

The elimination of manual processes and expensive printed communications also decreased tremendously across the District once the Notifi-ED solution was deployed. For example, the principal's office at one elementary school continued to operate at full capacity, even with a 50 percent reduction in staffing since it eliminated manual processes for communication and phased out all printed letters, backpack notes, and paper flyers. Instead, the office opted to send parent notices home through voicemail, email, and SMS text message, resulting in crucial savings in an already budget strapped school.

“The administrators, principals, faculty, and staff at the various school sites have all been very pleased with the Notifi-ED solution,” says Spiratos. “At the District level, we have already taken advantage of the solution to inform parents of different situations from our recent state budget crisis to the wildfires surrounding our schools to police activity in school neighborhoods. We are immediately able to communicate this type of information to our parents, assuring them that their children’s well being is our number-one priority. As you can imagine, their response has been very positive.”

### For More Information

To find out more about the Cisco Notifi-ED solution go to:

<http://www.cisco.com/web/strategy/education/notifiED.html>



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