



UCaaS gets an A

As one of North Carolina's leading school districts, Kannapolis City Schools (KCS) features a highly acclaimed science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) academy, partnerships with the NC Research Campus and an innovative online learning program. But KCS' size and tech focus means it needs a reliable and efficient network solution that meets the connectivity needs of its students without straining the district's budget.

KANNAPOLIS CITY SCHOOLS

Industry

Education

Customer

9 schools, 2 administrative buildings

Located in Kannapolis, NC

785 employees, 5,500 students

Challenges

Multiple locations, future growth

Strict budget

Solutions

Windstream Enterprise UCaaS Powered by Mitel

Results

Monthly cost savings

Exceptional voice service

Enhanced connectivity and security

Seamless connectivity, within budget

Like many public schools, KCS faced the ongoing challenge of meeting the needs of today's modern schooling environment while adhering to the budget constraints of the district. With multiple locations, KCS relies heavily on interschool connectivity in order to deliver the highest caliber of education and a safe environment.

Prior to partnering with Windstream Enterprise, KCS was using outdated communications equipment that often left their administrators and teachers with inconsistent connectivity. The fear of a severe outage affecting their aging system was constant. The KCS IT team was also increasingly frustrated with having to manage multiple phone lines for the district's fax, Internet and phone services and was receiving multiple bills from different providers at the end of each month. KCS was looking to make a change in their communications infrastructure and was hoping to find a service provider that could deliver a more efficient solution.

A Windstream Enterprise UC strategy

It was important to the KCS administration to have the same communications technology capabilities at all nine schools for consistency and maintenance purposes; Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) from Windstream Enterprise provided that standardization. Once selected, Windstream Enterprise designed a customized UCaaS solution that allowed for central management of one system for all schools and administration buildings. This solution resides in the cloud, and Windstream Enterprise designs, delivers and manages it on behalf of KCS. As a bonus, a portion of the UCaaS service was reimbursable to KCS via USAC's E-Rate program.

Windstream Enterprise worked closely with the school district's IT team to make the transition to the UCaaS solution easy. KCS' customized UCaaS solution, powered by Mitel, provides the district with four-digit dialing functionality that spans all schools. Not only has seamless interschool connectivity with UCaaS streamlined day-to-day communications for KCS, but Windstream Enterprise has improved school safety by giving KCS the peace of mind that all of its schools can be quickly alerted and can stay in contact during an emergency situation.

One of the deciding factors that led KCS to switch to Windstream Enterprise was the ability to upgrade their communications systems to more current technology and newer equipment as part of the school district's operating expense budget with no impact to its capital budget. By switching to Windstream Enterprise, KCS was able to streamline their services into one enterprise solution with one monthly bill.

"We chose to work with Windstream Enterprise because we knew exactly what we were getting," says Brenda McCombs, KCS' director of instructional technology. "Unlike many of the other proposals we received, Windstream Enterprise UCaaS is a complete solution."

Since UCaaS is a managed service, Windstream Enterprise experts now provide around-the-clock support so that KCS' IT team can focus on other technology initiatives outside of communications. And the cloud-based service also has unique features that are ideal for an educational setting. UCaaS provides the ability to acquire new technology and deliver on-demand UC resources and applications to students and teachers. It is also a scalable, flexible solution, which is ideal for schools districts like KCS that are experiencing consistent growth.

Communications you can count on

Thanks to Windstream Enterprise and UCaaS, KCS has a renewed confidence in their communications capabilities. The KCS IT team can trust that Windstream Enterprise will manage their voice solutions so the school district can focus on preparing their students for the future. McCombs remarks, "With Windstream Enterprise, we have the peace of mind knowing that our schools are always connected and secure."

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"Windstream Enterprise UCaaS has improved communication and collaboration immensely for our entire school system," McCombs says. "Essentially, all of our schools and offices are able to operate as if they are in one location with the help of our UCaaS solution. Best of all, this solution and all of its benefits comes to us at a lower cost than our previous solution, allowing us to invest more in the education of our students."

Dr. Daron Buckwell, the superintendent at KCS, agrees. "We set high standards for our teachers and students, so we strive to do the same with our service partners. Windstream Enterprise has proven to be reliable and responsive to our changing needs. They've gone above and beyond our expectations to deliver communications solutions that make KCS a better place to work and learn. We plan to continue to work with Windstream Enterprise as our technology needs change and grow."

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About Windstream Enterprise

Windstream Enterprise collaborates with businesses across the U.S. to drive digital transformation by delivering solutions that solve today's most complex networking and communication challenges.

To learn more about
Windstream Enterprise, visit
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Connecting the Dots to the Cloud