

TECHNOLOGY AND THE “BUSINESS” OF LEARNING

Convergion delivers the appropriate mix of communications technology for an improved educational environment.

Client Name: Darlington County School District (DCSD)

Project Type: Converged Voice, Video, and Data Network

Launch: Phase I - September 2001, Phase II - February 2002, Phase III - Early 2003

Testimonial: “The savings achieved with our new network are allowing us to redirect funds toward educational initiatives. Convergion has delivered a simplified and more efficient means of communication for our district. As a result our teachers have been able to minimize administrative tasks and focus on teaching.”

Project Overview: Convergion is deploying a state-of-the-art communications infrastructure bringing voice, video, and data into a single network to deliver instructional and administrative resources to DCSD teachers, students, and their community.

Business Need: A rural South Carolina school district with 23 locations and limited funds, DCSD needed to find a cost-effective way to broaden and improve their communications capabilities to make the most of their instructional and administrative resources district-wide. Their goal was to produce an improved educational environment by gaining the ability to prioritize efforts and fund allocation based upon educational needs instead of administrative demands.

The Convergion Solution: The first phase of the project connected all district schools with an infrastructure allowing for converged voice, video, and data. Convergion built a wide-area ATM network successfully connecting all of the schools, and upgraded Category 5 cabling connecting network devices to Cajun Switches. The district now shares information and applications across multiple sites. Fax or mail delays and hand-writing errors/discrepancies are no longer an issue. Administrative duties such as completion of purchase orders and sharing of spreadsheets and school data have been greatly simplified. Phase one of the solution also enabled voice and data to be carried simultaneously at high speeds over multiple T-1 circuits configured for Inverse Multiplexing over ATM (IMA) across the wide area network.

During the second phase, Convergion connected all Audix voicemail systems throughout the district by deploying multimedia communications servers along with an Interchange. In addition to reducing long-distance calling charges, this phase allowed for eased communications between schools and with parents or staff via a five-digit dialing plan running over the ATM wide-area network, and phone placement in the classrooms. Classroom phones also give teachers the added cost-effective ability to host guest speaker/subject matter expert presentations.

Phase III is scheduled for early 2003. This phase will enable the district to connect to the Internet. Students will gain access to DISCUS (South Carolina’s on-line library), and be able to complete assignments on laptop computers without plugging a wire into a wall.