



Cloud-Based Communications for Education Helping Rural K-12 Schools Get Connected

School Profile

Northport Public Schools
Northport, Michigan
Grades: K-12
Buildings: 2
Enrollment: 150

Main Challenges

Expensive repairs
Limited capabilities
Insufficient internet access

Solution

IntelliSIP LTE™

45 Yealink SIP-T19P Phones
5 Yealink SIP-T42G Admin phones
MTA 6328-2RE for fax
Overhead Paging System
1 Onsite Voice Carrier Server

Monthly Cost Savings

\$450 per mnth with Voice Carrier
\$1400 per mnth with AT&T



“What you’ll find in most rural schools is that the internet and networking infrastructure is not sufficient - with enough CAT5 drops in each room - to support a computer and an internet phone. Rewiring to support an additional network drop would be as expensive as the new phone system.”

Education has unique telecommunication needs and very important users - our nation’s teachers and students. For one rural Michigan school district, it was a matter of *some or none*. Northport Public Schools had several on-premise Mitel SX200 analog PBX systems. They were over 12 years old and failing. Replacement parts were no longer manufactured and expensive.

Superintendent Neil Wetherbee stated, “our budget is being overtaken by technician and part fees. The old system is simply too expensive to maintain and doesn’t do what we need it to do.”

Northport’s primary goal was to reduce costs and update the technology. After doing their homework - pun intended - the district decided on an internet-based phone system (i.e., VoIP). **The technology inherently costs less than traditional phone service** and, because it’s operated remotely, the district would essentially eliminate repair and replacement fees.

Remote automatic upgrades also ensured a maintenance-free ‘future proof’ phone system. This was the solution they needed.

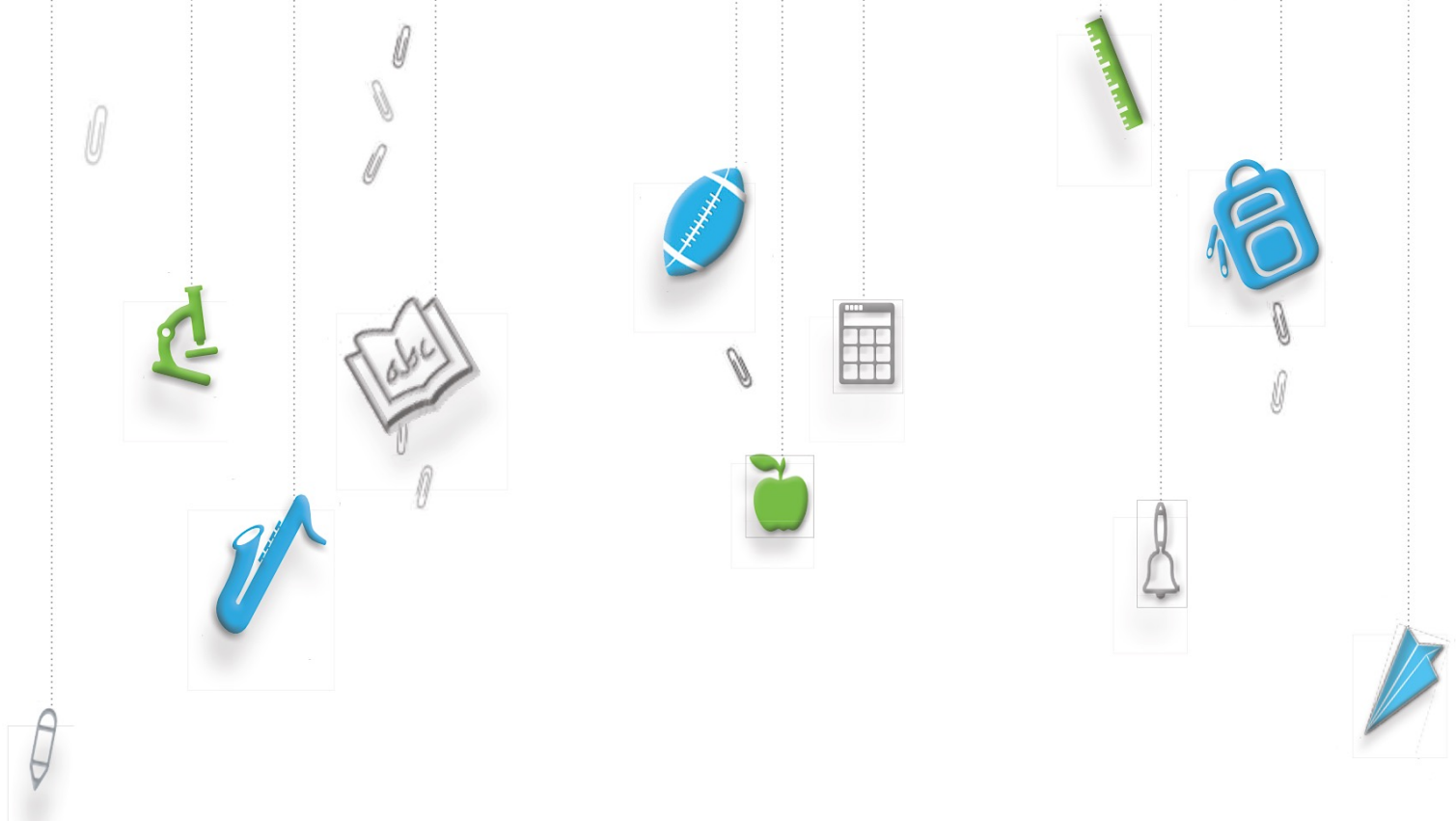
Problem

Unfortunately, rural school districts like Northport usually have two things in common - *limited internet connections and outdated equipment*. In this case, the Northport’s broadband speed could not support VoIP. Rewiring the facilities would cost \$150 a line and upgrading to faster broadband, neither of which lowered ongoing expenditures.

Solution

The solution for Northport was IntelliSIP LTE™ by Voice Carrier. The phone system uses an LTE connection instead of land lines or internet.

Within five days, 51 IP phones and one base station arrived at the school. Every piece of equipment arrived already preprogrammed. The LTE base station was plugged in and established a connection, then teachers and staff simply powered up their phones. That was it. The new phone system was fully operational.



IntelliSIP LTE™ is entirely cellular so every phone was now connected, without upgrading broadband, rewiring, or costly equipment repairs.

Results

Now, the district prioritizes spending on their students. "We went from paying AT&T \$1400 per month for basic phone service to \$450 per month with Voice Carrier," stated Wetherbee. Because they switched to a WIFI enabled system, funding was also protected against the impending E-Rate government reductions for analog-based phone systems.

Teacher's loved the ability to remotely monitor their classrooms. By entering #280 plus their extension, the classroom's microphone would turn on and listen in.

"We needed a phone in every classroom but the cost per line was a financial obstacle. With Voice Carrier, we now have 51 extensions for the price of our original 26...and we don't pay when the line isn't in use, like holidays or summer break."

Emergency response was integrated with overhead paging, alarm system, and the front-door intercom. In addition, the school could now identify the precise location of where a 911 call was placed for emergency situations.

"We need to keep our students safe. Our system is there for us in an emergency. For example, we can send a warning message to every phone in the school at the same time."

Michigan gets a lot of snow. Notifying students on snow days wasn't simple. With the first storm, the secretary dialed into the new system at 4:00am from her home, entered a code, and the school closing notice was then activated on the answering system.

Next Steps

Northport is one of seven schools in remote Leelanau County. Having fully embraced cloud technology and its benefits, they are now sharing their Voice Carrier success story with other schools in the county.



Extensions move with the teacher, not attached to a classroom. Unlimited phone and conference numbers. Follow-me from desk phones to cell phones. Automated attendance calls to parents and teachers. Teachers and staff can customize their extensions. Admins make changes easily and quickly from online portal. US-based support team on-call 24/7/365. included. Voicemail to email plus over 100 other advanced features.