



Success Story

Large School District Chooses Sangoma for Their Business Communications Solution

THE CUSTOMER

A Washington school district made up of 6 public schools, including four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The district has nine buildings in total: one for each of the schools and separate buildings for their facilities, buses, and administration offices. To handle communications across all sites, a Cisco Call Manager phone system was housed in the administration building, handling phone calls to/from each building over dedicated fiber lines. PRI lines were connected to the Call Manager for inbound and outbound calls with the outside world. Cisco handsets were deployed throughout the district to be used by all staff and faculty. On a typical day, the school district handles high call volumes between faculty members, grounds workers, and parents.



CHALLENGES

The currently deployed communication system, along with support, was being discontinued by the supplier. This left the district with a decision to spend a significant amount of money to upgrade to a system supported by the same vendor or search for an alternative.



SOLUTIONS

- Sangoma PBXact Unified Communications System
- Sangoma IP Phones
- Sangoma Vega VoIP Gateways

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

When the school district began constructing a new elementary school, they knew it would be a burden on their current phone system. Plus, Cisco had recently discontinued the Call Manager phone system, along with support and maintenance. This placed the district in a difficult situation as they would no longer be able to rely on Cisco for future support or product needs. They were faced with the decision to continue operation by upgrading to Cisco's Unified Communications (UC) phone solution (which meant possible license migration challenges and continuing SmartNet costs into the future) or finding an alternative product from a different vendor. If they chose to upgrade to Cisco's UC product, they would also be required to replace all their handsets throughout every buildings with updated versions as they would no longer be compatible. In total, it would cost the district upwards of \$350,000 to stay with a full Cisco solution.

THE SOLUTION FROM SANGOMA

Because of the steep price tag of staying with Cisco, the school district started researching alternative phone solutions. They reviewed companies such as Mitel as well as hosted services from vendors such as Spectrum (Charter). Open source solutions like Sangoma's Asterisk and FreePBX were also reviewed and tested based on input from peer districts in Washington. The district decided initially to go with FreePBX. However, after further consideration, they began reviewing Sangoma's turnkey, enterprise phone system PBXact.

PBXact is a UC phone solution available for on-premise and cloud installations and comes equipped with advanced UC functionality in one, ready-to-go package without license restrictions. It also includes auto-provisioning with Sangoma's line of IP phones that are equipped with advanced functionality and PhoneApps, which control the phone's display with unique productivity applications. Most important for the district was support, which was available for PBXact.

The school district also liked Sangoma's Vega VoIP gateways, which are the most resilient gateways on the market. A unique feature allows any registered IP phone behind the gateway to

continue working if the upstream internet link goes down, allowing them to call each other as well as make outbound calls if an analog line is connected. The school district could install one at each building for IP phone survivability and connect them to the analog lines in case the need ever arises for emergency PSTN calling.

The school district priced out the total Sangoma solution, which included the PBXact UC system, IP phones, and Vega gateways, and came to a total of \$67,000. This was significantly less than the \$350,000 cost for the Cisco solution. They selected Sangoma not only for the lower price, but because the solution provided better value overall.

THE RESULTS

The district installed two PBXact systems in the administration building in high availability mode for survivability. A single Vega gateway was installed at each school location and connected to the upstream fiber links. Various models of Sangoma IP phones were deployed at each location and registered through the Vega gateways to the PBXact system in the main office location. Analog lines from the local PSTN were connected to each Vega gateway for failover if the upstream fiber connection went down.

The district is very pleased with the solution from Sangoma. They are particularly happy that each Vega gateway is able to support up to 120 IP phones for the emergency fallback feature and long loop length (analog), so that they could be installed in the typical IT closet far away from the location of fax machines. PBXact was very easy to setup and the IP phones proved very useful with the PhoneApps features, which are used on a daily basis by staff. A favorite feature enjoyed by teachers is hot desking, which is perfect for roaming teachers so they can have their phone settings follow them when they log into a different phone.

By getting to know the client, Sangoma was able to put together a secure telecommunications solution that fit the client's needs and provided the best value.

