

How Texas' Judson ISD Saved Money and Streamlined Communications with Cloud-Based VoIP



Judson Independent School District (Judson) in Live Oak, TX, is a large K-12 school district supporting almost 26,000 students and over 3,200 staff members across 28+ schools. Located in the greater San Antonio metro area – one of the fastest growing metros in the U.S. – Judson is experiencing rapid year-over-year growth, adding more than 3,000 new students in the past two years alone.

With increasingly more students and staff to support, creating scalable and future-ready IT systems is critical to the district's success. That's why when Lacey Gosch joined Judson as Assistant Superintendent of Technology in 2021, she immediately began spearheading multiple transformational projects to build a pathway for the district's future.

One of the first projects her team tackled was replacing the district's decades-old and costly telephony infrastructure with modern and mobile cloud communications.

LEGACY PHONE SYSTEM GETS A FAILING GRADE

Judson's previous phone platform was outdated, hosted on-premises, and had multiple points of failure, resulting in outages that negatively impacted staff productivity.



"Our previous phone system was around 12-15 years old and was not upgraded over time, which caused many problems," said Gosch. **"Phones were going out across our schools, and we were having service outages from time to time due to the age of the equipment."**

In addition to its unreliable infrastructure, the platform was expensive and inflexible – exorbitant costs for

support components and equipment replacements were hurting Judson's bottom line, leaving no room in the budget to expand their system.

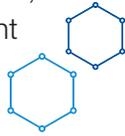
"Our old platform was not expandable at all in terms of cost," said Gosch. "Because of that, we couldn't have phones in classrooms, which was a major safety and security concern for the district. If a teacher needed to call a parent or internal department, they had to use a phone down the hallway, in a closet, or share a phone."

On top of this, the system lacked essential call routing and mobility features:

- Voicemails couldn't be accessed remotely
- Secretaries had to use multiple pieces of software to forward calls

- Administrators had no way to address calls when they were away from desk phones or off-site
- The system's sheer complexity made it difficult for IT members to update extensions as staff moved or changed roles

With so many issues and escalating expenses, Gosch knew a complete system replacement was in order.



A BETTER WAY

In their due diligence, Judson quickly discovered refreshing the existing system came at a hefty price tag.

“It was going to be upwards of \$2 million to simply replace our existing system, not including adding any new phones to our classrooms, which was a major priority for the district,” said Gosch.

Having worked with hosted phone systems in the past, Gosch knew migrating to a cloud-based system would be the more affordable and flexible solution, while also delivering productivity-enhancing features the district's end users needed.

After evaluating their options, Judson selected ENA's voice over IP (VoIP) service and cloud-based phone platform – ENA SmartVoice – due to its affordability, scalability, reliability, and feature set.

Leveraging ENA's purchasing contract with Region 20 Education Service Center (ESC20), Judson was able to simplify and expedite the procurement process. ENA project managers quickly went to work implementing their new voice system district-wide with 3,400 voice accounts and new IP phones.

FROM FEATURE DEFICIENT TO FEATURE RICH

In addition to saving money, Judson was able to add phones to every classroom. And as their district grows, expanding their phone system is now incredibly easy. Because ENA hosts the platform's infrastructure, Judson doesn't have to worry about installing phone lines or upgrading hardware – they can simply add new handsets and service plans when they need to.

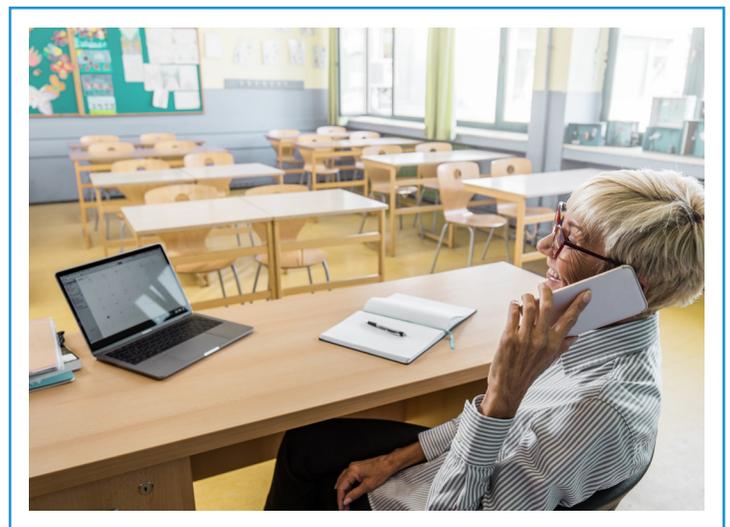
Judson's new phone system also equipped staff

with long-awaited features including including virtual voicemail, which enables users to check their voicemails from anywhere via ENA's online user portal.

“The reception from staff has been very good. Teachers love that they can now pick up their phone and call a parent from their classroom,” said Gosch.

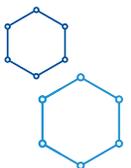
“We've programmed our tech help desk number into every phone and staff enjoy how they can easily search through the district directory and quickly find who they're trying to call.”

With the new feature set, Judson's call routing process has also been streamlined – auto attendants are set up at every site to help callers reach their intended destination, secretaries can easily forward calls with the push of a few buttons, and a multi-line hunt group for the district's tech support line ensures every call is answered as quickly as possible.



REMOTE-READY COMMUNICATIONS

Another pain point that's been eliminated with their new system is immobility. When the district went 100% remote during the COVID-19 pandemic, phone calls could be forwarded to personal numbers, but staff couldn't dial out from their professional Judson numbers. As a result, many administrators used personal phones to conduct business when they were not in the office, but had to expose their personal numbers to parents, coworkers, and the community in order to communicate.



With ENA's integrated mobile application, Judson admins can use their ENA SmartVoice extensions on their personal devices whenever they're away from their desks or off-site. And if the district ever needs to go back to remote operations again, Judson is equipped with a flexible system that can keep everyone connected from anywhere.

STREAMLINING MAINTENANCE AND REDUCING MANAGEMENT

Judson's 55-member IT team oversees everything from infrastructure and cybersecurity to desktop services, instructional technology, student data services, library services, and more. With so much on their plate, reducing workloads and increasing efficiencies is always top of mind.

With their new hosted phone system, ENA provides ongoing proactive maintenance, firmware updates, and 24x7 technical support at no additional cost – reducing time and money spent on phone management.

“The amount of time our team spends on phone maintenance has absolutely been reduced,” said Gosch. “This has enabled them to be able to bridge out and support other departments and teams.”

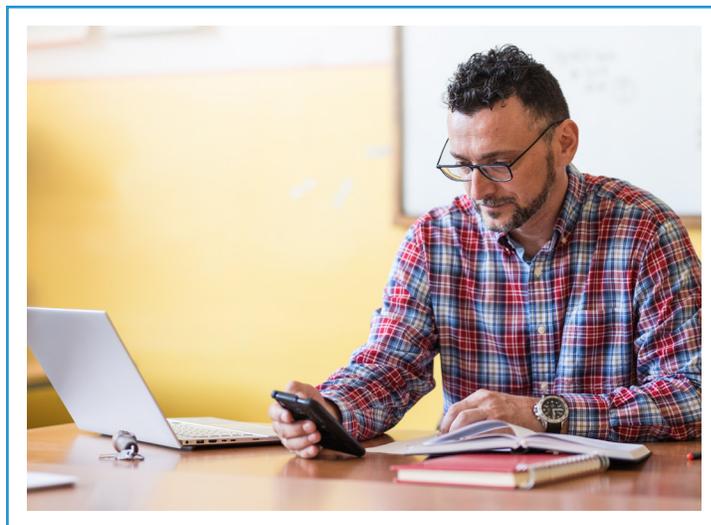
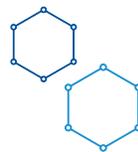
Moreover, ENA's online admin portal enables phone admins to easily change user settings, manage devices, configure phones, manage call groups, and more. “With this new system, we were able to streamline our data and organize phone number extensions by department and location,” said Gosch.

ON THE HORIZON

With their migration to cloud-based VoIP complete, Judson's sustainable and scalable phone system can easily handle the district's future growth.

When asked what's next, Gosch explained how her team is just getting started in transforming Judson into a future-focused district.

“We've spent the last year and a half shoring up our cybersecurity and now we're looking at other systems including cabling, switches, wiring, cameras, visitor check-in, and more,” she said. “We're also looking at creating model classrooms, adding interactive panels, adding new district academies, potentially setting up an Esports program, and upgrading our projection systems. There's a lot of exciting things on the horizon for Judson.”



Learn more about ENA's cost-effective and reliable VoIP solutions

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