



Out With the Old and In With the New!

Manchester City Schools Dials Back the Paperwork and Cuts Costs With ENA SmartVoice

As the old saying goes, “Happy Wife, Happy Life,” but in the K-12 sector, it’s more like “Happy Finance Department, Happy Everyone!” Manchester City Schools’ Director of Technology Mark Howell embraces this mantra and is always striving to streamline his district’s costs while still providing his teachers and students access to effective and efficient 21st-century learning and communication tools. One identified area of improvement concerned the district’s outdated phone system. The district was looking to implement a low-maintenance, reliable and cost-effective VoIP solution that simplified the district’s billing processes. After conducting a thorough review of the latest voice solutions, Mark and his team selected ENA SmartVoice. One hundred fifty plus phones later (and billing reduced to a single page!), Mark and his district’s finance department couldn’t be happier.



▲ Manchester City Schools’ Director of Technology Mark Howell enjoying ENA SmartVoice, ENA’s cost-effective, cloud-based and hosted VoIP solution.

ENA SmartVoice is ENA’s fully managed, cloud-based solution that converges voice and data onto one network, lowers the total cost of ownership and ensures a seamless path to future growth—all while streamlining communications and better preparing school campuses for emergencies. ENA’s newest generation voice offering is Priority 1 E-rate eligible and offers robust call forwarding, click-to-call, one-to-many intercom, voicemail to e-mail and numerous call-flow options.

Making the Switch

For Mark and his team, ENA SmartVoice’s vast feature set and low-price offering have been a refreshing change from their old phone system. “When we started looking at new VoIP solutions, we focused on two primary areas: price and billing,” states Mark. “With our other phone system, we had to have an individual PBX at every location. We had masses of equipment everywhere. When we started checking into pricing, we discovered that replacing our current PBX system was going to cost approximately \$125,000 and it wasn’t even VoIP. We really wanted VoIP because of the ease.”

In addition to its high price tag, the district’s prior voice system came with a complicated billing system that grew to be too much of a headache. “Our billing with the other vendor was 69 pages front and back,” says Mark. “We never understood what we were paying for. It was a complete mess. It was like a witch-hunt trying to track our costs and determine what was going on.”

ENA SmartVoice was the perfect solution, as it met the district’s pricing and simplified billing criteria. “We selected ENA [SmartVoice] because it was a hosted system,” shares Mark. “The fact that we didn’t have to buy servers, extra switches and other equipment to run our phone system was a big draw for us. Also, ENA’s one-page billing put our

finance department at ease. I also knew we could count on ENA's customer support in case we ever had issues. We've used other ENA products in the past, and I know the type of support ENA provides. All of those factors combined made the switch to ENA SmartVoice a no-brainer for us."

A Smooth Transition

The word "installation" can strike fear in the heart of even the bravest technology director, so Mark and his team wanted to ensure they had a thorough, well-designed implementation plan in place before introducing a new phone system into the district. "Once we made the decision to go with ENA SmartVoice, we immediately started planning with ENA's Brian Summers," shares Mark. "Brian designed the whole plan for our district. I kind of knew what I wanted to do, so I spoke with Brian and let him know that we were in the process of wiring for our network, our wireless and for ENA's new phone solution, and that I wanted to design the VoIP system around this new wiring. Brian visited our district, and we laid it all down on paper, which was a huge help to me. He went back to his ENA team, and he set it up for us. It was great because he kept me in the loop, so I always knew what ENA was doing, and they always knew what I was doing. It was just a very, very seamless implementation. When ENA plans a project, they do it very well."



▲ Last August, more than 150 new phones were installed in Manchester City Schools as part of its ENA SmartVoice integration, including Manchester's Westwood Elementary School. While the rest of the district's faculty members are enjoying the solution's vast feature set, Manchester's financial department is breathing easy thanks to the solution's simple one-page billing and low cost.

Training is also a vital component when introducing any new technology into a school district. Luckily, ENA Senior Product Manager Amanda Yoders was available to lend a helping hand. "Amanda came down for the day and trained me and our board secretary on the admin side of ENA SmartVoice," says Mark. "We also had three school secretaries who underwent some training. Once we saw the portal and we learned how to look at extensions, change some of the settings and set up the auto attendant, we were good to go. We also hosted a fifteen minute faculty meeting at each school where the staff learned about the new phones and were instructed how to set up voicemail. I probably had ten people request that I reset their pin number because they lost them. I love the fact that I have access to the portal and that I can take care of that for them—or that I can choose to call ENA and ask them to reset the pins for me. The fact that we now have support from both sides—both from within the school and at ENA—is great."

Having Fun With New Features

Although price was one of the key drivers behind the decision to switch to ENA SmartVoice, Mark and his team are enjoying the perks that come with having an up-to-date VoIP system. "I really enjoy the push-to-talk feature. It's really cool," says Mark. "I also really like the portal. I love that I can go in and change settings within the portal without having to call ENA. I wish we had that level of functionality and control with everything." Other features such as ENA SmartVoice's four-digit dialing option, robust call forwarding capability and user-friendly voicemail system are also appreciated by Mark and his team. "The ease of setting up voicemail and forwarding calls to your cellphone is great," offers Mark. "I don't have to worry about server settings, backing it up and all of those other miscellaneous things. You plug in, provision it and it works. And if it doesn't work for some reason—for example, I had a few handsets that weren't working—I can call ENA. The support I receive from ENA is probably the feature that I enjoy the most."

With new phones in every single classroom, office, library and cafeteria, Manchester City Schools is streamlining its communications and ensuring a seamless path to future growth. And with ENA by their side, Mark and his team know they have a reliable partner they can count on to meet and exceed their VoIP needs and expectations.

