

## Birdville Independent School District

**Birdville ISD Show-and-Tells Everyone About New High-Performance Network Infrastructure by CommScope Enterprise Solutions**



Birdville Independent School District (BISD) is one of the most prestigious districts in Texas. The district's 32 campuses stretch across 40 square miles northeast of Fort Worth, Texas, with elementary and secondary schools in Haltom City, North Richland Hills, Watauga, Richland Hills and Hurst. BISD is committed to excellence in education. In 2007, 16 of the 21 elementary schools received "Recognized" or "Exemplary" status from the Texas Education Agency – some of the highest honors a school can receive.



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William Tew, Director, Calence Cabling

#### **The situation: Birdville ISD aims at making an ‘archaic’ network a thing of the past**

When Dr. Stephen F. Waddell was brought in as Birdville ISD superintendent in 2002, one of his visions for the district was to create a strong technology platform that students, faculty, parents and the rest of the BISD community could utilize to communicate and gather information. With technology advancing at a rapid pace, the new BISD administration was looking for ways to make improvements on their current system.

With Waddell having past success in network upgrades at his former district, Tulosos-Midway ISD, he decided to tap the leadership of Julie Wallace, former Tulosos-Midway ISD and current Birdville ISD executive director of technology and information management systems (TIMS). Upon her evaluation of the existing BISD network, Wallace realized BISD was working with an “archaic system.”

“The outdated network was extremely unreliable,” Wallace said. “At most of the 32 campuses, the network infrastructure was a hodgepodge of different products, brands and installation methods. The network lacked uniformity, making it difficult for our TIMS specialists to be on the same page. It was a real mess.”

While network infrastructure was troubling the TIMS department, similar problems trickled down to the faculty and staff around the district. With most districts encouraging staff members to file grades, lesson plans and other daily work through the network, the faculty was forced to contend with network downtime and other erroneous messages from the network. The outdated network wasn’t able to handle the increased bandwidth and the amount of traffic occupying the existing network. Of the total amount of technical support requests received to the district’s TIMS department, Wallace attributed the majority of the queries to “lack of reliability in the network.”

After her evaluation of the network, Wallace and the TIMS department created a needs assessment and constructed a five-year plan that addressed each need accordingly. One of the top items on the list was a high-performance network infrastructure to help ensure the district’s investment was “future-proof” and wouldn’t become obsolete in five years. With \$12 million from a recently approved bond package designated toward the network upgrade, the BISD plan was ready for action, but successful implementation required the help of an expert.

#### **The solution: CommScope Enterprise Solutions passes with flying colors**

Birdville ISD selected Calence, LLC – a CommScope Enterprise BusinessPartner – to help restructure the network. Wallace had previous success when working with Calence at Tulosos-Midway ISD. By turning to Calence once again, Wallace and the rest of the district could rest assured that they were getting the most advanced cabling technology with adherence to the highest standards of performance, quality and reliability.

After reviewing the district’s unique requirements, a totally converged network seemed like the best option for BISD. Voice, data, video and other intelligent building solutions, such as heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC), and security cameras, were all features of the future network. Combining energy cost, comfort, convenience and safety through one network was BISD’s goal. The approach was unique, but Calence understood BISD’s situation and brought in CommScope’s SYSTIMAX product line to address those needs.

“When our customers want innovative, high-performing networks, SYSTIMAX cabling solutions are the perfect fit,” Calence Cabling Director William Tew said. “Birdville ISD, like many SYSTIMAX customers, was looking for a network infrastructure that was on the cutting-edge of technology. With voice, data and other intelligent features streaming on the network, the BISD administration made the right infrastructure solution choice to meet its needs.”

BISD and Calence did a trial SYSTIMAX installation at a new elementary school two years ago. Once BISD administration saw how well the high-performance converged network worked, it gave the greenlight to the rest of the project. In March 2007, Tew and fellow Calence project leaders John Riley and Randy Medlock began leading a team of 30 technicians on a network restructure that spanned 11 multi-floor buildings and covered approximately 1.3 million square feet. The project required 1.5 million feet of the SYSTIMAX® GigaSPEED® XL cabling solution and another 15,000 feet of the fiber-optic SYSTIMAX® LazrSPEED® solution. The new cabling replaced previous cabling infrastructures that had not been updated in more than 10 years.

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Scott Forester, Technology Manager, BIRD

**The results: Birdville ISD gets four gold stars for its network upgrade decision**

Since the network restructure, BIRD Technology Manager Scott Forester estimates the speed of the network has increased by 300 percent. Also, the upgrade enabled the district to increase network storage from one terabyte to 15 terabytes. Most importantly, the TMS support requests from BIRD faculty and staff were reduced by 40 percent, showing an increase in dependability in the network.

Forester was onsite with Calence for most of the project. Together, the group approached each campus, evaluated the site’s needs, planned the appropriate cabling procedure for the more than 25-year-old buildings and implemented the new cabling flawlessly.

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With Birdville ISD operating a totally converged network, the district has noticed energy savings with its new network. Energy costs have decreased from previous years, but the district won’t know the system’s total savings until 2008.

In addition, Forester and Tew also saved the district \$200,000 by opting to purchase all of the copper GigaSPEED XL cabling solution early and store it to protect themselves against the fluctuation in copper prices.

Birdville ISD’s converged network is creating quite the buzz among other school districts around the state. Wallace said she often receives calls asking about BIRD’s high-performance network and has given tours to other schools interested in similar upgrades. With the high-grade installation and new network speeds, Birdville ISD has one of the highest-performing networks among Texas independent school districts.

“It’s one thing to have the most sophisticated technology equipment running through your network, but those high-priced computers won’t bear much weight running over a low-performing network,” Wallace said. “At BIRD, we are fortunate enough to have an administration that understands the need for a high-performance network, especially with much of today’s teaching styles dependent on technology. Part of our goal is to create the best learning environment for BIRD students; the network upgrade helps us accomplish that goal.”

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