

HOW A RURAL COLORADO SCHOOL DISTRICT SAVED THOUSANDS AND SECURED CONNECTIVITY WITH CISCO WEBEX CALLING

AT A GLANCE

- **Client Profile:**
Colorado Rural
County School
District (anonymous)
- **Industry:** K-12
Education
- **Scale:** 8 Buildings |
300 Users | 1,900
Students
- **Services:** Cloud
Migration, Cisco
Webex Calling, E911
Compliance (RedSky)
- **Key Result:** \$30k
CapEx Savings | Zero
Disruption

DOING MORE WITH LESS: A BLUEPRINT FOR RURAL MODERNIZATION

Managing IT for a rural school district requires balancing strict budgets with the absolute need for safety and reliability. For one rural Colorado county school district, that balance was threatened by an aging phone system that was becoming a financial and security liability. The servers were failing, the software was outdated, and the complexity of the system made it a burden for staff to manage.

This case study highlights how 954 Consultants guided this client through a seamless cloud migration, simplifying their daily operations, ensuring full legal compliance, and saving the district time and resources in the process.

AGING HARDWARE & COMPLEXITY DEBT

The school district was operating on a legacy, onsite call processing solution that had become a significant risk. The physical servers powering the system were approaching End of Life (EOL), and the software was several versions behind, leaving the district vulnerable.

Beyond hardware risks, the district faced a complexity debt. Over years of operation, the system had accumulated a tangle of inconsistent programming.

- **Broken Call Flows:** Call handlers (the "press 1 for administration" menus) were riddled with dead ends, directing callers to extensions that no longer existed or routing calls to the wrong personnel.
- **Knowledge Gaps:** Frequent IT staff turnover meant the current team had to decipher a maze of customizations without a clear map, making basic maintenance a struggle.

A SEAMLESS MIGRATION TO THE CLOUD

We circumvented the need for a costly hardware refresh by migrating the district to Cisco Webex Calling. This transition shifted the district from a fragile, onsite model to a fully cloud-operated environment.

To address the complexity issues, we applied our simplification focus, which involves demystifying the environment rather than just lifting and shifting old data. This involved us engaging in a collaborative discovery process with district staff to understand the intent behind the old call flows. This helped our engineers clean up the old programming information, standardize the configurations, and align the system with the district's actual communication needs.

Additionally, we implemented a cloud-based carrier solution. This provided the district with redundant Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) connectivity, eliminating reliance on a single local carrier and removing the need for local termination hardware.

Zero Disruption Implementation

Understanding the district's need for continuity, the entire project was completed in one month, with the final migration implemented overnight, ensuring zero downtime during school hours. Crucially, the district was able to reuse their existing phones, eliminating the time and expense of physically swapping out hardware in classrooms.

PRIORITIZING SAFETY: MEETING FEDERAL LAW

Modernization wasn't just about convenience; it was about safety. The legacy system struggled to meet modern safety standards. We implemented RedSky, a solution integrated directly into Cisco Webex, to ensure the district met critical legal compliance requirements such as:

- **Kari's Law:** The new system allows anyone to dial 911 directly from any classroom phone without needing to dial a prefix (like "9") first. This eliminates confusion in high-stress emergencies.
- **Ray Baum's Act:** The solution provides dispatchable location data. Because Cisco phones are nomadic, if a teacher moves a phone to a different room, RedSky automatically updates its location. This ensures emergency responders know exactly where to go, rather than just arriving at the front address.



WHY CISCO WEBEX CALLING?

As a Cisco Partner, we recommended Webex Calling to address the district's need for reliability without the maintenance burden.



Simplified Management:

For small IT teams, Webex offers a centralized dashboard to manage multiple campuses. This aligns with our goal of enabling customer self-management.



Always Current:

The cloud-native architecture means schools are always on the latest version without downtime for upgrades or patches.



Predictable Costs:

By moving from a CapEx model (buying servers) to a subscription model, the district eliminated unexpected repair costs.

SAVINGS AND LONG-TERM STABILITY

By avoiding the purchase of new physical servers and reusing existing endpoints, the district realized an immediate capital savings of approximately \$30,000.

The Webex implementation delivered measurable outcomes, including:

- **Financial Efficiency:** Eliminated the budget cycle for server replacements and costly software upgrade projects.
- **Operational Simplicity:** Replaced a fractured programming landscape with a streamlined, consistent configuration that is easy for current IT staff to manage.
- **Enhanced Reliability:** The new cloud-based carrier provides redundancy, ensuring that communication lines remain open between schools, parents, and emergency services even if local carrier issues arise.
- **Scalability:** The solution now supports 300 users and 500 extensions with the flexibility to scale easily as the student body of 1,900 grows.



Cisco has fundamentally changed the equation for school districts. The transition from legacy on-prem hardware to the cloud is no longer a painful overhaul, it's a seamless migration. When you combine that ease of use with the immediate cost savings, the choice to modernize becomes undeniable.

— Leonard Lane, President & CEO, 954 Consultants

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954 Consultants is a diversity-owned firm with over 30 years of leadership experience in the IT space. We prioritize the health and wealth of our employees and customers over manufacturer-driven sales goals. Whether you need to modernize a K-12 network or secure a mid-market enterprise, we deliver best-in-class service designed to make your life simpler.

**Ready to modernize your infrastructure?
Let's talk.**

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