

CareHawk[®] Enhances Emergency Response with Unified Communication Systems

Forest Hills Public School District demonstrates its commitment to prioritizing safety and security while leveraging innovative IP solutions by CareHawk to overcome their technological challenges.



CASE STUDY



Multicampus district-wide communication facilitates efficient emergency response



"It's our goal to implement a modern, more capable, customizable, and uniform system throughout the school district."

Benjamin Hennip - Voice/Data Engineer Forest Hills Public Schools



"Compared to other systems we considered, CareHawk offers a much more user-friendly interface, high quality and visually appealing hardware, better expandability and much better ease of support." - Benjamin Hennip

Background

Effective emergency response systems are crucial for ensuring the safety and security of students and staff in schools. However, many educational institutions struggle with outdated technologies and disjointed systems, hindering their ability to respond efficiently to emergencies.

The Forest Hills Public School District, located near Grand Rapids, Michigan, faced similar challenges across its 17 schools. [Multiple manufacturers' systems, aged equipment, and inefficient communication between buildings posed significant obstacles to effective emergency response.](#)

Problem Statement

Forest Hills Public School grapples with a disparate array of systems across its campuses. These systems are aging and prone to frequent failures, requiring costly repairs. Moreover, the lack of interoperability between different systems hinders seamless communication during emergencies.

Forest Hills recognizes the importance of standardizing its technology infrastructure,

streamlining communication, and enhancing emergency response capabilities across all its schools.

"Our existing system is aging, making it difficult to get parts and support services. There is also no way to troubleshoot or check the status of the system from off-site. For a few of our buildings, it has become unreliable as additional needs have been identified and changes implemented. In addition, it is not user-friendly to operate for staff who are not very familiar with the system." - Benjamin Hennip

Objectives

1. Standardize on a unified technology platform for future scalability and interoperability.
2. Establish multi-system communication capabilities to facilitate efficient emergency response and everyday communication.
3. Implement Messaging Displays for visual alerts and enable classroom lockdowns with precise location identification.

Methodology

Forest Hills Public School District collaborated with Parkway Electric, a trusted integrator, to address its technological challenges. [Parkway Electric conducted comprehensive on-site assessments and needs analysis across the school district, identifying existing infrastructure, system requirements, and desired outcomes.](#)

Leveraging its longstanding relationship with the district, Parkway Electric provided detailed drawings and specifications for the multi-school project. The procurement phase involved a thorough bidding process, ensuring competitive pricing and alignment with the district's requirements.

Solution/Implementation

After careful evaluation, Forest Hills Public School opted for a comprehensive solution provided by CareHawk® and Parkway Electric. [The solution included installing CH2000IP systems, high-definition Messaging Displays with strobes, VCall+ mobile](#)

alerts, and Spotlight™ technology for enhanced situational awareness and Classroom Lockdown Acknowledgement.

The phased implementation plan aimed to install systems in three schools in the first quarter of 2024, with the remaining 14 schools scheduled for installation in subsequent phases, subject to funding availability. This tiered approach allowed for systematic deployment while ensuring minimal disruption to academic activities. Despite not being the lowest bid option, the chosen solution offered the best combination of features, value, and modern technology to meet the district's long-term needs.

Outcome

With this move to standardize to the CareHawk Spotlight technology, Forest Hills achieved all of its objectives. The district is positioned to tackle the evolving landscape of school safety and enhanced emergency response with CareHawk's modern future-ready technologies.

"As a longtime partner of CareHawk, Parkway has witnessed firsthand the exceptional reliability and user-friendliness of its mass communication and safety technologies. CareHawk's products enhance emergency response and daily school intercom and paging on a district level, making them an invaluable asset to a school district like Forest Hills. We confidently recommend CareHawk for unparalleled support and innovative solutions to meet the needs of our school customers now and for the future."

- Brian Rotman, Parkway



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