



## CASE STUDY

### Hawkswood Schools

#### SOLUTION SUMMARY

- Eastern DataComm helped **Hawkswood School** replace a trouble-plagued hosted phone system with a state-of-the-art ShoreTel Unified Communications platform.
- With knowledge of the latest carrier services and programs, **Eastern DataComm** enabled **Hawkswood** to offset the cost of the ShoreTel solution while reducing its monthly telecom spend.
- Seamless implementation provided rapid time-to-value of the ShoreTel platform.
- **Eastern DataComm** also leveraged its core expertise in data networking to resolve connectivity problems between the school's buildings.
- The system provides much-needed safety functionality such as group and overhead paging and E911 capabilities.
- The system's intuitive interface makes it easy for users to take advantage of directory and call-handling features.

**Eastern DataComm** enables **Hawkswood School** to eliminate a poorly functioning hosted system, gaining a state-of-the-art ShoreTel platform, critical safety features and expert local support – all at no capital cost.

Hawkswood School provides special education services to students age 3 through 21 who have multiple, complex disabilities. Its developmentally appropriate curriculum includes language, math, science, technology, social studies, art, health and physical education in alignment with New Jersey standards. The Eatontown, N.J., school has served the needs of more than 3,000 children since it opened its doors in 1976.

**Hawkswood** is innovative in its use of technology to meet student needs, but looks for outside help with voice and data systems that are ancillary to its core focus. The school decided to obtain a hosted phone system through its cable service provider under a five-year contract that included the physical hardware, phone lines and Internet access. After the five years was up, the phone system went back to the service provider unless the school renewed for another 5 year contract.

The school encountered all manner of problems. It took nine months from the date the contract was signed for the system to be installed, then phones didn't work and there were issues with network connectivity. There was no way to call 911 in an emergency. Third-party technicians tried to troubleshoot the problems over the course of six months with no success.

Fed up with more than a year of headaches, **Hawkswood** called **Eastern DataComm**.

Within a short time the school had a state-of-the-art ShoreTel phone system with all the latest functionality.

After analyzing the school's needs, the **Eastern DataComm** team determined that the hosted solution was not the right fit. They recommended the ShoreTel Unified Communications system, and explained that by switching telecom carriers the school could take advantage of a program that would offset the cost of the ShoreTel equipment. **Eastern DataComm** was even able to reduce the school's monthly telecom expense.

"The phones were completely paid for and we get to keep them after the five years," said Cody Hochstrasser, IT Technician, **Hawkswood School**.

## PROBLEM SOLVED

**Eastern DataComm** took the time to thoroughly understand the school's needs, then handled the implementation from end to end. Within a short time the school had a state-of-the-art ShoreTel phone system with all the latest functionality.

"We did a walk around first and **Eastern DataComm** determined what types of phones we needed. Everything went really smoothly and it didn't take long," Hochstrasser said. "Instead of waiting a week for a reply to an email, like we did with the other company, we'd have an actual conversation with **Eastern DataComm** throughout the day.

"There was never an issue where we had a group of phones that weren't working. When it came time for installation, we just updated the phones, put them where they needed to be, programmed them into the ShoreTel Director, and everything was up and working."

Of course, **Eastern DataComm's** core expertise is in the data network infrastructure that supports the unified communications system. As a result, the team was also able to resolve the school's network problems.

"They were able to accurately diagnose some firewall issues that were causing connectivity problems between our two buildings," said Hochstrasser. "It's helpful to have a provider who not only knows the phones but the net-work side as well. I feel like they really know their stuff."

The ShoreTel system provides much-needed safety features for the school. In addition to enabling group paging over the ShoreTel phones, the system can connect with overhead paging systems. **Eastern DataComm** also implemented an E911 solution so that **Hawkswood** staff can quickly reach first responders in an emergency.

"We like how the emergency system shows on the receptionist's console who dialed 911," Hochstrasser said. "We are also getting speakers in the hallways that can tie into the phone system so that you can hear emergency notifications in the hallways. **Eastern DataComm** is providing a solution that will work very well for us."

## GREAT RELATIONSHIP

**Hawkswood** also appreciates the call-handling features of the ShoreTel platform — users can easily set up the ShoreTel Communicator software to transfer calls, send them directly to voice mail or forward them to a mobile phone.

"Our users aren't very tech savvy but they really like the phones. They feel they're sleek-looking and easy to use," said Hochstrasser. "We like how the voice mail can be sent to email with this system. The directory feature on the phones is great as well — you don't have to have a piece of paper telling you everybody's extension."

Although the ShoreTel solution is fairly intuitive, **Eastern DataComm** provided end-user and administrator training to ensure that **Hawkswood** gains maximum value from the system.

"They trained the receptionists on how to transfer calls and things like that, and they trained me on how to use the ShoreTel Director software," Hochstrasser said. "I really like it. It's very easy to change where a phone is located, who's using the phone, and set up voice mail."

Most of all, Hochstrasser is pleased with the relationship with **Eastern DataComm**. Rather than getting the runaround, he receives responsive support from a local provider who's in it for the long haul.

"The support end is very good," he said. "Everyone I talk to seems happy to help."

While cloud-based phone systems can offer benefits, not all hosted solutions are created equal. **Hawkswood School** learned that the right technology from the right provider is the most important consideration.

"The hosted solution might have worked if we had better support, but I feel like the **Eastern DataComm**/ShoreTel combo is a great deal," said Hochstrasser. "They work hand-in-hand very well."