

## Case Study

# Illinois School District Improves Situational Awareness and Shortens Response Time

### Solution Overview

#### Industry

- Education

#### Radios

- 40 MOTOTRBO SL 7550

#### Solution

- MOTOTRBO Capacity Plus Network
- Telephone Interconnect (RBX)

#### Solution Partners

- Teldio
- Chicago Communications LLC
- Motorola Solutions

Located in Mundelein, Illinois, in the northwestern suburb outside Chicago, Fremont School District 79 (SD 79) is composed of three schools: elementary, intermediate and middle. The district enrolls over 2,200 students in kindergarten through eighth grade, covers a 36-square mile area, and draws from seven neighboring communities.

As Mike Tanner, their Director of Business Services points out, in the aftermath of an alarming number of incidents of school violence around the nation, their district placed even greater emphasis on tightening campus security and creating a culture of increased safety for students and school personnel.

### The Challenge

#### Replace Push-to-Talk Cellular with Reliable Real-Time Communications

A convergence of factors – the lack of coverage in certain areas of the schools, spotty cell reception, the decommissioning of the Nextel cellular service along with an upcoming renewal cycle with the carrier – was the catalyst for the district's search for a robust communication solution.

“Our cell signal was weak,” explains Mike Tanner. “It didn’t reach into the lower levels of our schools where we really needed it, such as the cafeteria, storage and mechanical rooms. Our cell coverage was not only unreliable, but Nextel stopped supporting the push-to-talk network which eliminated the redundancy we wanted to have in a communication system.”

#### Connect Radios Directly to 9-1-1 Call Centers

Whether it is a routine sports injury which requires medical attention or an unusual event such as a missing student that triggers a countywide alert, Fremont SD 79 wanted to maintain a direct line of communication with the 9-1-1 call center in Lake County.

“One of the challenges for us from an EMS and law enforcement standpoint is our isolated location,” explains Mike Tanner. “It might take 10 minutes for a deputy sheriff or 15 minutes for an ambulance to arrive, so we wanted to shorten that response time by enabling our people to talk directly to a dispatcher in an emergency instead of being relayed through an office. This capability was very important.”

## The Solution

### MOTOTRBO Capacity Plus Radio Network & Teldio RBX Application

In December 2014, Fremont SD 79 switched from Nextel push-to-talk cell phones to MOTOTRBO SL 7550 portable radios. Forty portable radios were distributed to front line administrators, the business office, transportation director, custodians, technology staff, playground aides and PE instructors who often teach students off campus. Even when personnel are out of sight, they are seamlessly within radio contact.



Teldio's advanced telephone interconnect, Radio Branch Exchange (RBX) was added to the radio network to allow radio users to make and receive phone calls directly on their MOTOTRBO digital radios. Integrating into the district's PBX phone system, employees can make a call from a MOTOTRBO radio directly to 9-1-1 dispatchers. "This capability is

important for all our personnel, but particularly for those who are outside monitoring playgrounds and sports activities and don't have access to a landline in the building in an emergency," says Mike Tanner.



**"We use MOTOTRBO radios to support potential security incidents as well as streamline everyday operations. However, having an instant connection to 9-1-1 is very important to us."**

**Mike Tanner, Director of Business Services, Fremont SD 79**



## The Result

### Faster Collaboration and Better Situational Awareness

The ability to streamline communications with MOTOTRBO group calling creates greater safety and efficiency. "In the past, if a student was injured or missing from a building, we didn't have the capability of group calling with cell phones. Now with the various radio zones, we can provide situational awareness, at any time during the incident, to all the people responding. That's one of the key benefits of MOTOTRBO radios," says Tanner.

### Excellent Coverage and Clarity, in Buildings and Beyond

The installation of the MOTOTRBO repeater eliminated the coverage problems and extended the range of communications. MOTOTRBO radios connect the entire district, so if there is a bus accident or a need to move a school to an alternate location, the radios perform clearly and reliably. In addition, the school has been able to turn lower-level space into multiple classrooms that are reachable by radio – an unexpected benefit.

### 20 Percent Return on Investment

Fremont SD 79 realized the cost-saving benefits of MOTOTRBO radio from the start. "We were spending thousands of dollars a year to have a Nextel solution that was not working for us," says Mike Tanner. "Now we have 20 percent return on investment for enhanced capabilities with MOTOTRBO. For us, the decision was a no brainer."

### Increased Safety for Schools, and Interoperability with Public Safety

Today, MOTOTRBO radios are a key component of the district's integrated security plan. By being able to talk directly with 9-1-1 dispatchers, it enables them to shorten response time with first responders.

## Key Benefits

- Resilient & reliable communications
- Accelerated response times with first responders
- Instant, efficient group calling
- Clear, continuous coverage district-wide
- Excellent return on investment and no monthly charges

**"We were spending thousands of dollars a year to have a Nextel solution that was not working for us, Not only did we eliminate cell phones, but our personnel are very satisfied with MOTOTRBO radios as the best tool for managing work around campus."**

Mike Tanner