

## TWCBC Network Gives Budget-Conscious Kansas School District Technology-Rich Classrooms

The intersection of teaching and technology can be tricky for large school districts, as they must provide the resources to best enhance education while heeding budgetary realities.

Shawnee Mission School District, which serves about 28,000 students in a suburban county southwest of Kansas City, Kansas, faced just such a dilemma. They needed to ramp up the bandwidth, speed and reliability of their telecommunications capabilities – but faced serious budget constraints, too.

So, they turned to the District's longtime cable TV provider – Time Warner Cable Business Class (TWCBC) – for a widespread Internet-centric upgrade that could help them overcome those challenges.

"We're consistently looking for ways to leverage our technology to support instruction," said Leigh Anne Neal, associate superintendent for communications. "Internet connectivity is a critical component for us as we meet the growing demand to incorporate more technology in the classroom."

Previously, Shawnee Mission's schools and other facilities used a T1 network from a large telco to access the Internet, but the slow speeds and inconsistent service made use of rich media technologies difficult or impossible. TWCBC, however, brought its wholly-owned, fiber-rich network to all of the District 46 schools, instantly increasing technology-aided educational opportunities for students and teachers.

"Time Warner Cable's engineers were extremely helpful in fine-tuning our solution," noted Bill Sandburg, telecommunications supervisor for the District. "Now, we have a very reliable and very scalable network. It's a quantum jump for us."

For access to the District's primary data centers and to carry its data and voice traffic, TWCBC has installed an up to 1 Gbps Metro Ethernet Wide Area Network (EWAN) point-to-multipoint network configuration. For each of the District's schools and other facilities, TWCBC is also providing Dedicated Internet Access (DIA), with up to 200 Mbps Internet speed. Recently, Shawnee Mission School District has doubled its Internet speed and is positioned to continue to increase speeds as their demand for bandwidth increases.

Importantly, given the financial burdens all school district's face, nearly 60 percent of the cost associated with the Ethernet portion of the District's network is covered by the federal E-Rate funding program. E-Rate provides discounts to assist many U.S. schools and libraries in obtaining affordable telecommunications and Internet access.

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**Bill Sandburg,**  
Telecommunications Supervisor  
and **Leigh Anne Neal,**  
Associate Superintendent for Communications,  
Shawnee Mission School District



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## TIME WARNER CABLE BUSINESS CLASS

According to Neal, the network upgrade has paid immediate dividends in the classroom, too. "The expansion allows our teachers and students to access a broad range of rich media for their research and instructional activities," she explained, noting as examples video streaming of live events, access to more instructional support resources and virtual training of faculty.

TWCBC's EWAN service is an excellent choice for enterprises, like school districts, needing any-to-any communication between and among centralized and branch locations. A cost-effective alternative to legacy technologies, it allows Shawnee Mission to lower its total cost of ownership by reducing capital outlays on routers, switches and hardware. The District can also take advantage of scalable bandwidth, from speeds up to 10 Gbps, to support the convergence of data, voice and video services.

Built on standardized, MEF-compliant Ethernet protocols, the EWAN service is easy to understand and manage. It comes with guarantees and other parameters defined as part of a Service Level Agreement (SLA).

For most locations, Shawnee Mission is using DIA, which delivers a continuously protected link between the District's network and the Internet. DIA is designed for locations with more than 20 users or that run technology requiring high availability and low latency, such as servers or audio conferencing.

One of Shawnee Mission's most important capabilities, thanks to its new network, is utilizing a host of high-bandwidth video-related services, including extensive video streaming. According to Sandburg, the TWCBC network enables the District to transport Webcast video for live events as well as school-produced programming for Johnson County cable TV providers.

Neal noted that a popular new feature is the live broadcasting of graduation ceremonies and other programs, enabling relatives and friends unable to attend a ceremony in person to view the event in real time.

"We have had the families of international exchange students watch on the Internet, from their homes, as their students graduate," Neal marveled. "It's very exciting to now have this capability."

Sandburg has been impressed by TWCBC's attentive customer service, beginning with the collaborative design and implementation of the network. "It was a fairly large deployment and the engineers and technicians were great to work with. And we finished a couple of months ahead of schedule."

Ongoing customer support is a benefit, too, as Sandburg noted that TWCBC provides a dedicated 800 number for him to use – giving him immediate access to a technician in a TWCBC operations center if he has questions or service requests.

Added Sandburg: "With this network in place, we'll be able to leverage additional ways to advance our technology in the future."

### About Time Warner Cable Business Class

Time Warner Cable Business Class, a division of Time Warner Cable (NYSE: TWC), offers a full complement of business communications tools to small- and medium-sized businesses and enterprise-sized companies. Its phone, Internet, Ethernet, cable TV and security solutions are enhanced by award-winning customer service and local support teams. Time Warner Cable Business Class was founded in 1998, offering high-speed Internet to small businesses. Today, it serves approximately 450,000 business customers throughout Time Warner Cable's markets.

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