



SUCCESS STORY: FOREST LAKE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

From humble beginnings as a preschool in 1966, Forest Lake Christian School in Auburn, California has since grown to occupy two campuses and is one of the leading college preparatory high schools in the area. Students receive opportunities for growth through leadership, extensive co-curricular programs, and spiritual development.

LEARN HOW GOTOCONNECT EMPOWERED FOREST LAKE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL THROUGH MODERNIZED COMMUNICATIONS

Challenge

As superintendent at Forest Lake Christian School, Andrew Ricabal had a vision for incorporating technology into the school's academic goals, from increasing the selection of online classes for students, to improving communication with families. But they had an existing infrastructure that required updating. "When I got to Forest Lake, one of our biggest issues was technology. I walked onto campus and asked, 'What's our download speed?' And it wasn't good. I walked into our server room, and we had 17 networks – and yet you couldn't access Internet anywhere. If you wanted to make a phone call, there were only two spots on campus where you could do it," confessed Ricabal.

While discussing the infrastructure overhaul, the school board focused on the need for a more effective phone system. "We were talking about not having phones in classrooms," Ricabal said. "And wanting a new bell system. Ken Bywater is one of our board members, and he said, 'Hey, I know some people. We could talk to them about speakers and bells.' So, we started a conversation with GoToConnect, formerly Jive."

Solution

With GoToConnect, tasks that used to be cumbersome and time-consuming are now easy and straightforward, such as performing communications tasks like sending out a page. "We're able to just hit a button and say, 'all students need to be aware this is going on.' It was so easy to do that. Twenty minutes after the system was installed, our vice principal was able to get on and make an announcement right off the bat." GoToConnect has also made system management simple and easy. "I'm most excited about how it's making my job easier," Ricabal said. "We have six people who make up the school's leadership. Six people to run the entire organization, from communications to marketing to business to discipline to academics. We wear a lot of hats. So, any time we could take one aspect of our jobs and simplify it, yet be better at it at the same time? Not only is that a no-brainer – it's exciting!"

GoToConnect's connectivity and ease of use is due, in part, to its integration with InformaCast's mass-notification system from Singlewire Software. InformaCast helps K-12 schools build alerts that can reach a variety of devices. This helps schools spread safety information that reaches everyone in the event of a crisis. "The integration with InformaCast helps us manage bell schedules for three different buildings simultaneously," Ricabal said. "We also have the added benefit of a robust mass-notification system we can use to send alerts if our school ever faces an emergency situation."

Ricabal said the bell system has been a challenge for Forest Lake since before he started. "But now, for the first time, we have consistent bells. And we can change the sounds on them. Today we have a gobble for Thanksgiving. The most exciting part for us is that now, we can begin and end the day on time. That makes it so much easier when you're coordinating things like bus schedules."

Results

When asked what he'd say to other schools that were thinking about switching to GoToConnect and InformaCast, Ricabal said, "GoToConnect has made us more effective and more real-time when it comes to communications. Sure, it's just a phone, but the communication is the part that isn't hardware. It's that part the students and faculty take home with them. It's also the opportunities available to us now. That gets us excited for the future, and that's what you want in any school."

"With GoToConnect, there's so much more capacity for growth. Having a system that grows with us is a big deal. And it's not just the number of phones or the reach of the system. It's all about the options open to us now."

**Andrew Ricabal, Superintendent,
Forest Lake Christian School**

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