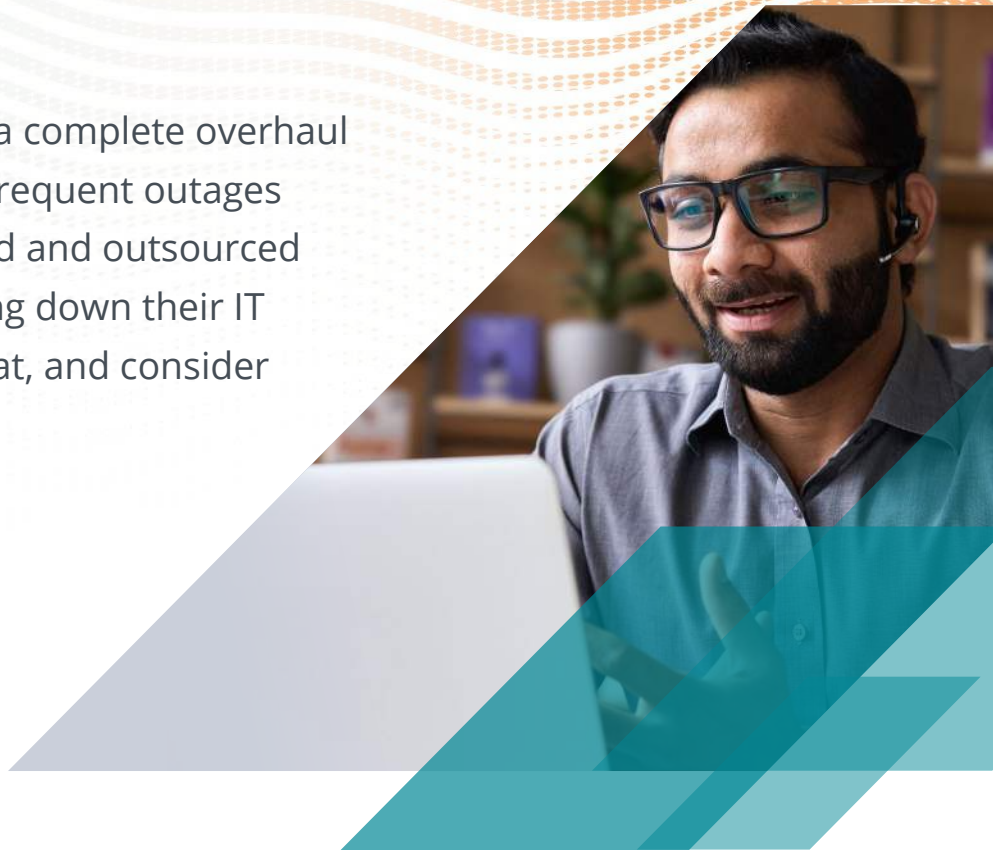Success Story | **Maconaquah School Corporation**

Transforming Communications and Simplifying IT Operations With Cloud Voice

Maconaquah Schools needed a complete overhaul of their aging phone system. Frequent outages and multiple layers of outdated and outsourced customer support was weighing down their IT staff. It was time to shed all that, and consider a cloud voice solution.

The Challenge

Maconaquah School Corporation is a small-to-medium-sized K-12 school district serving 2,300+ students and supporting four schools across six townships in north-central Indiana. Blending its historical agricultural roots with cutting edge technology and STEM-focused programs, Maconaquah is leading the way as a trailblazing district of the future.

When the district's aging phone system began negatively impacting users and staff, technology director Chris Percival knew embracing hosted communications was the next step in Maconaquah's digital transformation journey.

A phone system behind the times

Before migrating to the cloud, Maconaquah's on-premises phone system simply struggled to keep up.

> **"Our previous platform was at least eight years old and went down frequently. Any time we had a power outage we had to reboot the entire system in a very specific order – and even then, it struggled to come back on."**
>
> *Chris Percival,*
> *Technology Director*
> *Maconaquah School Corporation*

The Challenge (Continued)

In addition to its quirky and time consuming reboot process, multiple factors were creating issues for users:

- Standard features, like voicemail boxes, would often fail, leaving staff no way to leave or retrieve phone messages

- Complicated and costly equipment and systems made it difficult for staff to perform preventative maintenance, exacerbating the system's age-related issues

- Phones were failing across the district, causing disruptions in critical communications

- Simple administrative changes, such as creating mailboxes or new users, required a painstakingly complicated and time-consuming process

- The IT staff member who managed the phone system left the district, leaving a gap in telephony expertise

Moreover, Maconaquah's voice provider outsourced customer support. Therefore, every time an issue arose, they had to contact an outside vendor and pay an expensive service fee, often for subpar and delayed technical support.

"With so many annual school projects requiring budget priority, coming up with the large upfront capital costs for two new servers was going to be a challenge."

Chris Percival,
Technology Director
Maconaquah School Corporation

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The Solution

A new direction

Maconaquah began the process of evaluating the district's next move after discovering the upfront costs for an on-premises refresh were astronomical.

A broadband customer for years, Maconaquah technology director Chris Percival connected with ENA by Zayo at the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) conference and discussed cloud voice as a potential solution. After reaching out to vendors for quotes and conducting a cost- benefit analysis, it was clear cloud-based communications was the most cost-effective choice. Ultimately, Percival's long experience with the company's premier technical support guided his direction toward ENA by Zayo for their cloud-based phone system.

Now, Maconaquah is equipped with new features including pinpoint 911 for location-based reporting in emergencies, self-serve online administrative and user portals, and they no longer have to worry about installing phones lines, upgrading hardware, adding servers or switches – it's now all in the cloud. And for on-the-move staff, the solution includes mobile UCaaS, extending their professional phone numbers to their personal devices, so they can stay connected anytime from anywhere.

"For us it kept coming down to our confidence level in their customer service," explained Percival. "There were some vendors with similar offerings, pricing, and features. But we knew we would be getting 24/7 proactive customer service. It's tough to quantify how much that means."

The district moved forward with a new hosted phone platform and hasn't looked back since. Now Maconaquah schools and staff enjoy a robust cloud PBX feature set, including an auto attendant to help route calls, round-the-clock support for the IT team, all-inclusive technical support, and enterprise-level service quality and reliability.

> **"Moving to cloud voice was a great decision. The previous system was a pain to maintain, so this hosted platform has taken so many things off our plate as an IT team. The ease of the system is great – provisioning phones and updating them is a breeze."**
>
> *Chris Percival,*
> *Technology Director*
> *Maconaquah School Corporation*

Results

Service is king

With so many cloud voice vendors on the market, Percival encourages districts who are considering a phone migration to evaluate the level of customer service from vendors.

In fact, with such a positive customer service experience with Internet and cloud voice, Maconaquah also chose ENA by Zayo for DDoS Protection and managed firewall cybersecurity – moving these services to the cloud to mitigate the risk of internal IT specialists potentially leaving.

"Consolidating our critical IT services to a handful of trusted partners has put us in a much better position," said Percival. "If I or somebody on our team leaves, our critical infrastructure systems can be seamlessly transitioned without a huge learning curve or any devastating downtime."

Another benefit of consolidation is streamlined operations. Percival appreciates how his team can hop into his online portal and easily monitor their Internet access, WAN, firewall, and voice services.

"With other vendors, we have to babysit our open support tickets to make sure progress is happening – that makes me lose confidence in them. Access to advanced engineering support is only a phone call away. Within an hour of reporting an issue, an engineer is working on it and sending multiple updates to me and my team. And even if the problem is on our end, nine times out of ten, they will help point us in the right direction to getting it fixed."

Chris Percival,
Technology Director
Maconaquah School Corporation

Benefits

Finding trusted partners

While some may be wary about putting so many IT eggs in one vendor's basket, Percival explains it all comes down to being intentional about finding partners you trust.

Percival continues, "We know we can call customer support engineers and our account manager any time and we'll immediately have an advanced expert ready to help. I can't say enough about their engineers. Sometimes we forget about everything they do for us because everything just works – that's peace of mind."

> **"Even if a vendor's pricing is a little bit more, you gain so much by having someone that knows you, knows your network, and knows what you're trying to accomplish. Also, that you can rely on them and you don't have to call an overseas help desk and be passed around for hours."**

Chris Percival,
Technology Director
Maconaquah School Corporation

About Zayo

For more than 15 years, Zayo has empowered some of the world's largest and most innovative companies to connect what's next for their business. Zayo's future-ready network spans over 16.5 million fiber miles and 141,000 route miles. Zayo's tailored connectivity and edge solutions enable carriers, cloud providers, data centers, schools, and enterprises to deliver exceptional experiences, from core to cloud to edge.

Connect what's next for your business.

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