



## Application Story

### Kirksville School District, MO & Benjamin School, FL

### Teachers and Administrators Learn to Communicate Better with Secure Instant Messaging

The use of new and innovative technologies is not limited to the largest, wealthiest public school districts. In some cases, the smaller the district, the more easily and quickly it can evaluate, purchase and deploy new software. Nowhere else is this more evident than in the Kirksville School District in Kirksville, Missouri. The Kirksville School District found that secure instant messaging technology helps teachers and administrators communicate better which in turn helps them work more closely together to meet a common

goal – to provide the best educational experience possible for the students they serve. The District has two primary schools, a middle school and a high school. All of the schools, the administration office and even the maintenance shed are equipped with e/pop, the latest in secure instant messaging and real time communications technology from WiredRed. *During the past year, more than 260 employees including teachers, administrators, custodians and the central kitchen at Kirksville have found a variety of uses for secure instant messaging, which has dramatically increased the efficiency of communications between the main office, the principal and teachers.*

“We’ve been using some form of instant messaging since 1995, but once we upgraded our computer system we had to find a replacement that would run on our network,” explained Randy Reynolds, the district’s webmaster and technology teacher. “After testing four similar products we

#### Problem:

- Physical layout of school campus and lack of classroom phones inhibited communications

#### Solution:

- e/pop Professional, a secure instant messaging, presence and real time communications software for business
- e/pop Alert, a secure high priority one-way instant messaging system

#### Benefits:

- Teachers, administrators and other employees are better informed about important student issues
- Better campus security through the ability to instantly notify the entire campus of potential emergency situations.

realized that WiredRed's e/pop was the only one that would work correctly on our network so we purchased it for the whole district.”

Teachers and administrators at Ray Miller Elementary, one of two elementary schools in the district, have found that e/pop can be used to minimize the distraction of intercom calls. And since teachers don't have telephones in the class, it is extremely helpful for notifications that vary from curriculum discussions, to requesting assistance from the custodial staff and to discuss issues concerning shared classroom space. The administration utilizes e/pop on a daily basis to inform teachers when parents will be picking up students, teacher meetings, sending files back and forth between classrooms and to notify teachers of school suspensions and emergencies.

e/pop has decreased, in some instances replaced email for more urgent communications and is even used for less urgent general communications sent daily, such as teacher and student bulletins, meeting notices, absentee lists and weekly athletic schedules.

The district's IT staff, which includes Technology Coordinator Gary Hoppe and his staff, use e/pop to relay information about the status of the computer system, network and applications to district staff.

“We can instantly inform the entire district that the grade program is being updated and it won't be available during a certain time or that the server is down,” explained Reynolds. “All around it's been an extremely helpful tool that's increased productivity by eliminating the need for in person visits to classrooms or district offices.”

“Not only is it easy to use, but it was extremely simple to install. I recruited my best student to help me install it. Putting it on every district desktop took less than one week and it was great real world training for my student helper,” he adds.

Schools across the country have also been quick to adopt instant messaging technologies for very specific uses, such as an emergency notification system. North Palm Beach, Florida's **Benjamin School**, an independent school that offers a college preparatory education to a diverse student body

in grades K-12, adopted WiredRed's e/pop Alert, a secure high priority one way communication system, to provide instant notification capabilities that take the place of a traditional P.A. system.

Benjamin uses e/pop Alert to selectively notify teachers and staff about impending meetings, emergencies and other important notices simultaneously without interfering in the learning process.

“With 20 buildings, 70 classrooms, 200 faculty and 1100 students, the Benjamin School is very spread out,” said Dustin Durbin, director of technology at Benjamin School. “This posed a challenge as we sought a system that would enable us to communicate with our students and staff in real time, yet preserve our commitment to providing an environment that is both resource rich and conducive to learning.”

“Most importantly, it has been a highly effective and inexpensive way for us to increase the level of security throughout the school campus by arming us with the ability to instantly notify all staff of security-related incidents,” he adds.

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