



BACK TO SCHOOL FOR IT

Back to School for Students Means

Gearing Up for the Year – Are You Ready?

As summer comes to an end and school commences, the days of soaking in the sun and moving a bit slower are quickly replaced by the hustle and bustle of school activities. Between students, teachers and parents, there's a lot to take into consideration to ensure a successful and safe school year. Having a reliable unified communications solution for your school can not only ensure the safety of your students and faculty, but it can also help you increase efficiencies and improve teacher, parent and student relationships.

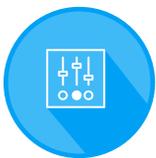
Here are three things to look for in a business phone system to ensure your school year is the best one yet:



Safety First

A safe learning environment is a top priority for educational institutions. Proactive communication capabilities are essential to keeping students and faculty safe and aware of potential dangers. Some questions to ask yourself are:

- Does your school's phone system make it easy to report emergencies? Your phone system should make it as easy as possible to seek help and alert authorities to crisis situations. For example, Enhanced 911 (E911) standards enable police departments to instantly identify the location of a caller to accelerate response times.
- How do you alert students and faculty of emergencies? If a crisis situation occurs, schools need to inform everyone on campus of the situation and provide guidance to help them stay safe. **Emergency notification systems** should be flexible to avoid over-communication and offer the ability to act quickly on critical "code-red" emergencies, but also provide less pressing "code-blue" alerts.



Flexibility to Adapt

Having a unified communications solution that can scale on-demand and evolve over time is critical to ensure a lasting investment. Cloud communications solutions make it easy to scale when the school year starts and stops so you're never overpaying and can stick to your budget. Solutions such as **Mitel Connect CLOUD** deliver the flexibility to change and mix and match user licenses so you can choose the right combination for your school's needs at that particular time. On top of that, cloud communications solutions greatly reduce overhead and maintenance costs.

Hybrid communications solutions are another option. With hybrid communications solutions, you can take advantage of cloud flexibility and cost benefits while still leveraging the control and investments you've made in your existing on-premises. This can also serve as a stepping stone for you to gradually migrate to the cloud over time.

Finally, a phone system that allows you to evolve over time will not only protect your investment, but it can also deliver more customization options. Does your phone system have open APIs that can help you connect your communications with other systems like student information portals? Does it allow you to add in SMS capabilities or other customizations? If not, you're probably missing out on some key functionality that would help you streamline workflows and increase efficiencies.

Communications platforms, such as [Mitel Summit](#), make it easy to extend your phone system with custom voice and SMS apps. Custom solutions can help streamline and automate communications processes, such as staff reminders or weather cancellation alerts, making it easier for you to communicate to your faculty, students and parents.



Seamless User Experience

Schools have other communications needs aside from their phone system. Between emails, phone calls and students, there's a lot to juggle. Modern unified communications solutions deliver an intuitive user experience and seamless integrations with solutions like Microsoft Outlook or Google G Suite, so you can prioritize your students and focus less on making the software work. By having a VoIP phone system that lets you quickly access your calendar and place a call, you can eliminate wasted time flipping back and forth between screens.

As you and your IT Teams roll into another school year and begin exploring new technology projects that will meet the demanding needs of your faculty, students and parents, don't forget to take a close look at your own phone system to see there is an opportunity to migrate to a new solution that's working for you and not against you.