

# Michigan School District Enhances Safety and Security With InformaCast



## The Challenge

The Lenawee Intermediate School District in Lenawee County, Michigan needed to replace outdated and unreliable technology to help enhance safety and security for students, staff, and visitors.

## The Solution

The district deployed a unified communications solution, including InformaCast mass notification software, to help meet evolving school safety needs as well as bolster communication during emergency events.

## Addressing Safety and Security Needs

As districts across the country work to protect students, staff and visitors from potential threats, many are finding the technology they have in place is insufficient to meet the demands. That was the case at the Lenawee Intermediate School District (LISD), a regional education service agency in Lenawee County, Michigan, which offers support services to 11 public school districts and their students. While evaluating their technology, Nicholas Adams, Director of Information Technology at LISD, and other district leaders realized they needed to overhaul their system. With 1,600 students and 450 staff across six campuses and facilities that are frequently used for community activities and events, there was a need to implement a more modern and reliable unified communications system.

The district started by identifying three core needs:

1. Enhance safety and security.
2. Provide district staff with a feature-rich, easy-to-use, collaborative platform that meets current, as well as future, district communication needs.
3. Maintain flexibility and scalability options to allow future buy-in from other public school districts.

“We were no longer able to accommodate various needs and requests that arose internally with the system in place,” said Adams. “We realized that our current tools weren’t sustainable if we wanted to make enhancing safety and security a top priority.”

Adams worked with district consultants to help solicit proposals from qualified vendors to design, engineer, provision, install, and set-up a district-wide unified communications system which would replace the district’s telephone system and supplement other communication tools. It was during this process that the district was first introduced to InformaCast mass notification software.



## Moving to a Modern Solution

With InformaCast's Cisco compatibility and wide range of mass notification features and available integrations, LISD decided to implement the software to help address its safety needs. InformaCast helped the district seamlessly join multiple systems, including communication, security, and safety systems, enhancing operations and creating a feature-rich collaborative platform.

"By Investing in and implementing InformaCast, our district dramatically improved our communication systems and school safety capabilities," said Adams. "The LISD Board, superintendent, and administration supported this project so we can meet our current needs, as well as position our district to address any future needs that may arise."

LISD has deployed a wide range of InformaCast features to help fully support their initiative and address a variety of use cases. Alerts can be triggered via a number of methods, including a button on a Cisco IP phone, the InformaCast Mobile application, and CAP feeds for severe weather events like severe thunderstorms and tornadoes. When an alert is triggered, the district leverage text and audio notifications using phones, digital displays, public address and strobe systems, computers, and mobile devices to deliver the message. This helps ensure that the district is reaching as many people as possible through every available channel.

These message delivery options are customized for different scenarios the district is prepared to face. For example, being able to lockdown a school was a must-have for the district. InformaCast was integrated with LISD's electronic door lock system, public address systems, and other devices, allowing for ALICE responses and lockdown initiation from an IP phone. Following a lockdown, LISD officials can gather on a conference call triggered by the system as well. Other use cases include 911 alerts, environmental hazard alerts, active shooter, general assistance requests, and other emergency broadcasts. The district can also use InformaCast to issue an all clear and reset other systems, giving it the flexibility it sought from a new system.

Visitor safety was also within the scope of this project. LISD can now offer a visitor enrollment option for alert notification via text message. This allows the district to create custom campaigns to inform individuals who are temporarily visiting facilities. Visitors are able to register to receive notifications using a web browser or by texting a hashtag to a phone number. This keeps them in the loop should an emergency occur.

## An Eye on the Future

With resources like a staff guidebook, the solution is being quickly adopted, and people are becoming more comfortable using it. The district is continuing to look for ways to take advantage of even more InformaCast features. It works with local law enforcement to develop best practices for deployment. They also invite other local school districts that they service to share their Cisco phone system with InformaCast, to substantially reduce their costs of implementation and in doing so, promote school safety throughout Lenawee County.

"We like InformaCast because it has a diverse catalog of safety and communication options," said Adams. "But we also trust that Singlewire will continue to make improvements and provide new features for the software which we can implement down the road."

Visit [www.singlewire.com/informacast-k12-education](http://www.singlewire.com/informacast-k12-education) for more information about how K-12 schools can implement InformaCast to help with their safety and security needs.

