

# CASE STUDY



## Controlling Costs Without Sacrificing Service

Dalton Public Schools blankets campuses with zoned, two-way communications at a value-centered price point with help from NetPlanner Systems, Inc.

When Dalton Public Schools sought to modernize its intercom systems on a tight, education-industry budget, Director of Technology Stuart Davis knew the task would be challenging. NetPlanner Systems, Inc. had worked with the district on an analog system nearly 20 years earlier, so when their NetPlanner contact reached out to them, Davis invited them to bid.

Davis had already rejected a proposal from another firm due to its high cost, yet he and the school board didn't want to sacrifice features or quality of service. NetPlanner worked with Davis on a pilot project at Roan Elementary School, designing and deploying a value-engineered system, and the school board awarded NetPlanner a contract for the remaining six schools scheduled to receive intercom upgrades.

"NetPlanner's sales and service personnel went the extra mile to ensure our satisfaction," says Davis. "Their engineer, William McGinnis, kept things on schedule, helped us integrate the solution with other systems, and even assisted with staff training. It felt very much like white glove service."



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*—Stuart Davis  
Director of Technology*

### Trimming Costs Without Cutting Corners

To help Dalton control costs for the new system, McGinnis and NetPlanner Account Manager Allison Murphy worked closely with Davis and Dalton Project Manager Jorge Miranda to maximize value. Not only was the system they selected — the



Valcom IP6000 — more cost effective than options presented by other firms, NetPlanner's proposal also leveraged lower-cost infrastructure where possible. NetPlanner techs ran additional analog cabling from the school's network closet and then connected it via analog gateways with the higher-priced, distributed IP network solution.

That adjustment alone reduced the cost of the overall system by 50% without sacrificing any features. The IP connection supports a campus-wide, multiple-zone paging system, and school officials and staff enjoy the added convenience of remote system management from different buildings.

### A System Greater than Its Parts

Project execution was complicated by the need to integrate the new Valcom paging network with other systems — including the school's Centegix crisis management platform. The district had recently deployed the Centegix solution, and Davis needed the two systems to talk. "We wanted the Valcom system listening for any alerts that came from the Centegix system so it could distribute them quickly to classrooms and around the campus," he notes.

McGinnis immediately stepped in to assist with the integration effort, working with both providers to identify how best to accomplish the handshake. "William really helped us out with that effort," says Davis. "He took time to explore the system, figure out the integration and then ensure it was handled properly. Then he taught us how to use the unified system."

### Aligning with a Vision for Excellence

Per Davis, he and district administration have been very happy with the value-add features, including the expanded level of service, that NetPlanner has provided. "Our people love the new paging system — especially the fact that it's two-way. Having it zoned is really helpful too, since only those locations for which a message is intended will receive it."

Davis specifically cites Murphy for her contribution to the effort, noting that he wouldn't hesitate to recommend NetPlanner — and Murphy — to other educational institutions. "I am usually skeptical of salespeople, but Allison has been great to work with. She proactively responds to all my questions and doesn't hesitate to escalate them to others, if necessary, to ensure I get a prompt answer."

As a bonus, Davis says, the NetPlanner project perfectly aligns with the vision of Dalton's School Board. "Shortly after the pilot project, the school board released a new strategic plan that calls for operational excellence and world-class facilities with top equipment," says Davis. "I feel confident that NetPlanner's work dovetails nicely with their goals."



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### About Dalton Public Schools

Located in Whitfield County, Georgia, Dalton Public Schools is a district composed of nine schools serving approximately 8,000 students. Focused on optimizing and enriching the learning experience for students from preschool through 12th grade, Dalton Public Schools is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the Georgia Accrediting Commission. For more information, visit [www.daltonpublicschools.com](http://www.daltonpublicschools.com).

