

# STRATA

Toshiba STRATA CTX



**Methacton** School District  
Education

# TOSHIBA



# STRATA CTX

## Toshiba Strata CTX670 Gets High Marks From Methacton School District

With more than 600 telephones at eight locations, Methacton School District of Norristown, Penn., has an extensive telecommunications system that connects its more than 600 staff members to thousands of parents, students, vendors, and others in the community.

A Toshiba customer since 1994, Methacton turned to Authorized Toshiba Dealer PhoneAmerica Corporation of Frazer, Penn., to upgrade the district's older Toshiba Strata DK280 and DK424 systems to the new Toshiba Strata CTX670 systems. Robert Holly, director of Technology and Information Services for Methacton School District, said, "After we did our homework on competitive systems, we were convinced that our best bet was to stay with Toshiba and PhoneAmerica and migrate our existing Toshiba system to the new CTX670 solution."

hundreds of calls a day as well, most of which are from parents.

The Administration Building is the primary entry point for people calling the district. It is the headquarters for the district, including such departments as student services, human resources, business and financial offices, community relations, the offices of the superintendent, and technology services.

The Transportation Center, located on the main campus, has more call volume than any other individual department. In addition to handling bus services for the district's seven schools, the fleet provides transportation for 100+ private schools in the area every day. Located at the intermediate school campus, the Facilities Center receives many incoming calls for maintenance, grounds keeping, reprographics and related services, and is home to the district's only central storage facility. The buildings that house the Transportation Center and the Facilities Center are connected to the high school and middle school systems respectively, via fiber and remote cabinets, providing a cost savings by allowing direct extension dialing.

The new Toshiba equipment at Methacton School District also includes Toshiba 3000-series digital telephones for the administrative offices, as well as some of the other locations.

Robert Holly of Methacton School District gives Toshiba and PhoneAmerica an "A+" for the Strata CTX670 system's ease of use.

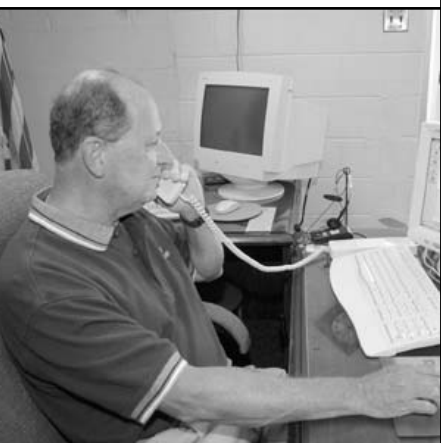
### Strata CTX670 Telecom Systems Seamlessly Networked Eight Sites

For Methacton School District, PhoneAmerica installed Toshiba Strata CTX670 systems at all eight locations. At the Administration Building on the main campus, the Strata CTX670 has six cabinets with 11 PRI cards, and a 32-port Stragy Enterprise Server (SES) voice processing solution with fax server and unified messaging capabilities.

All seven schools in the district, including one high school, one intermediate school, and five elementary schools, each have their own Strata CTX670 system that is networked to the main system. There are more than 600 extensions at all eight locations combined. Each of the district's seven schools receives

### Seamlessly Networked Systems Are Transparent To Callers And Users Alike

Methacton's primary goal in upgrading to Toshiba Strata CTX670 systems for its eight locations was to create a completely integrated telecommunications solution with a



single voice messaging system, the Toshiba Strategy Enterprise Server (Strategy ES), which would appear to callers and users to be a single system.

Chris Brandt, communications consultant for PhoneAmerica, said, "By networking the Strata CTX670 systems between all eight locations and installing the Strategy ES voice processing solution at the Administration Building, we were able to meet the challenge of delivering a seamless telecommunications solution for all users."

Holly said, "Today, our Strata CTX670 systems provide the transparent 'single system' benefits we wanted, with the added benefit of improving efficiencies while reducing operating costs."

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## Five-Digit Extension Calling Over Fiber Network Between All Eight Locations

The Toshiba Strata CTX670 is networked across private fiber installed by the school for use in its Wide Area Network (WAN). Brandt explained, "We set up five-digit extension direct dialing to route all calls over Methacton's private fiber network so people at all eight locations can call each other directly. Because it's over the private WAN, there are no telephone service charges for those calls. Each is handled by the telephone system as if it's a direct extension, regardless from which building the call is placed."

Holly added, "Being able to call anyone in the school district simply by dialing a five-digit extension is a real benefit, both in terms of ease of use and cost savings. For the internal communication within each individual school, direct extension calling beats the old intercom system hands down."

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## PRI System Supports 69 Simultaneous External Calls

For external calls, PhoneAmerica installed three PRIs at the Administration Building to handle all the communications. The 3 PRIs support 69 simultaneous conversations, not including the internal communications.

"Going with a PRI-based system typically provides significant savings over traditional long distance for most applications," Brandt pointed out. The school expects at least a 20 percent reduction in costs the first year of operation.

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## Migration Saved Thousands By Keeping Existing Equipment

Because the school district selected the new Toshiba Strata CTX670, PhoneAmerica was able to migrate existing systems to the new systems. Brandt said, "Migrating Methacton School District to the Strata CTX670 system allowed the district to keep much of its existing Toshiba equipment, including telephones, as well as most of the telephone interface cards, which provided a significant cost savings and enabled a smoother transition."

By reusing so much of the existing equipment, the district saved approximately 35 percent over the cost of an identical new Strata CTX670 telephone system, according to Brandt.

According to Holly, the users also appreciate the smooth transition and familiarity of staying with Toshiba. "Our users were very happy to get the new capabilities; and furthermore, staying with Toshiba meant there was a comfort level that just would not exist had we gone to a completely different system."

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## Voice Mail For All Teachers Improves Communication

At all of the district's seven schools, each teacher has voice mail and e-mail through the networked system so that they can be in touch with parents, students, and others on a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week basis.

"Providing the teachers voice mail and e-mail helps them to manage their schedules better by not having to be disturbed by incoming calls at inappropriate times and not having to play phone tag. They can easily pick up voice messages from home or any location and can change their outgoing messages to note homework assignments or other



PhoneAmerica's Chris Brandt, at left, and Thomas Drevyanko with Robert Holly of Methacton School District.



**Methacton School District's Strata CTX670 connects its 600 staff members to parents, students, and others.**

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valuable information," Holly mentioned. Teachers at all but two of the elementary schools also have telephones in their classrooms so they can call out as needed.

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## **Improved Efficiencies For District's Information Services Team**

For the district's Technology and Information Services Department, the new system has brought many new efficiencies. Holly said, "My team is able to deal with a single voice mail system instead of eight. That is a tremendous improvement in efficiency."

The technology team uses Toshiba's new Strata CTX WinAdmin software to administer the system remotely, using an Internet Protocol. Holly pointed out, "We can now also administer the vast majority of changes to the telephone system at all eight locations remotely from our desks through our Wide Area Network. This includes adding new users, changing or moving extensions, or helping people set up their voice mail. Being able to do this remotely saves a lot of travel time and effort and makes things happen faster for the users."

Holly and his staff were very pleased with the efforts PhoneAmerica's team put into the installation itself. He said, "The installation was one of the smoothest implementations of anything we've done in Technology and Information Services. Toshiba and PhoneAmerica have been highly responsive and have made exceptional partners with our own internal team."

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## **New Safety Features Improve School Security District-wide**

Safety measures have also improved as a result of the new Strata CTX670. With the new system, Methacton School District has Caller ID for all incoming calls and can call record from any telephone in the case of threatening calls.

Holly said, "Schools today must be on a higher level of alert than ever before. Having a telephone system that allows us to identify

callers and record calls gives us an added measure of security."

The system's Enhanced 911 feature also provides added security benefits in that the school will get a higher priority response in an emergency situation. The school district is also setting up a detailed call accounting system using the Strata CTX670 so it can track calls for several purposes, including security.

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## **Early Use Of Strata CTX Attendant Console Improves Receptionist's Call Handling**

PhoneAmerica also coordinated with the school district to allow it to beta test Toshiba's new Strata CTX Attendant Console, a PC-based telephone attendant system that is used by the district's main receptionist to manage and transfer incoming calls.

According to Holly, the receptionist has rave reviews for the new CTX Attendant Console, which has provided an ability to speed up call answering and transferring. "Being able to be first to use the new technology, even before it's available to the rest of the world, is a big thrill," Holly said.

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## **Methacton Gives Toshiba And PhoneAmerica An "A+"**

Holly said, "Going with the Strata CTX670 systems will not only save us significant dollars on out-of-pocket costs, especially for inter-building calling, but we also get the state-of-the-art technology, the ability to use an IP solution, and significant user advantages."

In addition to a dramatic increase in productivity and ease of use, Holly is confident the system will save the school district at least 20 percent in cost savings. "We've completely eliminated 100 local telephone lines that were originally used for calling between the buildings, which we're now doing over our private fiber. Given the tremendous improvements in system features and our cost savings, we'll give Toshiba and PhoneAmerica an A+ on its report card."