

# TANDBERG CUSTOMER PROFILE

## Howe Public Schools



- Expand curriculum offerings
- Enable students to connect with cultural institutions
- Expand professional development for teachers and staff

"Schools really are the life blood of small communities. The distance learning program at Howe has allowed this district to create a stronger curriculum, expand the educational opportunities for its students, and provide an exceptional educational program for the benefit of not only the students and teachers, but also the community in general."

LANCE FORD  
IT DIRECTOR  
HOWE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### THE CHALLENGE

Howe Public School District in LeFlore County, Oklahoma, is composed of an elementary, middle and high school. Collectively, the schools serve a population of only 389 students and face grim statistics, falling into the state's highest category for poverty, and claiming the highest number of reported child abuse cases. Howe is a 90 percent E-Rate district, which means that more than 75 percent of the student body qualifies for the free and reduced lunch program. In addition, the district's budget only marginally met teacher salaries and operating expenses -nothing was left over for extras such as technology and non-core classes. As such, the district had no network, no modern computers and no plans for introducing technology into the curriculum. In addition, Howe is located in a relatively remote area, isolated from educational opportunities and cultural institutions such as museums, theaters and zoos. Many of Howe's students have never traveled outside the state of Oklahoma, and many never will, even after graduation. The district was faced with the challenges of providing students in an impoverished, rural location with the same educational experiences and resources that are available in urban areas.

### THE SOLUTION

Howe understood the importance of technology in connecting Howe with educational resources, and worked tirelessly to secure funding through grants. After being awarded \$572,000 in grants in 2001, Howe used the grants to provide the district with a robust IP network.

Once the network was in place, Howe began to expand course offerings by installing TANDBERG videoconferencing technology. Since rural schools in eastern Oklahoma typically have low student populations, elective classes, such as foreign language, often could not be supported because the district would have to pay an instructor and provide resources for a class of just two or three students. By using videoconferencing, Howe expanded course offerings to include Spanish I, Spanish II, AP Psychology, Physics and Art. The district's video lab is now used continuously seven hours a day, five days a week for such courses.

# TANDBERG CUSTOMER PROFILE

## Howe Public Schools

Additionally, video communications enables Howe public school students to be connected with cultural institutions and educational experiences that otherwise would never have been available to them. Through TANDBERG's Connections Program, Howe students can participate in a variety of educational experiences. Whether it's the high school literature class staging a section of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" with the staff of Rutgers University, or a group of third graders chatting with zoologists at the Indianapolis Zoo's Penguin Exhibit, the students at Howe are introduced to new places, ideas and experiences.

TANDBERG video communication solutions also allow Howe to expand professional development opportunities for its teachers. Graduate courses from state universities are offered over video, affording teachers the opportunity to continue their education without requiring them to travel two to three hours to the closest university. Recently, Howe was named a Regional Training Site for the HB1815 Master Training Program, which emphasizes technology implementation, maximizes distance learning teaching methods, and requires more than 60 hours of distance learning training for certification.

As Lance Ford, IT director at Howe, says, "Schools really are the life-blood of small communities. The distance learning program at Howe has allowed this district to create a stronger curriculum, expand the educational opportunities for its students, and provide an exceptional educational program for the benefit of not only the students and teachers, but also the community in general."

### FUTURE PLANS

Howe schools continue to set, meet and exceed goals for its distance-learning program. A program that started as a means to share classes has now expanded in a variety of ways, as teachers and administrators start to "think outside the box" and create new ways to use the technology. A few interesting examples include:

- Videoconferencing systems used for parent-teacher conferences, allowing parents to meet their child's distance learning teacher through the same medium that their child takes the class.
- Implementation of a streaming and archiving program that allows students who have missed school, or those that need to review a portion of a lesson, to go back and view a class in its entirety.
- Team-teaching over distance learning technologies between teachers throughout the region, and eventually the state. Leveraging a variety of technologies to include interactive compressed video, streaming, Internet and bridging.

Howe continues to develop a state-of-the-art distance learning program - a program that helps connect Oklahoma teachers and students with opportunities that would otherwise be unobtainable.

TANDBERG WORLD HEADQUARTERS  
Philip Pedersens vei 22  
1366 Lysaker, Norway  
Tel: +47 67 125 125  
Fax: +47 67 125 234  
Video: +47 67 117 777  
E-mail: tandberg@tandberg.net

200 Park Avenue, Suite 2005  
New York, NY U.S.A. 10166  
Tel: +1 212 692 6500  
Tel: +1 800 538 2884 (toll free in the U.S.)  
Fax: +1 212 692 6501  
Video: +1 212 692 6535  
E-mail: tandberg@tandbergusa.com

www.tandberg.net