



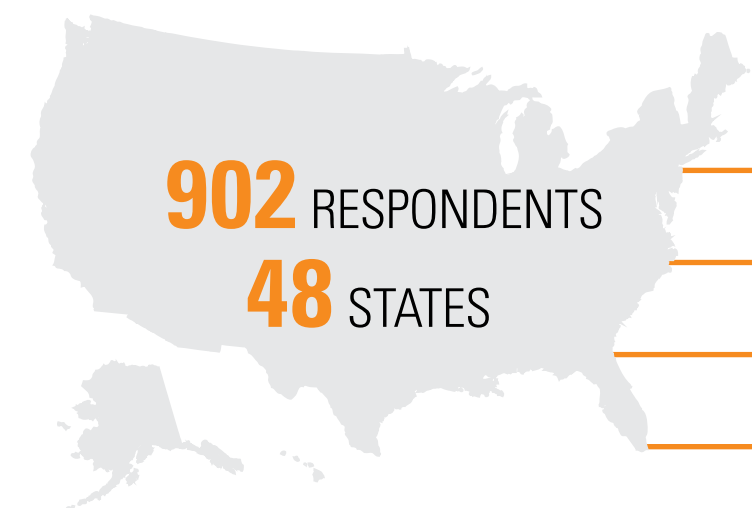
2015 STUDY: COMMUNICATION TRENDS SHAPING K-12 SCHOOL SAFETY



SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Motorola's latest education survey offers a compelling look at the evolving state of communications in U.S. school districts. Conducted in June and July 2015, responses were gathered from a well-balanced representation of K-12 schools in 48 states and the District of Columbia.

This year, 902 educators weighed in on pressing issues concerning school safety, emergency preparedness and stronger communications. Survey participants represented almost every department in K-12 schools, including teachers, administrators, telecommunications and IT, transportation, facilities and operations, maintenance, athletics, office staff, and safety and security.



SIZE OF SCHOOL DISTRICT

16% LESS THAN 500 STUDENTS

29% 500-2499 STUDENTS

24% 2500-9999 STUDENTS

27% OVER 10,000 STUDENTS

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

Creating a safer, secure environment for students and staff continues to be an overriding concern for educators nationwide.

Ninety-seven percent of overall respondents and 99 percent of administrators say this is their top priority, unchanged since our 2013 Education Survey. Equally significant, 96 percent of all respondents and 99 percent of administrators believe having “always available communications” for emergencies is important.

Almost 60 percent say they could be better equipped to handle emergencies by improving K-12 communications, up 20 percent from our 2013 Education Survey.

Over 25 percent believe their existing communication system needs to be improved to handle emergencies, such as injuries and accidents, external threats, weather events and natural disasters.

Unified communications are critical for K-12 schools, whether to connect directly to first responders or to school personnel on any device, anywhere they go.

Ninety-three percent of educators want to communicate with law enforcement, fire services and EMS directly, and 85 percent to communicate with personnel on the move, within or outside their school district, on any device.

The research revealed a pressing need to improve the primary form of school communications.

Internet and email are the default technology for 55 percent of schools. Thirteen percent use cell phones, 12 percent landline phones, 10 percent two-way radios and 6 percent rely on an overhead paging system.

Educators recognize that power outages, cyber attacks, weather events and computer network failures can compromise the integrity and reliability of school communications. Almost 25 percent are concerned about cell towers overloading in an emergency and 50 percent say they want to be able to interrupt conversations to prioritize critical messages.

The imperative to improve K-12 communications extends beyond emergency situations to everyday operations.

Ninety-six percent believe it is important for their communications system to help personnel work more efficiently. Ninety-two percent emphasize the importance of using a reliable device with long battery life, consistent with results from our 2013 Education Survey.

Insufficient funds are a barrier to upgrading K-12 communications according to 47 percent of respondents.

This is a 19 percent decline from our 2013 Education Survey and could point to the emergence of more funding, from public and private sources, as the economy regains its vigor.

TOP PRIORITIES FOR K-12 SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS



97%

CREATE A SAFER AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT

In ranking priorities for their school or district-wide communications system, respondents place the greatest emphasis on creating a safer, secure environment for students and staff. Over 85 percent say it is “very important” and 97 percent overall confirm it is “important”. However, 99 percent of administrators who oversee school operations say a safer, secure environment is “important”. This priority persists with the same degree of seriousness as our 2013 Education Survey.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, “Improvements in monitoring and communication can help to ensure students, teachers, and parents have the information they need at the right moment.”¹

Sixty-five percent of public schools reported at least one violent incident during the 2013–14 school year; violent incidents occurred at 53 percent of elementary schools and 88 percent of middle schools.² Educators are looking for better communication solutions to keep students and staff safe, especially as violence and crime in schools escalate.³



96%

HAVE “ALWAYS AVAILABLE” COMMUNICATIONS

Maintaining a continuous flow of information with always available communications is one of the greatest needs revealed in this survey. This is especially true when it comes to connecting and coordinating school personnel on campus or district-wide.

Ninety-six percent of overall respondents and 99 percent of administrators say it is “important.” Any opportunity to improve or accelerate communications and increase the safety and security of students and staff is absolutely critical.⁴



96%

HELP SCHOOL PERSONNEL WORK MORE EFFICIENTLY

Beyond emergencies, K-12 communication systems must stand up to the rigors of day-to-day operations. Schools depend upon them to communicate with their staff, coordinate building operations, manage students and athletic events, alert custodians to issues, move supplies, monitor recess times and more.

For schools with bus fleets, improved communications expedite information directly to bus drivers about students, routes, traffic, weather and how to handle scenarios. Upgraded K-12 communication systems can unify school personnel and bus drivers to coordinate and collaborate more efficiently.



93%

CONNECT DIRECTLY TO FIRST RESPONDERS

Statistics show that, on average, while a shooting event spans 13 minutes, it takes a first responder 10 minutes to arrive on scene.⁵ During such a crisis, a call to 9-1-1 is the logical first step. In order to maintain communication with first responders, a landline or cell phone is often inadequate. Valuable minutes can be lost as personnel try to make connections and relay information accurately.

Landlines and cell networks can quickly overload with a volume of calls. Educators can rely on two-way radio systems for a direct line to law enforcement, firefighters and emergency medical responders to facilitate real-time communications during an incident. This enables best case emergency preparation and response once upon the scene.



PUTTING EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TO THE TEST

When it comes to handling emergencies, over 25 percent of educators believe their existing system needs to be improved. Twenty-eight percent say their system works well and 42 percent feel it is adequate. Fifty-five percent indicate that they have emergency communications during and after events. When correlated with the 96 percent who say “always available” communications is a top priority, school districts must close that gap for emergency response and disaster planning.

TOP 5 “MUST HAVES” IN K-12 SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS



IMPROVING SCORES FOR SCHOOL SAFETY PLANNING

In this era of heightened awareness, the overwhelming majority of schools surveyed have a safety plan. Only 3 percent do not. Sixty-six percent maintain a basic plan with their school personnel. Fifty-percent have a mid-level plan with school personnel and public safety. Forty-five percent practice a high-level plan with other schools, public safety agencies and community partners.

School safety plans should address planning and preparation, mitigation of vulnerabilities, response to events that happen, and recovery after an event has happened. They must be an ongoing process, regularly reviewed and revised with all partners, from public safety agencies to communication vendors.

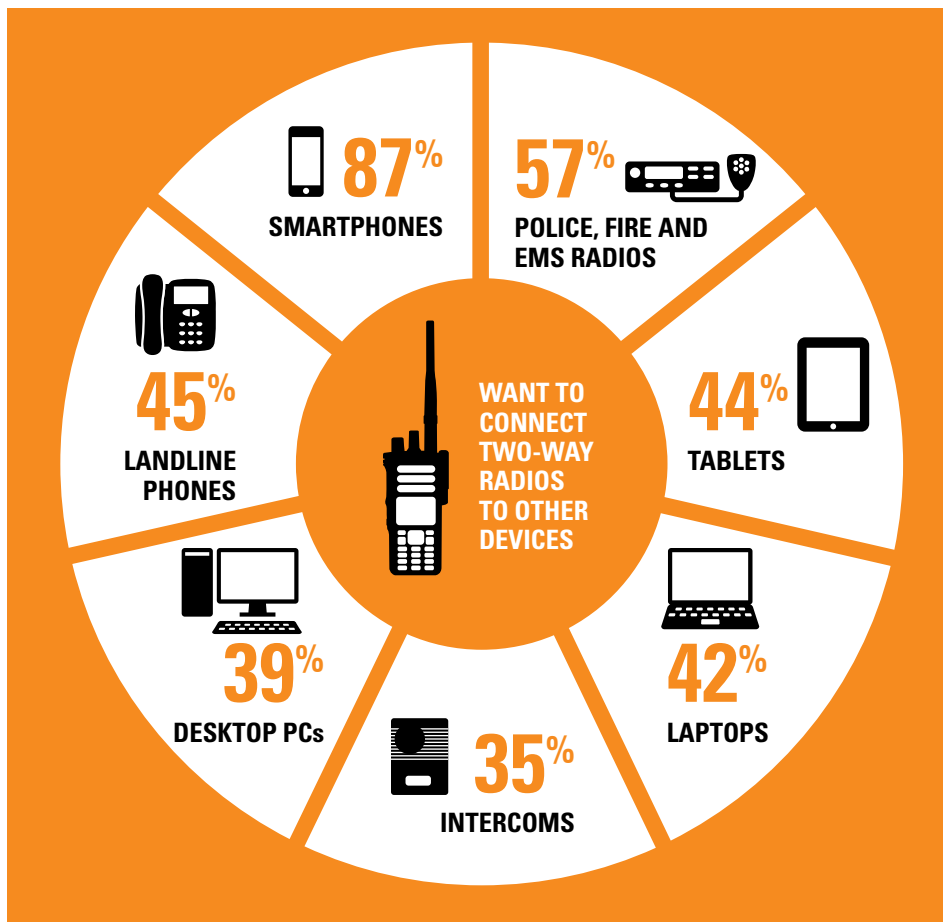
It’s imperative these plans are exercised regularly with schools, law enforcement, fire and EMS. All should participate and practice their individual communications protocols and responses to various situations at their own schools.

TODAY’S SCHOOL SAFETY PLANS

66% WITH SCHOOL PERSONNEL

50% SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND PUBLIC SAFETY

45% SCHOOLS, PUBLIC SAFETY, COMMUNITY PARTNERS



UNIFYING PERSONNEL ON DIFFERENT DEVICES

The 2015 findings underscore the criticality of connectivity. Educators want to extend the reach of their two-way radios to connect directly to school personnel on any device and any network, anywhere they go.

Sixty-two percent who use two-way radios want to connect them to personnel on other devices, such as smartphones and tablets. Whether it is talking to a principal at a convention on a smartphone or a facilities director at home on his laptop, educators are seeking unified communications.

GETTING ON THE SAME WAVELENGTH AS PUBLIC SAFETY

For many schools, the only way to connect across the district is by Internet, email or phone and to connect to law enforcement, fire service and EMS is by calling 9-1-1. As a school superintendent in Ohio points out, "In an emergency, we had to relay everything through the voice of one caller to public safety. It was inefficient at best and inaccurate at worst because of incomplete information and first responders not knowing what was going on."

This sentiment about connectivity with public safety is echoed by almost 60 percent of survey respondents who want to talk directly to first responders heading to a scene. Instead of information passing through multiple parties or being incomplete, everyone is on the same channel as an incident unfolds. This continuous exchange of information is key to effective emergency response, when seconds matter most.



The WAVE™ Work Group Communications application extends a radio's reach to virtually any device, on any public or private mobile data network, including Wi-Fi for non-emergency communications. Off-site personnel can keep their own devices and network plans, and schools benefit from seamless, secure connectivity and affordable push-to-talk.



SchoolSAFE™ connects school two-way radios directly and securely with the radios used by first responders. School personnel are linked to local police, fire, EMS and 9-1-1 call centers for reliable, secure, two-way communication during a crisis.

SchoolSAFE is a comprehensive program that includes software, hardware and training. More importantly, it fosters teamwork between school administrators and first responders. SchoolSAFE enables them to develop plans and practice drills together and ensure they are SchoolSAFE-certified for emergency readiness levels each year.



The APX™ O2 Control Head adds another layer of critical responsiveness and safety. Acting like “a fire alarm for law enforcement”, it connects schools instantly to public safety agencies even if school personnel can’t call 9-1-1.

All schools do is press a large orange button. Communications can continue after the button is pressed with two-way radios to convey necessary information as first responders prepare for their arrival.

DRIVING GREATER SAFETY, ON THE BUS AND ON THE ROAD

Of those surveyed who have their own district-wide communication system, 74 percent rely on two-way radios to connect schools and bus drivers. Two-way radios are approved by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) for drivers of commercial motor vehicles to communicate on the road.

Twenty percent of school bus drivers use cell phones, unchanged from our 2013 Education Survey. While 60 percent of educators were aware of the DOT restrictions on the use of cell phones by bus drivers, 40 percent were not.

74% BUS DRIVERS USING
TWO-WAY RADIOS

20% USING CELL PHONES

6% USING OTHER

**ALMOST
60%** WANT TO BE BETTER
EQUIPPED FOR AN
EMERGENCY

**ONLY
12%** SAY THEIR CURRENT
SYSTEM WORKS FINE

GIVING SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS AN UPGRADE

When asked “why does your district need to improve communications”, 59 percent indicated they could be better equipped to handle an emergency. Thirty-four percent confirm they have problems with clarity or coverage of their communications; 28 percent want to link to public safety; and 23 percent are concerned that cell towers overload in an emergency.

Interestingly enough, while most educators say their communication system makes the grade, only 12 percent believe their system doesn’t need to be improved.

STANDING IN THE WAY OF STRONGER SAFETY

While 47 percent of respondents believe funding is a barrier to improving school communications, this is a 19 percent decrease from our 2013 Education Survey. Only 9 percent said upgrading communications is not a priority for their administration, down by nearly half from 2013.

Fifty percent receive dollars from their school district and only 15 percent from state and local grants. According to the Department of Education, the largest source of K-12 education funding flows from state and local grants.⁶ This offers a number of opportunities for school districts to tap into a pool of money they may not know exists.

47% SAY BUDGET IS THE
BIGGEST BARRIER

The **Grant Assistance Program** is a custom, comprehensive solution to coordinate and create high-quality grant applications. It helps schools explore grant programs to purchase two-way radio systems and SchoolSAFE to bridge and effectively manage ongoing communications with first responders.

Free to schools and local governments, the program includes grant research, application assistance, narrative reviews and grant alerts. This service tailors applications to grant program requirements, greatly improving the chance for funding.

TO LEARN MORE AND APPLY FOR FREE GRANT ASSISTANCE, VISIT
WWW.GOVGRANTSHELP.COM/MOTOROLA

MOST WANTED APPLICATIONS

Beyond voice calling, schools expressed a desire for greater data capabilities in their communications system. Whether tracking school buses, responding to maintenance issues, or remotely controlling lights and gates, they expect their devices to help them improve safety and efficiency.

 **68%** TEXT MESSAGING ✓

 **44%** GPS TRACKING ✓

 **43%** REMOTE FACILITY MANAGEMENT ✓

 **33%** RFID TO IDENTIFY AND TRACK STUDENTS ✓

 **30%** WORK ORDER TICKETS MANAGEMENT ✓

WHO RELIES ON TWO-WAY RADIOS IN K-12 SCHOOLS

Two-way radios are essential communications for K-12 schools throughout the country. According to survey respondents, they are relied on for everyday and emergency operations by numerous departments in school districts, from administration to athletics. Radios are used primarily by principals and office staff (75 percent and 71 percent), maintenance (55 percent), transportation (32 percent) and security (29 percent).

The 2015 study is part of an ongoing Motorola research initiative to help identify and report on trends affecting communications technology. For more information on planning and deploying a unified K-12 communication solution to help improve safety, security and efficiency, talk to your local Motorola representative or visit motorolasolutions.com/education.

SOURCES

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3. Report: School Crime and Violence Rise, U.S. News and World Report, June 10, 2014
- 4, 5. "Unified Communications, Improving School Safety", Business Solutions, March 11, 2013
6. Ten Facts About K-12 Education Funding, U.S. Department of Education

Motorola Solutions, Inc. 1301 E. Algonquin Road, Schaumburg, Illinois 60196 U.S.A. motorolasolutions.com

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