



## CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

# Palm Beach County Schools Deploy Polycom® Telepresence to Cut Costs and Achieve Educational Equity Across Nation's 11th Largest District

### Industry

- Education

### Daily use

- Distance learning
- Virtual field trips
- Cultural exchange
- Professional development

### Solution

- A distance learning network powered by Polycom helps Palm Beach County schools maximize resources in an era of budget cuts
- Backed by the Polycom® RealPresence® Platform, the network includes four highly capable Distance and E-Learning Lecture Halls driven by Polycom® HDX® 9000 telepresence solutions, 10 portable and mobile classroom solutions powered by Polycom® HDX® 8000 telepresence, 500 licenses of Polycom® CMA® desktop with management software and Polycom® RSS™ recording and streaming server

### Results and benefits

- The district cost-effectively maximizes resources across its 187 schools, bringing more courses to more students for greater equity
- Content exchanges support International Baccalaureate curriculum
- Telepresence-based training reduces costs and time lost to travel



### Overview

The School District of Palm Beach County is no stranger to challenges. The nation's eleventh largest district, it serves more than 172,000 students. The sprawling southern Florida district is home to a remarkably diverse population—students there speak 143 languages and dialects—and its 187 schools can be found in upscale beach communities, inland rural areas, and economically challenged sections of Florida's famous Everglades. Lately, the hard job of managing the district has been made even tougher as budget cuts add to the daily pressures faced by teachers and administrators. Despite this, the district still must find a way to ensure that all schools provide the same kind of classes and educational opportunities available at traditionally high-performing campuses.

In Palm Beach County, the answer includes a distance learning network built around Polycom® high definition (HD) telepresence. The Polycom® RealPresence® Platform serves as the backbone for more than 500 telepresence and video endpoints. Polycom powers sophisticated Distance and E-Learning Lecture Halls installed in four high schools, mobile instructional carts deployed in key district facilities, and PC-based video conferencing software distributed across the district. By enabling "location liberation," educators here can share instructional resources across budget-strapped schools; provide access to virtual field trips and International Baccalaureate content; and form collaborative partnerships with schools, museums, universities, and institutions around the world.

### Closing the gap with distance learning

Nearly half of the 23 high schools in the School District of Palm Beach County are ranked by Newsweek in the top 11 percent of all U.S. high schools. As part of their effort to bring the other schools up to that level, officials in 2009 secured a grant to fund the Polycom distance education network. "Our goal is to enhance offerings at all our schools, but particularly those where there is the greatest need for improvement," notes Jayne Kupperman, a resource teacher for Palm Beach County schools. "Polycom telepresence is helping us achieve that."

At four high schools, for instance, Polycom HDX® 9000 room telepresence solutions power high-tech Distance and E-Learning Lecture Halls. Each location features drop-down projection screens, Polycom® EagleEye HD cameras, an integrated computer, document camera, touch control, whiteboard, DVR, and a microphone/camera system that finds and displays students when they speak up. All locations offer a completely interactive environment for enhanced

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learning, virtual field trips, cultural exchanges, administrative meetings, professional development, global studies, and resource sharing with other districts or agencies such as Florida Safe Schools.

One recent session involved dozens of science students from three high schools remotely participating in an autopsy conducted live at Ohio State University. “It was incredible,” recalls Kupperman. “They could see everything, ask questions, and be part of the procedure. This would be very difficult to do in person, but with Polycom telepresence, it was possible.”

### Gaining access to anyone

All school locations enable face-to-face collaboration with educators and administrators from other districts. “We can share resources and best practices with colleagues from throughout the state, or nation, or even the world,” says Kupperman. “Polycom gives us access to virtually anyone with a standards-based video conferencing system. There are very few limits on what we can do.”

Working with Polycom, Kupperman has also arranged inservice sessions with teachers, staff, and administrators that highlight the capabilities of telepresence. In one session, Dave Carey, a former Vietnam POW and now a popular motivational speaker, inspired the audience to pursue greatness. In another, the audience engaged with an educator in Scotland to explore content partnerships. “The excitement was palpable,” says Kupperman. “We had dozens of teachers realizing what this means for how they prepare students for today’s global economy.”

### Doing more with less

With the district potentially facing \$100 million in budget cuts for fiscal year 2012, it could mean plenty. Telepresence could make it easier to meet expanded teacher-to-student ratios by “adding” students to a class via telepresence. And specialized courses, such as Mandarin Chinese or advanced science classes, can be available to more students in more schools—without adding more teachers.

Helping to achieve these goals are nearly a dozen instructional carts featuring Polycom HDX 8000 room telepresence systems, which roll into classrooms and offices for on-demand video calls. Teachers also can download Polycom CMA® Desktop software, which transforms any desktop or mobile PC into a video conferencing system. The district manages multipoint video calls via its Polycom® RealPresence® Platform infrastructure, whose components enable out-of-district collaboration, and also records, archives and streams instructional and professional development sessions.

### Real-Time Communication and Collaboration

- Four Polycom® HDX® 9000 room telepresence systems installed in Distance and E-Learning Lecture Halls equipped with Polycom® EagleEye HD cameras
- 10+ Polycom HDX 8000 room telepresence systems incorporated into mobile carts for use in school rooms and offices
- 500 licenses of Polycom® CMA Desktop software
- Polycom® CMA management application
- Polycom® RMX® 4000 multimedia conference platform to schedule and manage multi-point conferences
- Polycom® Video Border Proxy™ (VBP®) converged network appliance to enable secure collaboration with parties outside the district
- Polycom® RSS™ 4000 recording and streaming server to record, archive and distribute classes and training sessions

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But this, administrators say, is just the beginning. The district hopes to build Distance and E-Learning labs in two lower-performing schools, while increasing use of its network overall. Kupperman says it's a matter of dollars and “sense.” “At a time when schools are being forced to cut back, we're strategically applying Polycom telepresence to multiply what we already have, to make the most of every dollar, and to deliver the best education possible.”

## About Polycom

Polycom is the global leader in open standards-based unified communications (UC) solutions for voice and video collaboration, trusted by more than 415,000 customers around the world. Polycom solutions are powered by the Polycom® RealPresence® Platform, comprehensive software infrastructure and rich APIs that interoperate with the broadest set of communication, business, mobile and cloud applications and devices to deliver secure face-to-face video collaboration in any environment. Polycom and its ecosystem of over 7,000 partners provide truly unified communications solutions that deliver the best user experience, highest multi-vendor interoperability, and lowest TCO. Visit [www.polycom.com](http://www.polycom.com) or connect with us on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn to learn how we're pushing the greatness of human collaboration forward.

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