

# Education Service Provider Offers Collaborative Learning Experience



Texas' Education Service Center, Region 20 deploys innovative videoconferencing to enhance academic opportunities.

## Executive Summary

### Education Service Center, Region 20

- **Industry:** Education
- **Location:** San Antonio, Texas
- **Number of Students:** 300,000

### CHALLENGE

- Need interactive voice and video messaging solution to enhance teaching and learning experience
- Need cost-effective solution to connect students, teachers, administrators, and outside experts under tightened budget

### SOLUTION

- Deployed Cisco Jabber to efficiently and effectively connect students, teachers, administrators, and outside experts across multiple locations

### RESULTS

- Reduced time and money needed to travel to attend meetings, field trips, and training sessions
- Reduced human resources costs associated with hiring candidates outside of region
- Enhanced academic opportunities for students in search of curriculum not offered within own school or district

## Challenge

Education Service Center, Region 20 (ESC-20) is one of 20 nonregulatory, regional education service agencies located in Texas. Based in San Antonio, ESC-20 serves 51 school districts and 32 charter schools in 15 counties throughout the south-central region of the state, offering high-quality, cost-effective products and services to enhance efficiencies and improve student performance.

As part of the U.S. Elementary and Secondary Education Act, ESC-20 was formed in 1966 under the name the Inter-American Educational Center. The agency aimed to provide both education and cultural development for K-12 students. As the organization evolved into ESC-20, the service center expanded its support based on regional academic needs and state education initiatives.

ESC-20 now serves 500 schools, 300,000 students, and 40,000 education professionals, 20,000 of whom are teachers. The service center offers support focused on administration, business, certifications, recruitment, curriculum, instruction and assessment, health and safety, professional development, specialized services, and technology.

In 1998, ESC-20 adopted and began offering telephony conferencing services to connect groups of students, teachers, and administrators across multiple locations. As technology advanced and online learning emerged, the organization began to consider web-based videoconferencing services to enhance the teaching and learning experience.

## Solution

ESC-20 has been using Cisco technology for a number of years for its networking, voice, and conferencing needs. Due to the success of the relationship, Cisco Jabber™ was top of mind as ESC-20 began its search for a web-based solution for interactive conferencing.

Cisco® Jabber enables real-time instant messaging, voice, video, desktop sharing, group chat, and conferencing all in one easy-to-use platform. The technology runs on multiple devices, including PCs, tablets, and smartphones.

Jabber can be built into any organization's current infrastructure; therefore, deploying the solution within ESC-20 was done with ease. After integrating the interactive technology, ESC-20 quickly learned of the benefits that the technology could bring to schools and districts throughout the region.

"When we first integrated Jabber into our network, we offered it as a service to allow superintendents to meet virtually," says Harriett Jackson, component director of infrastructure and network services at ESC-20. "As an easy-to-use, self-intuitive technology, we realized Jabber could be used for many valuable opportunities, including taking students on virtual field trips, conducting teacher training, holding virtual meetings and interviews, and ultimately, reducing travel costs."

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## Product List

### Voice and IP Communications

- Cisco Jabber

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**Harriett Jackson**, Component Director,  
Infrastructure and Network Services,  
Education Service Center, Region 20

## Results

By deploying Cisco Jabber, ESC-20 has assisted school districts and charter schools throughout the south-central region of Texas with providing 21st century interactive technology to students, teachers, and administrative professionals. At a time when education budgets have been cut at the local and state level, Jabber has allowed ESC-20 to provide its customers with a solution that reduces travel costs without jeopardizing teaching, training, or learning experiences.

“One of our schools used Jabber in the classroom to virtually bring in a curator from the Columbus Zoo, located over a thousand miles away in Ohio,” says Ron Dennis, distance learning specialist at ESC-20. “Other classrooms have used it to watch and learn from real-time surgeries being conducted in a Cincinnati hospital. We’ve even had a teacher in Antarctica use Jabber’s interactive video capabilities to virtually show students in Texas the project and terrain she was working on.”

By offering Jabber as a service to its education customers, ESC-20 has enabled schools and districts to reduce time and money needed to travel across the state or the globe to attend meetings, field trips, or training sessions. The service center itself has used the technology to save on human resources costs, interviewing candidates virtually, including one candidate in Afghanistan, who was seeking employment following his transition from the battlefield.

With the superior interconnectivity of Cisco Jabber, ESC-20 anticipates that its school district and charter school customers will be able to extend curriculum beyond their school walls. Gifted students will be able to use the solution to take expanded language courses, including in Mandarin or French. Likewise, students trailing behind can use Jabber for virtual tutoring from a teacher in their district, or anywhere on the map.

## For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Jabber, go to:  
<http://www.cisco.com/go/jabber>.