



“The old 2-inch thick booklets given out at the start of each semester are a thing of the past. At our most recent semester kick-off, I think we handed out only five pieces of paper. Everything is on our Workspace now!”

— Anthony Ambrogio, Music Department, Sachem Central Schools

Sachem Central Schools faculty increase productivity and improve idea and information exchange with WebEx Workspace.



INDUSTRY
Education

WEBEX APPLICATIONS
WebEx Workspace

SUMMARY
Music and Arts department of Sachem School District sets up a Web-based collaboration system to help its faculty in different physical locations easily exchange ideas and information.

ABOUT SACHEM SCHOOL DISTRICT

Line of Business

Sachem Schools is the largest suburban school district in the state of New York, with over 15,000 students attending annually.

Headquarters
New York

WebEx Customer Since 2003

Sachem Central Schools is the largest suburban school district in New York State. In the Music & Art Department alone, there are 85 teachers located in 18 different buildings. Keeping such a disperse group of faculty in close communication can be a challenge, but Mr. Anthony Ambrogio – one of the four department administrators – has WebEx Workspace to help him succeed.

The Challenge

When Ambrogio joined the Music & Art Department a year ago, one of the first things he did was investigate setting up a Web-based solution for collaboration among staff. While the school preferred trying to build something in-house, Anthony expressed his concerns about relying on a busy IT staff with limited resources. Long before he accepted his position in the Sachem School District, Anthony had been an avid user of WebEx Workspace (formerly Intranets.com) and so he persuaded them to try that solution.

The Solution

Ambrogio set up WebEx Workspace in the summer of 2003 as a way for faculty in different physical locations to easily exchange ideas and information.

The WebEx Workspace Database Manager is proving to be a huge time saver for the busy group. They've been able to move their event registration online. "We have over 700 students participating in our upcoming music festival. A year ago, we

would have spent hours collecting printed forms from teachers and then entering the information on the computer. Now, teachers can register their students online, right from the classroom," says Ambrogio. "The databases are also great for keeping track of our over 5,000 instruments. Now rather than making a bunch of phone calls to the different buildings to find an extra flute, we just look in the database."

The Benefit

Teachers have embraced the technology. They use the Discussion Forums for topics on everything from music software programs to the use of gel pens in art classes. "I'm happy that our teachers communicate more with one another now," says Ambrogio. "Recently they collaborated on WebEx Workspace to create a 2-hour faculty concert and art exhibit. It was a great event!" Ambrogio even posted MP3s of the music performances on Workspace so that students and teachers could listen online.

Ambrogio and other Sachem staff rely heavily on the Calendar. It makes coordinating meetings with the entire group easy. "On a typical day, I might have four concerts, in addition to several private meetings. I just sync it with my Palm, and I have my schedule with me even when I'm on the road." And when Ambrogio needs to get an e-mail out to the staff quickly or post an announcement, he can log on from any computer, anywhere.

I'm excited to share my experience and possibly help other schools achieve what we have here at Sachem.

— Anthony Ambrogio, Music Department, Sachem Central Schools

Ambrogio's assistants estimate that WebEx Workspace has improved their productivity by about 30%. With the Workspace Document Manager, they no longer need to maintain printed handbooks with forms and schedules of activities. "The old 2-inch thick booklets given out at the start of each semester are a thing of the past. At our most recent semester kick-off, I think we handed out only five pieces of paper. Everything is on our Workspace now!"

Students in Sachem can also visit the Workspace as guests, with limited access. The teachers maintain an area on the site with organized links for all areas of music and art advocacy. Students can learn about upcoming local cultural events, link to online ticket brokers, find resources and help on art software programs, research scholarships and more. Ambrogio also has plans to expand Workspace by creating a cumulative knowledge base, along with a searchable digitized music library.

"I like to tell my staff, 'it's not just me, it's us.'" Ambrogio has helped to change the Sachem environment from a top-down organization to a more collaborative group of professionals. He's been invited to present his work at the New York State Administrators Convention.

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Sachem Central Schools faculty use WebEx Workspace and realize process improvements that have generated an estimated 30% increase in productivity.
- Teachers maintain an area on the site with organized links to all areas of music and art advocacy. Students and faculty enjoy increased communication and collaboration.
- WebEx Workspace has helped Sachem Central Schools reduce paper handling and virtually eliminate the printing of thick booklets that were once needed.