



HIGH PERFORMANCE WI-FI NETWORK

East Bernard Independent School District Leverages ADTRAN for Its Networking Needs

The East Bernard Independent School District (EBISD) located in East Bernard, Texas, serves just over 1,000 students and around 130 full-time employees. The EBISD campus has eight buildings that require connectivity to support the district's bring your own device (BYOD) policy, resulting in as many as 500 devices on the network, with up to 300 devices on Wi-Fi.

The district's BYOD policy was put in place to help foster the creation of more modern classrooms for its student body. Both teachers and students enjoy using technology to expand the classroom beyond traditional book learning. They use tablets, laptops and other devices to create a more enriching learning experience.

"I cannot say enough about the support we get when we need it. With our previous technology provider, we felt like a number to them. With ADTRAN, we feel like a valued customer," said Jackson Williams, technology director at EBISD.

Benefits

ADTRAN enables the East Bernard Independent School District to pursue an aggressive BYOD policy and scale its Wi-Fi network to meet any new learning initiatives that are required. Other benefits include:

- Bluesocket vWLAN provides a stable building block for future growth and IT needs;
- Worry-free connectivity throughout the school allows teachers to use learning applications and connect student devices whenever needed;
- Virtualization of the wireless network minimizes management issues and reduces the burden on the IT staff while increasing overall network flexibility.

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Management Issues Cause a Pivot to a More Modern Solution

The EBISD serves a large number of students who require a modern learning environment to succeed in today's world. To do this, the EBISD began pursuing a BYOD policy for its students and staff, as well as purchasing and utilizing carts in classrooms filled with tablets and other devices. All of these connected devices require a robust Wi-Fi network capable of handling a large amount of traffic on a daily basis. This soon became a challenge. The EBISD required technology that could not only scale to meet its needs and provide flexibility for everyday use, but it also had to be cost-effective and be manageable for a small IT staff.

"The previous solution we had in place for creating our Wi-Fi network wasn't a solution we could count on for the direction we were moving in from a network perspective. To support our BYOD policy and the in-class applications being used by our teachers, we needed a Wi-Fi network that could offer a lot of bandwidth, while also being easy to manage," said Jackson Williams, technology director, East Bernard Independent School District. "Our team knew we needed to make a change if we were going to keep pace with the learning objectives we had set forth for our classrooms."

Since the IT department for the EBISD has only two managers, the ability to effortlessly manage the Wi-Fi network is imperative. When its legacy Cisco networking solution went down, the EBISD IT Department found the technology not only unfamiliar but also found getting answers and fixes for problems from the supplier to be time-consuming. Firefighting minor networking errors began to take its toll on the small IT department, which inevitably took attention away from other action items they needed to address.

"With just two staff members managing the Wi-Fi network for the entire district, we needed to be as efficient as possible with our time. The amount of time spent on troubleshooting issues, both major and minor, was beginning to pile up," said Williams. "The team knew we needed to make a move to a technology supplier who could provide us with the technology we needed at the right price that met our overall needs."

East Bernard Selects ADTRAN to Solve Its Networking Woes

The EBISD began the search for a manageable and cost-effective solution to create the Wi-Fi network it needed for its students and faculty members. After viewing a demo of ADTRAN's technology, the district decided it was a great fit. Today, the EBISD leverages a wide variety of ADTRAN technology for its Wi-Fi network, including ADTRAN NetVanta switches, Bluesocket virtual WLAN (vWLAN), Bluesocket access points (APs) and ADTRAN phone systems. The Bluesocket vWLAN centralizes management and control and distributes data with intelligent APs that enforce policies at the edge of the network. Additionally, it ensures there are no single points of failure, bottlenecks, or scalability concerns associated with the network, making management of the Wi-Fi network painless for the EBISD IT staff.

"ADTRAN reduces the pressure on our IT staff and allows us to provide a Wi-Fi network that can handle the expected amount of daily traffic with ease," said Williams. "ADTRAN gives us more freedom to accomplish our goals better than any Wi-Fi solution we previously had in place."

The cost-effective nature of the ADTRAN solution coupled with the ease of network management is an added bonus for the EBISD IT staff. Williams and his team can assure the EBISD superintendent that the Wi-Fi network will be able to meet expectations and match new learning initiatives. Additionally, ADTRAN was able to customize its Wi-Fi network solution and technology for the EBISD, eliminating hardware or services it didn't need. This helped to control costs and stay within the district's budget.



EAST BERNARD



“When it comes to ADTRAN, nobody provides a better cost point for the types of services you receive. I never have to worry about not meeting the expectations of the district administrators, going over budget or not having the tools we need to do our jobs,” said Williams. “ADTRAN gives us exactly what we require, which makes everyone more efficient, from the IT department to the teachers and students leveraging technology in the classrooms.”

Ability to Meet the Demands of Today and Tomorrow

Working through ADTRAN partner IT Works, the EBISD was able to purchase the right equipment for the job. The district is now able to address all of its needs and meet its budgeting requirements, which left administrators extremely satisfied with the deployment from a cost perspective. Getting up to speed on how to use and maintain the technology was simple as well. ADTRAN provides a host of resources including a support community, forums and much more.

“I cannot say enough about the support we get when we need it. With our previous technology provider, we felt like a number to them. With ADTRAN, we feel like a valued customer,” said Williams. “From ADTRAN’s partner to the company itself, the entire process from

sales to installation was quick and painless. Being able to quickly digest and learn how to use the technology is a major plus as well.”

The ADTRAN technology gives the EBISD a strong Wi-Fi foundation to support learning initiatives in the classroom. With the ability to scale the Wi-Fi network easily at any time, the EBISD can achieve uninterrupted network coverage for all of its classroom technology, from BYOD devices to the tablets provided by the district.

“Bluesocket enables us to move the vWLAN from host to host when needed without having to worry about any time-consuming downtime for the network. What this boils down to is that when the technology works, our students have the chance to learn,” said Williams. “ADTRAN gives us the ability to never worry about having access to a robust Wi-Fi network that has enough bandwidth for everyone’s needs.”

Williams foresees an expansion of the number of devices in the classroom and will be extending the use of ADTRAN technology. EBISD plans to expand and scale its wireless coverage with 802.11ac Wave 2 access points, as well as upgrade its network infrastructure to high-density 10 Gigabit switching to quickly and cost effectively meet future needs. This will allow the district to provide more devices for more students and move toward a hybrid 1:1 environment in the future.



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