

CASE STUDY / NON-PROFIT HEAD START / UTAH

Network *Confidence* and Reliability

How a lean non-profit serving 900 families finally trusted its network.

13

locations across three Utah counties

900+

students served

AT A GLANCE

CLIENT

Mountainland Head Start

LOCATION

Utah, Juab, and Wasatch
counties, Utah

INDUSTRY

Non-Profit Head Start

SERVICES

RUCKUS Wireless · Switching
· Sophos Firewall · Staff
Training

SITES

13 locations

HEADLINE RESULT

A faster, reliable network the
team can manage

01 THE CLIENT

School readiness, for families who *need* it

Mountainland Head Start promotes school readiness for nearly 900 students and employs 200 staff across 13 locations in Utah, Juab, and Wasatch counties. Its work is educational services for families in need, which means the people it serves have the least margin for a program that does not run.

Head Start organizations are also accountable in ways a private school is not. Enrollment, attendance, health screenings, and family engagement all have to be recorded and reported, and nearly all of that reporting now happens online. A slow network does not just frustrate a teacher, it delays the paperwork the program's funding depends on.

So the network at Mountainland is not a convenience layered on top of the mission. It is part of how the mission gets documented and funded.

02 THE CHALLENGE

Clunky, slow, and *unreliable*

The old network was clunky, slow, and unreliable, in the specific way that wears a staff down: not broken enough to be an emergency, just unpredictable enough that nobody quite trusted it. Teachers built workarounds. Administrators assumed a task would take two attempts. Across 13 sites, that lost time compounds into hours every week.

Fixing it meant confronting two real constraints at once. Mountainland runs on a lean non-profit budget, so there was no room for an oversized solution. And its entire IT department is two people covering 13 sites, so whatever replaced the old network had to be something that small a team could actually operate. A non-profit does not get to solve a problem twice.

THE REAL CONSTRAINT

A network refresh across 13 locations is a large project for any organization. For a two-person IT team with a non-profit budget, the risk was never the technology. It was taking it on at all.

03 FINDING THE RIGHT PARTNER

A nervous *start*

IT Lead and Data Manager Aaron Perkins came into the project apprehensive, which is the honest reaction of anyone about to re-cable their own organization. After talking it through with Pine Cove, he chose RUCKUS wireless access points and switching alongside a new Sophos firewall.

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Pine Cove exceeded all expectations. I was nervous for the project. Their team made me feel confident and the results have been great.

AARON PERKINS · IT LEAD AND DATA MANAGER, MOUNTAINLAND HEAD START

04 WHAT CHANGED

New hardware, and the training to *keep* it

Pine Cove replaced the wireless, the switching, and the firewall in one coordinated pass.

01 RUCKUS wireless access points

New wireless throughout, sized for classrooms full of devices rather than for the floor plan alone.

02 RUCKUS switching

The wired layer underneath replaced at the same time, so the new wireless was not bottlenecked by old switches.

03 A new Sophos firewall

Security modernized alongside performance, protecting student and family data across every site.

04 Installed across all 13 locations

Pine Cove's project team handled the rollout site by site, so the work did not land on a two-person department.

05 Staff trained to manage it

Pine Cove trained Mountainland's team to run the new environment themselves, which was the point of the whole exercise.

05 THE RESULTS

Night and *day*

13

sites on one wireless and switching standard

2

IT staff who can now manage the network themselves

Night & Day

improvement in speed and reliability

Speed and reliability improved so plainly that the staff stopped describing the network in degrees and started describing it as a different thing entirely. The workarounds went away, and with them the quiet assumption that a task might not go through the first time.

The more durable result is the one in the quote. Perkins started the project nervous and finished it confident, which for a two-person team responsible for 13 sites is the difference between maintaining a network and being at the mercy of one.

06 LOOKING AHEAD

Confidence worth *keeping*

Because Mountainland's team was trained to manage the environment rather than handed a black box, day-to-day changes stay in house and Pine Cove stays available for the work that genuinely needs a specialist. For a non-profit budget, that split is the whole value.

Ready to *chat*?

Let's talk about what your organization is trying to accomplish, before we talk about products.

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