

CASE STUDY / K-12 SCHOOL DISTRICT / COLORADO

A Faster, Cleaner Network *Refresh*

How a one-person IT department replaced an entire five-school network in a matter of days.

20

RUCKUS switches

50+

wireless access points

Days

to install, all five schools

AT A GLANCE

CLIENT

North Conejos School District

LOCATION

La Jara, Colorado

INDUSTRY

K-12 Public Schools

SERVICES

Core Switching · Wireless
Access Points · Installation
Services

PARTNER

RUCKUS Networks

FUNDING

E-Rate

HEADLINE RESULT

A complete five-school network refresh, finished in days

01 THE CLIENT

One person, *five* schools

North Conejos School District sits in southern Colorado's San Luis Valley, serving 1,100 students and 100 staff across five schools. It is a small district by headcount and a wide one by geography, with buildings spread across a rural valley rather than clustered on a single campus.

Its entire IT department is Brad Huffaker, and has been for 23 years. Technology is also not his only title. He is the district's CTE coordinator and its assessment coordinator, and he drives a school bus.

That is not an unusual arrangement in rural districts, and it changes what a technology project has to look like. There is no team to absorb a bad week, no second set of hands for a late night, and no realistic way to hand the work to somebody else while it gets done.

02 THE CHALLENGE

An entire network, all at *once*

The district's network had reached the point where replacing pieces of it was no longer worth doing. What it needed was a full refresh, wired and wireless, across all five schools, funded through E-Rate and awarded by RFP.

That scope is difficult for any district. For a one-person department it is genuinely daunting: switching and wireless across five buildings, all of it specified correctly the first time, all of it documented well enough to satisfy federal funding requirements, and none of it allowed to interrupt instruction for long.

E-Rate also adds a second job on top of the first. The funding is substantial, but it arrives with a competitive bidding process and a documentation trail, and the district carries that compliance burden regardless of who ends up installing the equipment.

WHAT HE WAS ACTUALLY BUYING

Huffaker was not shopping for hardware. He was shopping for a project that would land cleanly and not leave him with a half-finished network and four other jobs still waiting.

03 FINDING THE RIGHT PARTNER

A proposal that started with the *problem*

The RFP brought in the responses an RFP usually brings in: equipment lists priced against a specification. Pine Cove's was personalized, and it started from what the district was trying to solve rather than from a catalog.

For a director who would be living with the result alone, that difference decided it.

04 WHAT CHANGED

Mapped first, then *installed*

Pine Cove designed the network against the actual buildings, then put it in fast enough that the district barely had to plan around it.

01 A coverage heatmap first

Pine Cove mapped signal coverage across all five schools before ordering hardware, so the design answered the buildings rather than the floor plan.

02 Roughly 20 RUCKUS switches

The wired core replaced across the district, giving the new wireless something worth connecting to.

03 More than 50 access points

New RUCKUS wireless throughout all five schools, placed against the heatmap.

04 Installed in a matter of days

The whole district went in over a few days rather than across a summer, and Pine Cove stayed on to support it afterward.

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The install would definitely be ranked right up there with the very best, cleanest, quickest, and neatest installs that I've done.

BRAD HUFFAKER · IT DIRECTOR, NORTH CONEJOS SCHOOL DISTRICT

05 THE RESULTS

Refreshed, and still *supported*

5

schools refreshed, wired and wireless, in one engagement

70+

pieces of RUCKUS hardware installed and configured

1

IT director who did not have to do it alone

The measure of a project like this is not the equipment list. It is whether a district with one IT person came out of a full network replacement with a working network and a director who was not buried by it. North Conejos did both.

Pine Cove stayed on afterward, which matters more here than the install itself. A one-person department does not need a vendor who disappears once the invoices clear.

06 LOOKING AHEAD

Time back for the other *four* jobs

With the network current and supported, the hours Huffaker used to spend keeping aging equipment alive go back to the rest of his job description, which at North Conejos is most of a job description.

Ready to *chat*?

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

[Schedule Your Free IT Assessment](#)

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