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Cypress Fairbanks ISD Adopts Aruba Networks Gigabit Wireless Network

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Aruba Networks, an HP company, today announced that Cypress Fairbanks Independent School District (CFISD) of Houston, the third largest school district in Texas, is deploying a new Gigabit wireless infrastructure to support the district's commitment to 21st century K-12 education. Using [Aruba's 802.11ac solution](#) and [ClearPass Policy Management platform](#), CFISD plans to adopt a Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT) policy for its 113,000+ students and 14,000 staff and teachers.

The district is implementing a one-to-many device strategy and will allow students and staff to bring their own devices onto the school campuses.

"We expect to support nearly a half million devices," said Frankie Jackson, Chief Technology Officer, CFISD. "To do this successfully, we need a reliable, high speed infrastructure that can scale, can deliver uninterrupted coverage across our schools and in the classrooms, and can authenticate and provide secure access for all of these devices."

To address these challenges, CFISD replaced its existing wireless infrastructure with Aruba's 802.11ac solution, installing more than 8,000 [Aruba 200 Series Access Points](#) both indoors and outdoors, [7200 Series Mobility Controllers](#), [AirWave network management](#) and [ClearPass](#) for 802.1X and guest wireless authentication. With the help of partner Layer 3 Communications of Houston, Texas, the district is currently installing the new infrastructure in its middle and high schools and plans to roll out the new wireless network in its elementary schools in the fall.

Said Jackson, "Our vision in this district is that in our classrooms, every teacher and every student can be connected at very fast speeds 100 percent of the time. We anticipate elementary students bringing at least one device onto campus with them, middle schoolers bringing two and at the high school level, as many as three per student. By enabling a reliable, high-speed connection for these devices, we hope to not only increase the use of technology in the classroom, but to improve overall academic achievement by allowing students to collaborate, communicate, problem-solve

and engage in creative and critical thinking.”

Jackson noted that the network was crucial to turning CFISD’s vision into reality. “We knew we needed to fix the foundation before we started purchasing and bringing in devices. You don’t want to apply new wallpaper before fixing cracks in the walls,” she said.

ClearPass was a key factor in CFISD’s decision to select Aruba. The district’s vision – to allow BYOT for all students, staff and faculty, as well as allow guests to connect to the wireless network – meant that security, authentication and policy management were key concerns. With ClearPass, CFISD can now identify all BYO devices and create differentiated policies based on the type of users – for example, student, teacher, administrator or guest – to determine the appropriate network access that each user’s device can have.

“We looked at a number of solutions and Aruba had the policy management we were looking for and was the best value,” Jackson commented. Jackson and her team were also impressed by Aruba’s dedication and partnership with the district and its commitment to helping CFISD meet its goals, even allowing them to borrow equipment and resources during implementation.

Added Jackson, “A company that will partner with your district to ensure you don’t fail is invaluable.”

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