

CASE STUDY

When a New York City school ran into connectivity issues, it needed a partner who could create a customized solution to keep the school bells ringing

Out-of-the-Box Thinking Helps a NYC School Stay Connected



“I know that TPx is going to offer the best solutions to make things work. With TPx, you’re not just trying to jam a square peg into a round hole. They create custom solutions for our needs.”

Paul Fisher, Cooke School and Institute, Director of Information Technology



Cooke School and Institute (CS) works directly with a multitude of educators in different roles to elevate outcomes in general and special education. Working with teachers and school leaders, CS consultants support educators to gain knowledge of the diverse needs of their students. As CS has evolved over the years, it has remained focused on its core mission of helping students with special needs by creating a learning environment that caters to their specific needs. While it has excelled in its mission, it hasn’t always had the resources to focus on its IT processes. When IT Director Paul Fisher, moved into his role, he immediately saw the opportunity to improve processes, address cybersecurity and ensure that his team had a reliable connection to enable it to do what it does best: help prepare the next generation for life on their own.

PROFILE

Cooke School and Institute is dedicated to providing services for children with special needs, including young adults.

CHALLENGE

- Notoriously unreliable internet connections caused teachers to lose internet mid-lesson
- The school was going to move to a new location within a year

SOLUTION

- Create an out-of-the-box SD-WAN solution to augment existing cable
- 4G wireless backup to power Wi-Fi coverage and ensure uninterrupted classroom connectivity

BENEFITS

The school’s network now has redundancy and a wireless option it can take with it when it relocates to a new space.

RESULTS

The Cooke School and Institute now has a network that keeps users connected even if the cable internet goes down.

The Challenge

When Fisher started his role, he inherited a network in one of the school buildings that was “slightly better than home cable internet” from the local cable provider. The outdated technology caused frequent outages that would happen without warning, and since CS didn’t have a dedicated line, the school would be just one of many without internet in the vicinity and would have to wait patiently until their needs could be addressed.

“When we would reach out to the ISP, they would try their best to help by the end of the day,” Fisher said. “We would have to wait for a technician to get dispatched to figure out what’s going on. School is taking place during this time. We have a bunch of teachers with no internet, and that’s why I give these teachers the greatest amount of respect. They’re quick on their feet.”

Without internet connection, teachers couldn’t use their smart boards. But they persevered, whether it was using an iPad or a particularly old school medium: pen and paper. The situation was not sustainable. Even though most people at the school accepted the outages as a necessary evil, Fisher was thinking ahead and knew he needed to find a solution.

“As we’re growing — and we’re growing very fast — the biggest challenge is to make sure we create processes and best practices that allow us to handle difficult situations when they arise. That requires a lot more planning on the backend than we’ve done in the past,” says Fisher.

Addressing the Growing Pains

Fisher began talking with service providers about possible solutions. He found many willing and able to replace the outdated technology with a more modern solution, but the cost was always prohibitive with one provider even quoting \$22,000 to run a dedicated line. Since the school was scheduled to move to a new location in a year, Fisher was unwilling to pay steep prices for technology he would have to leave behind. He also did not want to get locked into a multi-year contract for a solution he would soon outgrow.

Fisher knew there had to be a better solution. He knew he needed a partner that would be able to create a customized solution catered to his specific needs and

budget. When he connected with TPx, he encountered a team that looked at the situation from a fresh perspective.

A Creative Solution

TPx suggested incorporating SD-WAN technology to provide a wireless backup network instead of replacing the outdated cables. The commercial-grade wireless connection detects when there is an outage and takes over the Wi-Fi, resulting in continuous internet connection that allows teachers to continue their lessons without interruption.

“Now when we have cable outages, TPx’s Wi-Fi keeps us connected until the cable comes back online. It’s nice and seamless,” says Fisher. He jokes, “The staff went from saying, ‘we don’t have any internet; everything is down,’ to ‘do you know how long it’s going to be slow?’ That is a major win.”

This creative solution addressed all of CS’s pain points. It allowed them to keep the cable infrastructure that was already in place instead paying thousands of dollars to replace it, and also take the wireless technology with them when they move to their new location.

With the cable outages now firmly under control, Fisher is now able to focus his time and attention on building effective processes that help CS grow. He is already thinking through future problems he expects to face, and likes knowing he has a partner that can help him be successful.

“I know that TPx is going to look for the best solutions to make things work,” Fisher said. “They’re not just trying to jam a square peg into a round hole. They’re creating custom solutions for our needs.”

About TPx

TPx helps businesses navigate the complicated and evolving IT landscape. As a leading nationwide managed services provider, TPx helps businesses simplify operations, optimize networks, improve productivity, reduce costs and keep IT environments secure.

