



CASE STUDY

New Fairfield Public Schools

Atlantic helps New Fairfield Public Schools breeze through computer-adaptive testing and utilize outdoor wireless to enhance student safety.

Schools throughout Connecticut and beyond are under increasing pressure to support computer-adaptive testing on mobile devices. The challenge many schools face is having a wireless network capable of supporting large numbers of devices logging on simultaneously.

New Fairfield Public Schools is no exception. As the district began implementing computer-adaptive testing, its IT team had to expend significant time and resources helping students get logged in. Techs then had to stand by during testing in case of an issue.

With four schools serving nearly 3,000 students, New Fairfield Public Schools needed to relieve those bottlenecks and ensure seamless support for the new testing standards. The district called upon Atlantic Computing to assist with wireless infrastructure improvements and help optimize the network to ensure that every student could get access.

“In the past it’s been very difficult for us to test all students in a particular school at the same time because of the challenge of getting all the devices on the network,” said Aaron Herold, Director of Technology, New Fairfield Public Schools. “We partnered with Atlantic about a year ago to start addressing some of these issues. Because of that, we were able to test all of our middle school kids at the same time. Everything worked beautifully.

“In fact, I walked into my middle school technician’s office one day during testing and I got scared because she was there in her office. I asked, ‘You know we’re testing to-

ABOUT ATLANTIC

Atlantic provides superior wireless and wired network deployments. We focus on commercial and educational WiFi, and the supporting LAN / WAN infrastructures. We’ve deployed many, many thousands of access points in demanding wide-area wireless networks. We’ve enhanced terrestrial networks, bringing layer-3 resiliency and 10 Gbit/s service to existing deployments at affordable costs. We’ve provided point-to-point links and wireless infrastructure to municipalities. Atlantic has installations spanning the US, and into Canada and Mexico. We have a stellar reputation. Call us first.



We have complete outdoor coverage and there was never a problem with it. The entire Atlantic team came out to make sure that everything was set before we installed those devices. They did a heck of a job.”

day, right?’ And she said, ‘Oh, they’re already done.’ There was not a single hitch. It had never been that smooth.”

Ensuring Student Access

Atlantic began by analyzing the district’s wireless coverage and determining what equipment was due for an upgrade. Atlantic then put in new wireless controllers and made configuration changes so that the network could better handle the testing load.

“They helped us not only implement technologies but also optimize how we use the technology,” Herold said. “The Aruba equipment gives you all these features but if you don’t configure it properly you’re going to have problems. You might have one laptop connecting at full gigabit speed that takes resources away from all the other devices. Atlantic looked at how the rules are set up in terms of wireless airspace in order to provide for better access.”

Atlantic also helped Herold and his team utilize monitoring tools to identify potential chokepoints. Armed with this information, New Fairfield Public Schools can continue to make investments and fine-tune the network to ensure that it can support growing numbers of devices.

“We’re buying another new wireless controller that can handle the load moving forward because we still have another three grades to onboard with wireless one-to-one,” said Herold. “We’re making sure we’re not going to hit those same problems again down the road.”

Herold continues to rely upon the expertise of the Atlantic team. Atlantic has implemented wireless solutions in schools throughout Connecticut and beyond, and has seen most every issue in the field.

“There are things that I just don’t have the time to try to research. And I don’t have to because I have yet to find something that the guys at Atlantic do not know,” Herold said. “It’s

not like they have to go look it up or research it. They know the answer right away from first-hand experience.”

Complete Outdoor Coverage

Atlantic’s strong relationship with New Fairfield Public Schools led to the completion of another initiative — outdoor wireless covering the district’s athletic fields. Outdoor wireless projects pose a number of unique challenges, not the least of which is the logistics of simply installing the equipment.

“To install it you have to get permits and you need a crane to be able to mount the access points. That heavy equipment costs \$1,000 a day, so you rent it for as little time as possible. No mistakes can be made because once the wireless gear is 50 feet in the air you can’t touch it,” said Herold.

“Atlantic programmed the equipment and it worked like a charm. We have complete outdoor coverage and there was never a problem with it. The entire Atlantic team came out to make sure that everything was set before we installed those devices. They did a heck of a job.”

The outdoor Wi-Fi network supports a security system that enables high school and middle school staff to use electronic badges to call in threats or medical issues. The system provides location information so that the nurse or security officer will know exactly where to go.

New Fairfield Public Schools is utilizing Wi-Fi to enhance student security and safety and meet new testing requirements. Thanks to Atlantic Computing, the district has robust outdoor Wi-Fi and a network capable of supporting computer-adaptive testing without any issues. That’s a huge relief for Herold’s five-person staff.

“My techs have been able to focus on other work rather than holding everybody’s hand to try to figure out why they can’t get on the network,” he said. “Now everybody can get on at the same time and it just works.”

