

7 QUESTIONS ABOUT

Connecting Classrooms in Puerto Rico



"Cambium Networks, gracias por el servicio. Finalmente, tenemos Wi-Fi en toda la Academia (thanks for the service. Finally, we have Wi-Fi all over the Academy)." –

PASTOR WILKINS GONZALEZ, PRINCIPAL,
RINCÓN CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Wi-Fi connectivity is a resource many North American schools take for granted. However, there are many places worldwide where the increasingly basic educational need of classroom connectivity remains scarce. When Charlie Galik, a Cambium Networks software engineer, brought his family to live in Puerto Rico and discovered that the school serving his new community's children lacked sufficient Wi-Fi, he took action. After receiving a donation of cnPilot™ access points from Cambium Networks, students and faculty benefit from expanded connectivity that enhances their educational experience.

HOW DID YOU DISCOVER THE LACK OF CONNECTIVITY AT THE SCHOOL?

My wife Elizabeth and I wanted to take our family to Puerto Rico for a study abroad program. The school my children began attending in the fall of 2018 was hiring for the English teacher position, and Elizabeth joined the staff, discovering that the school lacked Wi-Fi coverage in the classrooms.

GIVE US A MENTAL TOUR OF THE SCHOOL

Rincón Christian Academy is a bilingual Pre-K thru 12th grade school, located on the western side of the island 3 hours from San Juan. The school is new, only in its third year of operation and growing annually – with about 150 students and 12 staff members. The main building has 3 classrooms, but they've added several metal temporary classrooms that form a courtyard on the campus. Next year they plan to expand across the road and add more buildings.



Charlie Galik installs a cnPilot™ e700

WHAT ARE RINCÓN'S UNIQUE CONNECTIVITY NEEDS?

The main building always had Wi-Fi, but the exterior classrooms did not. All connections had to be made from that building – teachers, students doing research, entire classes brought in to watch streaming media – and all from personal devices because the school has no computer lab. Even using the phone proved to be difficult because the signal was so poor due to the metal construction of the classrooms. Plus, the school's proximity to the coast makes the signal unreliable so close to the edge of the network.

WHAT'S THE IMPACT OF CLASSROOM CONNECTIVITY?

From the teachers' perspective, the convenience of having a connection anywhere on campus is paramount. Before, teachers had to do their lesson planning when they had connection to the internet, and then print off worksheets and materials only at the main building. It heavily restricted what they could access and when, and how they could teach. Getting Wi-Fi into the classrooms is really the first step in enabling digital learning at the school. Without it, using laptops or other online learning tools is impossible.

WHAT CAMBIUM NETWORKS PRODUCTS WERE USED?

The school received a donation from Cambium Networks of four cnPilot e700 access points, rugged outdoor units with full metal enclosures designed to withstand harsh weather like the heat, rain, and even hurricanes we get in Puerto Rico. After installing the first two units, I was surprised to discover that I got all the coverage I needed for the entire courtyard and its buildings from only two Access Points. The other units are not vital now, but can be helpful to offset the load for the first two, and to be prepared when more classrooms are added. Having this network also provides flexibility because when the metal classrooms are relocated to the future campus space across the road, the Wi-Fi network simply goes with it.

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL MANAGE THE NETWORK?

They are using cnMaestro™ wireless management platform, which is very simple to use for folks who are not technically proficient, like this school without an IT staff. With cnMaestro, I can easily help out by monitoring the network remotely.

HAS THE NEW NETWORK RECEIVED FEEDBACK?

The kids love it, the teachers love it, and it just works. For Elizabeth in her classroom, having internet that is strong enough to stream video is significant. Because of the easy access to research online, the progress of even her lowest performing students improved immensely. The connection is seamless and reliable. The entire staff is so grateful because investing in Wi-Fi for all the classrooms was not financially feasible, nor would the expansion they'd need to continue as the school keeps growing – but the cnPilot network will support that growth. It is so remarkable how what seems like a small gift from Cambium Networks can make such a big impact.



cnPilot™ e700

“A huge thank you to Cambium Networks for making this possible. The quality of the equipment is incredible, especially for streaming video. We're very grateful for this contribution to our school and community.” – ELIZABETH GALIK, ENGLISH TEACHER, RINCÓN CHRISTIAN ACADEMY



Rincón students of all ages in assembly

