FWISD Partenered with Bearcom & Airspan to build its Private 4G Network to Sustain Distance Learning During Covid-19 Pandemic

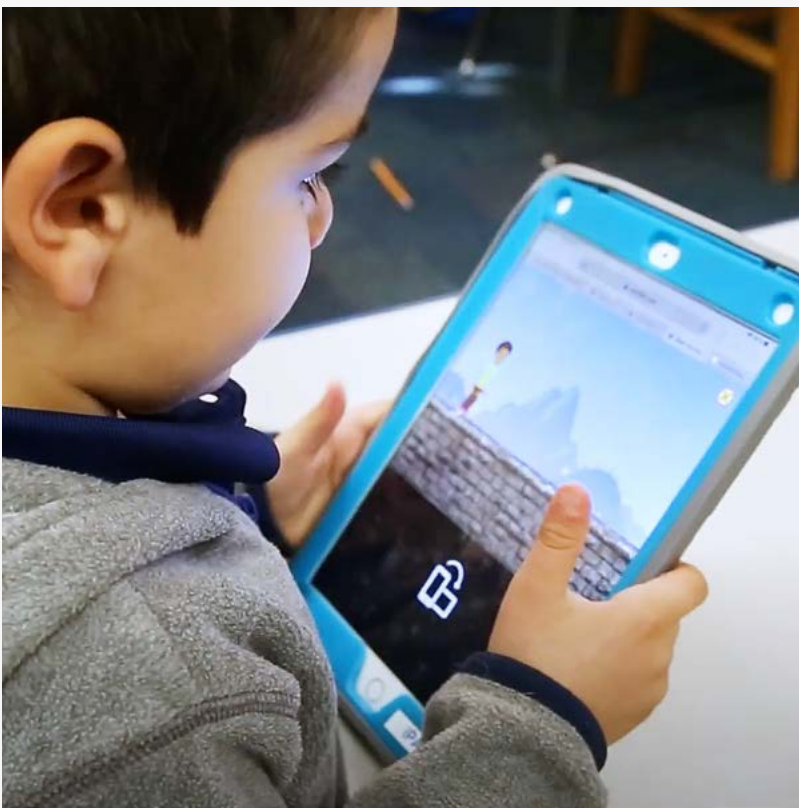| Industry	Location	Partner	End User	
Education	Texas, USA	Bearcom	Fort Worth Independent School District	Reference

Overview

Texas's Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD) worked with BearCom to create its own private LTE network via a CBRS platform. FWISD used its emergency fund to address the growing need for students to learn remotely as a result of Covid 19 outbreak. Bearcom is a network and backhaul solution provider. According to Bearcom, most of these citizens are living in the rural, urban and tribal communities and do not have access to a reliable internet access which put them in a disadvantage position compared to their peers.
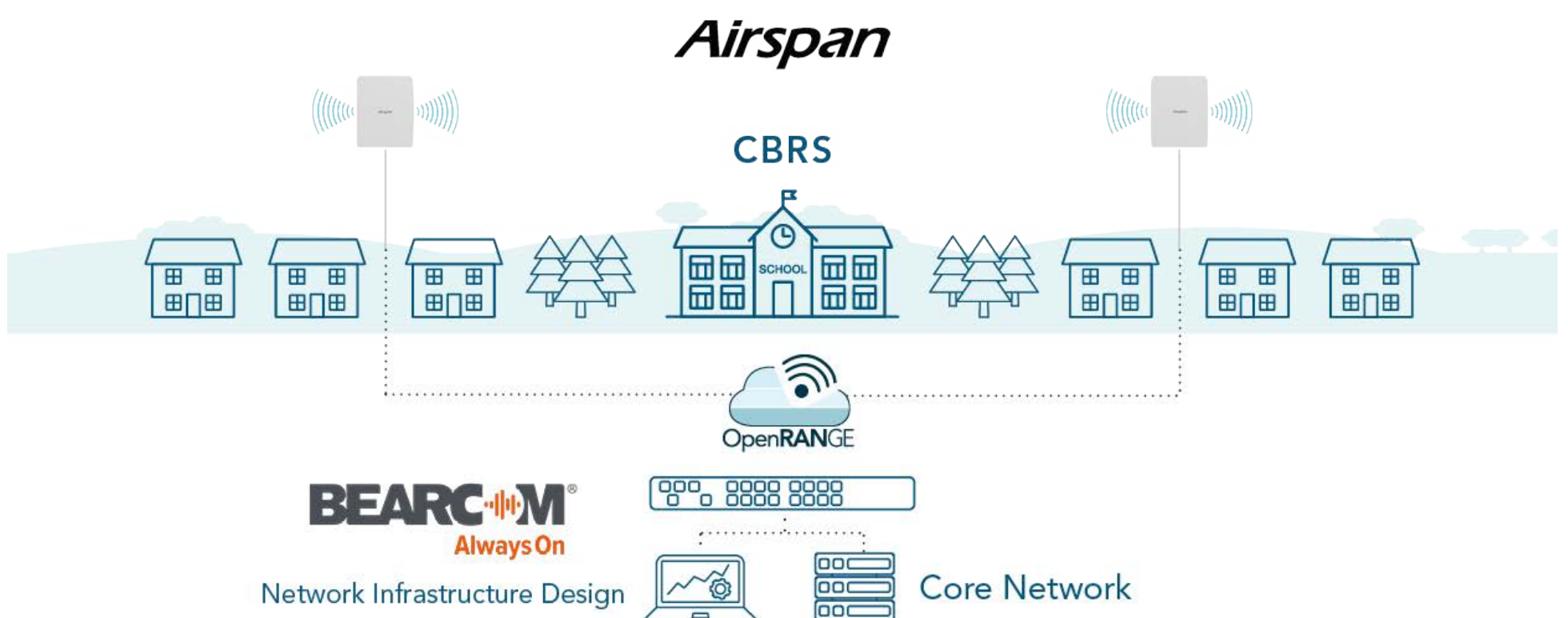

Challenges

To provide internet access not just to students but for the people in the district, Bearcom partnered with CommScope, Athonet, Airspan and Cradlepoint to build a core network and radio sites. The challenge is to put them up and running within 60 days. This projects must also consider the funding provided by the government. FWISD will also own the network infrastructure to reduce opex. The school will also utilize the government's CBRS spectrum allocation for General Authorized Access.

Solution & Benefits

To operate the network services, CommScope provided Spectrum Access, Cradlepoint supplied routers with sim card and FWISD provided laptops and tablets to students. Airspan CBRS and Open RAN technologies have played a vital role. 12 CBSDs were deployed across 4 sites. With CBRS, the school was able to own a private LTE network with carrier-class speed, security, range, and capacity. CBRS can provide a secure internet connections to students at a lower cost compared to wifi. 4,000 students were expected to connect during the first quarter.

This project has become a milestone for Bearcom and FWISD. More than sustaining the internet need for distance learning and WFH jobs, it has addressed the issue of digital divide as a result of poor internet connection and lack of access to online opportunities and important information.

Airspan

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