

Case Study - Lakeland School

Lakeland School District unifies 9 locations, 1,500 students, and over 3,000 daily device connections—all under a single, license-free network infrastructure.



Background

In the heart of northeast Indiana, Lakeland School District serves about 1,500 K–12 students and 200 staff across nine locations. As IT Director, Sam Lovelace manages a sprawling network that must accommodate modern teaching methods, tight budget constraints, and a 1:1 learning initiative that places a device in every student's hands. Over the past six years, Sam has balanced cost, performance, and long-term scalability—eventually standardizing on UniFi to unify Wi-Fi, switching, cameras, and door access under one license-free ecosystem.

Business Objectives

- Predictable Costs & Longevity
- Minimal Licensing
- Scalable Technology Path
- Simple, Self-Managed Deployment

Why UniFi?

Affordability and No Licensing Fees

When the district compared UniFi's upfront cost to other enterprise solutions, they saw dramatic savings. For example, a Cisco AP refresh quote was nearly three times the cost of a similar UniFi deployment—plus ongoing SmartNet fees. By choosing UniFi, Sam could buy extra spares for critical areas and still stay under budget.



Future-Proof Upgrades

As standards evolve, Lakeland can integrate new UniFi devices—like Wi-Fi 7 or higher-capacity switches—into the existing setup. The older hardware still operates under the same controller, letting Sam phase in new technologies over time rather than performing a costly overhaul.

Unified Management & Flexible Features

From the cloud-based controller and Site Manager to the UniFi Protect and Door Access platforms, Lakeland manages nearly every network aspect in a single interface. New VLANs, door-access permissions, or camera angles can be adjusted on the fly—no complicated licensing or multiple logins.

Implementation Highlights

Core Network & Aggregation

At the network core, Lakeland runs Enterprise Fortress Gateways (EFGs) plus a pair of Enterprise Campus Switches. Each closet then has a Pro or Enterprise switch, providing up to 50 Gbps links back to the core. While some locations still rely on wireless point-to-point links, the district is rolling out private fiber to replace those.

“We’ve shifted from air-fiber links to burying 14 miles of our own cable, UniFi’s agility helps us evolve the backbone without over-complicating daily operations”

Sam Lovelace, IT Director, Lakeland School District