How One School District Is Keeping Its Community Safe from Cyber Threats

A QUESTION OF WHEN, NOT IF…

This is a scary time for schools. Nationwide, even the smallest districts have become targets for ransomware, phishing scams, and a wide range of other attacks that are occurring more and more often. Indeed, these attacks have grown so prevalent that schools should now consider attacks to be a question of when, not if. And that's just what Tennessee's Bedford County Schools learned in 2019, when a successful malware attack wreaked havoc throughout the district.

> "WE HAD A SCHOOL AT WHICH MALWARE MADE ITS WAY ONTO A COMPUTER, ATTACHED ITSELF TO THE SERVER, AND THEN PROPAGATED OUT," EXPLAINED MR. BEN BARRETT, BEDFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS' DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY. "CLEANUP WAS A REAL PAIN BECAUSE WE HAD TO INSPECT EVERY SINGLE MACHINE TO SEE IF IT WAS INFECTED."

With Mr. Barrett's small IT staff already stretched by the many other tasks required to manage the technology of a district educating more than 8,000 students, the strain of recovery from this malware attack convinced Mr. Barrett of the truth of the old adage: an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

He resolved to do everything he could to prevent another attack on his community.

A SECURE DEFENSE ENGINEERED FOR EDUCATION

Mr. Barrett wanted to implement a defense system that offered comprehensive protection to the Bedford County Schools' community. "My district has the usual concerns that schools face," he said, "particularly around student data. We've got to make sure we protect our kids and keep their information secure."

However, Mr. Barrett also sought a security solution that would meet his district's particular needs as well. "Because I'm working with a small staff and budget," he elaborated, "I wanted to outsource much of the work while still retaining as much control as possible."
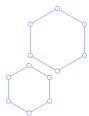
In practice, that meant he wanted an effective layer of defense against proxies and malicious software that also paired seamlessly with Malwarebytes and Windows Defender, his district's existing virus-detection software. And second, he wanted a solution that offered him full visibility into his network while enabling him to maintain maximal control.

> "AFTER I SAW ENA NETSHIELD UTM PRESENTED AT A TETA [TENNESSEE EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION] MEETING," MR. BARRETT SAID, "I KNEW IT HAD THE CAPABILITIES WE NEEDED. WHEN I BROUGHT THE INFORMATION BACK TO MY TEAM, EVERYBODY LIKED IT."

So in December of 2019, Bedford County Schools deployed ENA NetShield UTM districtwide. The deployment went so smoothly, he said, nobody in the community noticed any disruption.

A CUSTOMIZED SOLUTION FOR PROACTIVE DEFENSE

Mr. Barrett has been delighted with ENA NetShield UTM's performance. Not only has the solution kept his community safe from attacks, he has been able to make the solution work for him on his terms.

"We asked ENA for a change in when we received reporting," he said, "and had that change immediately, helping me know where to focus time and attention. Instead of having to react to a problem, my team and I can be proactive before a problem spreads from one machine to others on the network."

Having such a willing partner in ENA has helped Mr. Barrett deliver his community the reliable security it needs. Instead of waiting and hoping that his district is lucky enough to escape attackers' notice, he rests assured that his students are protected and education continues without interruption. That's why, based on his newfound peace of mind and Bedford County's experience, he said, "I would recommend it to any district that needs to make sure their kids are safe and that their data is protected."