

## K-12 SCHOOL CASE STUDY

# Morphisec Guard Lets Wilson County Schools Worry About Educating Students



### Customer Profile

Wilson County Schools is the county district in Wilson County, North Carolina, about 45 minutes east of the state capital in Raleigh. Headquartered in Wilson, NC, the school district's 1,746 teachers and staff serve 10,980 students in grades K-12 at 14 elementary schools, six middle schools, three traditional high schools, two early colleges, and one alternative school.



### Challenge

Brian Wagner, senior network engineer for Wilson County Schools, is in charge of IT administration and security for the school system. This includes more than 10,000 Chromebooks delivered to students system-wide, 3,300 Windows machines, and 30 servers. Including Wagner, there are two engineers and three technicians to support the technology infrastructure for the school district's more than 12,000 users across 26 buildings.

Wilson County Schools sought a way to secure their infrastructure against ransomware--a major concern, Wagner said--following the ongoing news coverage other school systems experienced and high awareness of the cyber risks. As with any large scale purchase consideration, the school board wants to understand what they're getting. At issue is that the school district does not have a high budget allocation for technology security that is afforded by private corporations, so Wagner and the technology team needed to find a way to provide better IT security for their user community without adding expensive additional solutions. Further, they had recently purchased a Microsoft license and wanted to maximize the higher value within their existing budget. Price affordability of security software was only one element of their constraint. With only a small IT staff, the operational component of any new security tool was a much larger consideration factor.

"It's not just a budgetary constraint, it's also a human resources one as well. We couldn't just throw more resources at the problem," Wager said. "We needed to build a defense plan that made better use out our existing security technology, that was closely coupled with advanced protection capabilities."

Wagner also noted that most of their users are students, and they need to tread a fine line on security especially at the high school level. Wilson County Schools also needed to contend with its endpoints suddenly being fully

### INDUSTRY

Education, K-12 School District

### ENVIRONMENT

- More than 13,000 Chromebooks and Windows endpoints
- 30 servers
- 10,000+ students, teachers, and staff at 26 locations

### CHALLENGES

- Ensure all remote endpoints were protected while distance learning during COVID-19.
- Five-person IT team for 12,000+ .
- Zero tolerance for breaches or disruptions.
- Protect against ransomware and other cyber threats.

### SOLUTION

- Deploy Morphisec and Windows Defender AV.
- Protect the entire enterprise from advanced attacks without adding to the IT burden.



*“The integration of Morphisec Guard and Microsoft Defender AV was seamless. I had one reporting console and one agent, and didn’t need to worry about pushing updates to remote laptops. We saw the immediate benefit of having much better protection together with light maintenance.”*

— Brian Wagner, Senior Network Engineer, Wilson County Schools

remote and disconnected from the school network as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. “When all this started to erupt and it looked like we were going to be out for more than a few weeks,” Wagner said, “We started having discussions around how to keep the laptops updated so they didn’t come back in five months without having an update performed and with lowered security as a result.”

## Solution

Wilson County Schools chose Morphisec Guard—after an introduction by SHI—to bolster their district-wide IT security against advanced cyber threats. Wagner said the ability of Morphisec to work closely with native Windows security tools like Defender AV was an important component of the decision. While Defender AV did a great job stopping the generic file-based attacks, Wilson needed a more robust preventive approach to stopping advanced ransomware attacks going after memory that commonly evade antivirus solutions. With Morphisec Guard in place, Wilson County Schools was able to maximize their protection against file-based malware and fileless attacks being used by Ransomware while also gaining needed operational flexibility. Further, Morphisec Guard provided a unified dashboard to manage both Defender AV and Morphisec alerts with a single agent.

“Our first impression of Morphisec was that it was the most cutting edge prevention technology out there and really set a new bar in this space,” Wagner said. “It didn’t require us to step in with a lot of care and feeding by my team. It was truly set and forget, and the comforting part is that it worked. It stopped the things we were concerned about and helped greatly simplify our security approach and lower our costs.”

As a result of Morphisec Guard not requiring updates to function, Wagner was also confident that remote endpoints would remain secure while they were off-campus for an extended period. Further, the small IT team could easily manage their corporate security in addition to other day-to-day tasks without needing to worry about investigating alerts because Morphisec Guard deterministically blocks advanced threats.

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## Results

Morphisec Guard protected Wilson County Schools from a serious attack a few weeks ago. Where previously technicians had to re-image machines to recover from malware, they didn’t have to take that time because Morphisec blocked the attack. As a result, the technology team at Wilson County Schools saved staff time and will continue to do so because they have Morphisec Guard in place.

**Schedule a demo now:** [demo@morphisec.com](mailto:demo@morphisec.com)



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