

K-12 SCHOOL CASE STUDY

Morphisec Lets School District Worry About Educating Students

Customer

This North Carolina school district's 1,500+ teachers server over 10,000 students in grades K-12 at over 25 different schools.

Challenge

The school district's senior network engineer is in charge of IT administration and security for the school system. This includes more than 10,000 Chromebooks delivered to students system-wide, 3,000 Windows machines, and 30 servers. The IT team consists of two engineers and three technicians to support the technology infrastructure for the school district's more than 12,000 users across 25+ buildings.

The school district sought a way to secure their infrastructure against ransomware--a major concern--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 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.

INDUSTRY

Education, K-12 School District

ENVIRONMENT

- More than 13,000 Chromebooks and Windows endpoints
- 30 servers
- 10,000+ students, teachers, and staff at 25+ locations

CHALLENGES

-  Ensure all remote endpoints were protected even during distance learning
-  Five-person IT team for 13,000+ endpoints
-  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

Challenge cont.

“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,” their network engineer 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.”

The engineer 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. The school district also needed to contend with its endpoints suddenly being fully 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.”

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.”

— Senior Network Engineer at the North Carolina school district

Solution

The school district chose Morphisec—after an introduction by SHI—to bolster their district-wide IT security against advanced cyber threats. The network engineer 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, the school district needed a more robust preventive approach to stopping advanced ransomware attacks going after memory that commonly evade antivirus solutions. With Morphisec in place, the school district 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 packaged a seamless integrated platform provided a single portal dashboard to manage both DefenderAV and Morphisec alerts packaged as 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,” the network engineer 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 not requiring updates to function, the team 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 deterministically blocks advanced threats.

Results

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 saved staff time and will continue to do so because they have Morphisec in place.

"A layered defense consisting of AMTD obstacles and deceptions significantly elevates an organization's security posture"

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Tech Innovators in Automated Moving Target Defense

About Morphisec

Morphisec provides prevention-first security against the most advanced threats to stop the attacks that others don't, from endpoint to the cloud. Morphisec's software is powered by Automated Moving Target Defense (AMTD) technology, the next evolution of cybersecurity. AMTD stops ransomware, supply chain attacks, zero-days, and other advanced attacks. AMTD provides an ultra-lightweight, Defense-in-Depth security layer to augment solutions like NGAV, EPP and EDR/XDR. We close their runtime memory security gap against the undetectable cyberattacks with no performance impact or extra staff needed. Over 5,000 organizations trust Morphisec to protect nine million Windows and Linux servers, workloads, and endpoints. Morphisec stops thousands of advanced attacks daily at Lenovo/Motorola, TruGreen, Covenant Health, Citizens Medical Center, and many more.

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