



Frederick County Public Schools

A case study

October 2020

About

The IT department for the Frederick County School District wanted to maintain a standard of web filtering but remove the drawbacks experienced with hardware solutions. After looking into Securly's cloud-based filtering, what they got was a better performing filter, plus unexpected benefits they had never even considered. It was as if they'd asked the ice cream man for a cup of vanilla, but were served a sundae piled high with goodies and a cherry on top at no extra charge.

The need

Frederick County Public Schools has an annual enrollment of 13,200 students and 2000 staff across 11 elementary schools, four middle schools, and three high schools. The school district has been using Securly to filter 16000 devices for over 3 years.

The school district's IT department was bogged down by recurring problems stemming from their appliance-based web filter, including:

- Weekly network crashes caused unstable service and left the district CIPA non-compliant.
- Complex single sign-on (SSO) solutions were too insufficient to implement across a network as large as Frederick County.
- Pulling reports on users and accommodating teachers' website whitelisting requests left IT staff very little time to concentrate on important IT work.

The solution

Ken Melnikoff, Head of Frederick County School District's IT department, was impressed with Securly's cloud-based web filtering solution which eliminated the risk of appliance failures and unstable filtering during critical school peak hours. Securly's cloud-based auto-scaling ensures that no traffic load is too big to handle and kids remain safe at all times.

Securly also provided Frederick County an easy-to-implement SSO solution that accounts for the tendency by students to forget usernames and passwords, especially after Frederick County's shift from Active Directory to G Suite. With Securly's SSO solution students could log in just once and remove future failed access requests.

Furthermore, Securly's Delegated Reporting solution made pulling reports and whitelisting sites easier than any other solution the school district had used. It also allowed IT admins to delegate this activity to multiple teachers and staff members who would otherwise have been sending the requests to the IT department. This eliminated the IT department's involvement from day to day web filtering management while ensuring that the school staff always had instant access to information they need.

The cherry on top

Securly's Parent Portal sends parents a weekly email report of their child's online activity on school-devices. Parents also get access to their own parent portal where they can view their child's online activities in detail, plus manage policies for when the school device is at home.

“When I told my superintendent what the Securly Parent Portal could do, his jaw dropped! For the first time ever, we are able to let parents know on a live basis what is happening in the classroom. How cool is that?”

Ken Melnikoff,
Head - IT Department

Conclusion

Frederick County wanted a base level of filtering without the drawbacks of appliances. With Securly, Frederick County students were safer, teachers less frustrated, parents engaged, and the IT department was able to get back to more important functions. Frederick County learned that even with a simple request, you still end up getting the works...with a cherry on top.



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