



8th Largest School District Replaces Web Filter, Reaps Continued Rewards

Business Challenge:

Hillsborough County Public Schools is the 8th largest school district in the United States with roughly 200,000 students attending more than 200 school locations for their elementary, middle and high school education. Hillsborough, like many other public school districts, has relatively limited IT resources and tight budget constraints when compared with much of corporate America. As a result, when its Phantom iBoss web filtering solution came up for renewal the County solicited competitive bids despite being very satisfied with the solution and the way it helped meet the requirements of the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

Not only did Fortinet win the tender by meeting their web filtering requirements at the best price, but it also delivered a network security platform that has continued to help them meet new requirements over time. As Executive Officer in charge of IT Compliance Rick Laneau notes, “Sometimes it’s even better to be knowledgeable, great and lucky. Selecting Fortinet’s FortiGate was definitely a stroke of good fortune.”

In regard to the original project, web filtering, according to Laneau “Fortinet has really embraced the unique challenges in the education space – like coping with the massive traffic spikes that result from such a large student population, delivering 10Gbps of web filtering, including encrypted traffic, to truly become a responsive and strategic partner over time.”

Unmatched Value

Fortinet has truly embraced the needs of the education space – delivering solutions that can deal with the massive traffic spikes that result from such a large student population, deliver 10Gbps of web filtering, including encrypted traffic, and truly become a responsive and strategic partner over time.

– Rick Laneau,
Executive Officer, IT Compliance
Hillsborough County Public Schools

Details

Customer Name: Hillsborough County Public Schools
Industry: Pre-K, K-12, Adult Education
Location: Florida

Business Impact

- Proactive compliance with CIPA and FERPA
- Reduced risk of data breaches
- Infrastructure to scale bandwidth to meet State requirements
- Dramatic cost containment and reduction
- Extensible security platform that meets the needs of today and tomorrow

Since the Initial Project

In the years since the incumbent web filter solutions was implemented, new challenges have arisen that Hillsborough has been able to address with their in-place FortiGate. Most recently, after hearing of the data breaches that headlined in the news this past year, the school district decided to add Fortinet's Data Loss Prevention (DLP) functionality to reduce the risk of a data breach that compromises the personal information of students, staff or parents as well as complying with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). And they have been able to do so simply and proactively by enabling it on their existing FortiGate appliances.

Hillsborough County School District is also looking at Fortinet's Intrusion Prevention (IPS) to add a deeper level of inspection beyond its traditional firewall and VPN. "You can't protect data unless you know where it is and is going. Nowadays everybody's information is at risk" says Laneau. This is such a serious concern that a dedicated security and privacy group was recently established.

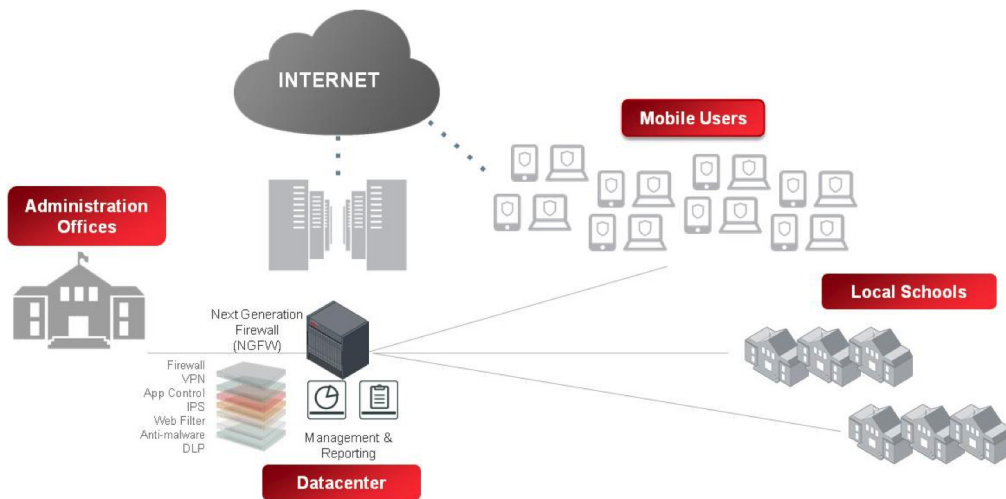
And that is just the beginning. The growth and change in education (online virtual classes, study resources, etc.) constantly raises new IT challenges of how to take advantage of them while remaining secure.

A Great Investment

We would be remiss if we didn't mention the tangible financial benefits of having selected Fortinet. First off, the State of Florida Department of Education has published specific bandwidth guidelines per student and, as Laneau notes, "Partnering with Fortinet and its carrier class security has aligned us with a partner that can scale us towards the State guidelines (200 Gbps) while still optimizing our traffic to pay for only what is needed. Specifically, the visibility of our FortiGate next generation firewall allows us to understand and manage that traffic."

Second, its comprehensive feature set – Web Filter, DLP, FW/VPN, IPS, AV and more – allows Hillsborough to replace dedicated products as their renewals come up. It also means that Hillsborough can add new capabilities as needed, within a security management framework familiar to the team, without increasing the cost.

"Our initial goal was to implement a content filter; what we got was a powerful set of tools that enable us to drill down, monitor and manage the bandwidth that we are using," said Laneau. "The best part is that we ended up with a partner who is constantly working with us to achieve our goals."



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