



SonicWALL

Revere Public Schools optimizes bandwidth with Dell SonicWALL solution

Deploying NSA E5500, district enhances performance with application control



Customer profile



Company Revere Public Schools
Industry Education K-12
Country United States
Users 6,400 students;
1,000 staff members
Website www.revereeps.mec.edu

Challenge

- Use of non-academic applications
- Increased streaming media traffic
- Rise in spyware and malware
- Expanded Wi-Fi traffic
- Regulatory mandates

Solution

- Dell SonicWALL E-Class NSA E5500s paired in active/passive HA mode

Benefits

- Dell SonicWALL Application Intelligence and Control
- Dell SonicWALL Anti-Virus, Anti-Spyware, Intrusion Prevention and Content Filtering
- Automatic signature updates

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Jonathan Ferrara
IT Manager

The Revere Public Schools district educates approximately 6,400 K-12 students from the community of Revere, Massachusetts. The district includes 11 elementary, middle and high schools and employs approximately 1,000 staff members. To control applications and optimize bandwidth on its new fiber optic network, the district deployed a Dell™ SonicWALL™ E-Class Network Security Appliance (NSA) solution.

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*Jonathan Ferrara
IT Manager*

The challenge: optimizing bandwidth and gaining application control

As part of a recent citywide initiative, the district implemented a fiber optic network throughout its campus locations.

“We bought a 60 MB pipe because we figured we were going to flood the firewall and have a lot of kids use all their applications at once,” said Jonathan Ferrara, IT manager at Revere Public Schools.

The primary challenge was to identify and control unproductive applications from stealing bandwidth from legitimate activities.

“If you looked at our logs, you would see YouTube and Pandora eating up all our bandwidth,” divulged Ferrara. “Teachers use YouTube as part of their curriculum and even post videos of their own lessons. And I have no problem with users listening to Internet radio, but not when it slows down access to important academic applications.”

As a result, the district sought a firewall solution that could help them control applications and optimize bandwidth.

The solution: application intelligence and control with Dell SonicWALL E-Class NSA E5500

“We needed a scalable solution that was robust enough to handle the throughput we would need for the next five years,” remarked Ferrara.

The district had previously switched from Dell SonicWALL PRO Series firewalls to Fortinet® FortiGate products, but was dissatisfied with the change.

“We soon realized Fortinet wasn’t as granular or robust or straightforward as Dell SonicWALL,” stated Ferrara. “Plus, Dell SonicWALL’s wizards made the set-up a lot easier than Fortinet.”

Ferrara also considered products from Cisco® and 3Com, before selecting a Dell SonicWALL NSA E5500 solution.

“Compared with other vendors, Dell SonicWALL gave me what I needed without the sticker shock,” affirmed Ferrara. “And because it is so easy to use, I can delegate firewall management tasks without the need for investment in specialized training.”

The district deployed two Dell SonicWALL E-Class NSA E5500 Next-Generation Firewalls in active/passive High Availability (HA) mode. The NSA E5500 solution provides the district with intrusion prevention, anti-malware, content filtering and application intelligence, control and visualization over its distributed fiber optic network. Combining Dell SonicWALL Reassembly-Free Deep Packet Inspection® (RFDPI) with a powerful multi-core hardware platform, the NSA E5500 enables the district to analyze and control thousands of unique applications, whether unencrypted or encrypted with SSL.

The result: application control and optimized bandwidth

For Ferrara, the biggest benefit has been gaining back bandwidth from throttling non-academic applications.

"We created application control policies to block BitTorrent and other non-academic applications. The results were amazing! We have gained so much of our bandwidth back," said Ferrara. "We still let teachers use YouTube for academic purposes, but we throttled it down to 20 MB. Now, we have 35-40 MB available for other crucial traffic at any time of day."

Moreover, the NSA E5500 saves the district from the costs of purchasing additional bandwidth, for a greater return on investment and lower total cost of ownership.

"There is a public misconception that the answer is to simply purchase more bandwidth. This is not a strategic solution because your users will respond by consuming more and more bandwidth," noted Ferrara. "Dell SonicWALL lets us properly manage the bandwidth we have; this has created a real return on our investment."

The NSA E5500 also enables the district to prioritize bandwidth for Session Initiation Protocol and latency-sensitive Voice/Video over IP traffic.

Using the NSA E5500, the district enforces unique policies for teachers, students and technical staff to comply with Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA) mandates.

"We use Dell SonicWALL Content Filtering to block inappropriate content," stated Ferrara.

Previously, Ferrara frequently received calls for help from users who had inadvertently installed spyware and other malware.

"We used to just get hammered with these kinds of threats, because they are so embedded in Internet traffic," acknowledged Ferrara. "But Dell SonicWALL is not letting that happen. We can prevent this using the basic IPS settings alone."

Not only is the district's network more secure, but it is easier to manage as well.

"Dell SonicWALL's automatic signature updates simplify security," remarked Ferrara. "Instead of making decisions in the dark based on port and protocol, Dell SonicWALL gives me direct visibility and I can build a policy based on the existing signatures."

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