

Joliet Public School District 86

Chalking Up More Than \$216,000 in IT Staff Time Savings With Symantec Solutions



An IT staff of just six people in Joliet Public School District 86 must oversee network security in 20 schools equipped with 3,000 computers and 35 servers. Security incidents consumed 50 percent of their time before they discovered Symantec solutions in 1999. Since then, the staff has had no security incidents on servers and has seen up to 50 security incidents per month blocked on desktops and laptops. Symantec solutions save the district over \$216,000 annually in staff time, reducing staff time for security administration by 80 percent and deployment time for new and repaired PCs by 88 percent.

Company Profile

Located in Joliet, Illinois, about 31 miles southwest of Chicago, Joliet Public School District 86 (www.joliet86.org) consists of 20 elementary and junior high schools with about 9,600 students and 560 teachers.

Industry

Education

Solution

Information Security
Data Protection
Application Service Management

In search of streamlined security

Six years ago, the IT department for the Joliet Public School District in Illinois was experiencing a serious technological challenge: Their antivirus software was not providing adequate protection. A virus getting through the defenses could compromise the network and negatively impact the 560 teachers and 9,600 students who depend on it for tutoring assistance, teaching programs, and other learning tools. As a result, the team led by IT director Danielle C. Gustafson spent 50 percent of its time mitigating virus attacks and administering security.

Gustafson delegated the job of finding a new security solution to the team led by Thomas Mount, LAN/WAN support analyst for the district. "Our staff was taking too much of our time," recalls Mount. "Our staff spent many weekends, nights, and even holidays traveling to server sites and repairing systems damaged by attacks. There were other ways to use our time more strategically in support of our educational mission, but we just weren't available."

Protecting server operations

Mount and his team decided to look for a better antivirus solution. Because of Symantec's strong reputation, they chose Symantec AntiVirus™ Corporate Edition software. They deployed it on their network servers, behind a Cisco Pix 515E Router. The team liked the fact that Symantec AntiVirus software alerts them to vulnerable nodes within the network and contains an automatic removal feature so administrators can easily dispose of any located viruses and spyware. For the next four years, this completely eliminated any server security incidents, allowing IT personnel to become more proactive.

"We've cut security deployment time by 99.99 percent and security administration time by 80 percent. That gives us 80 staff hours a week, worth about \$216,000 a year, to allocate for more strategic tasks."

Thomas Mount

LAN/WAN Support Analyst
Joliet Public School District

Symantec security solutions protect a school district's network, eliminating all security incidents for the past year.

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As threats became more sophisticated, however, the district became aware of other kinds of vulnerabilities besides viruses. “Many worms and Trojan horse programs exploit open, unprotected ports,” Mount explains. “Also, we have between 100 to 150 laptops offsite each night, as teachers do paperwork at home. Those laptops are outside our network defenses.”

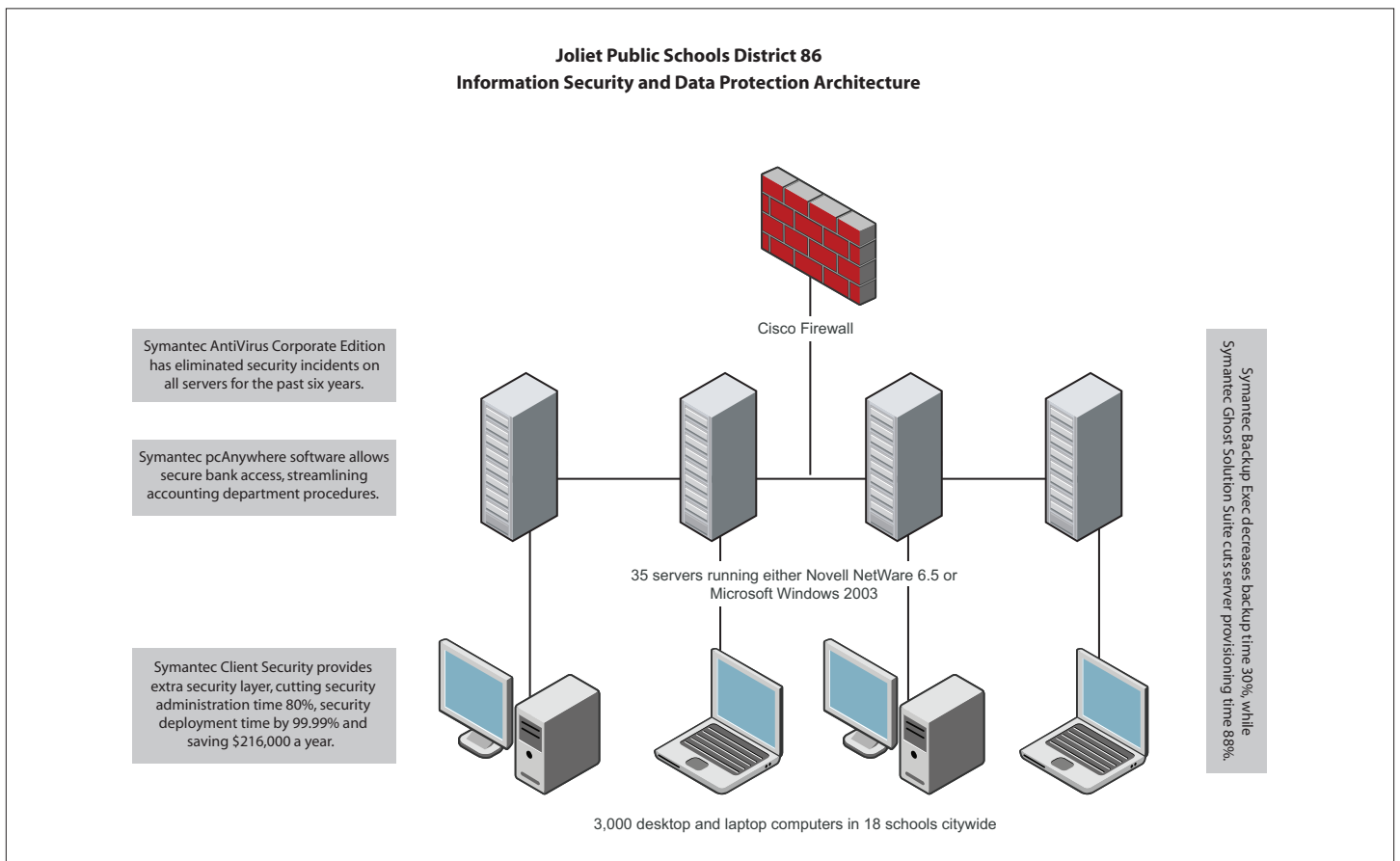
Symantec Client Security adds new protection

In 2004, when the school district's AntiVirus licenses came up for renewal, Symantec business partner CDW, based in Vernon Hills, Illinois, recommended that the district upgrade to Symantec™ Client Security software. This solution adds two types of critical protection to the security network. “Symantec Client Security not only delivers the virus and spyware defenses of Symantec AntiVirus,” says Mount, “it also brings intrusion detection and a firewall to the desktop and laptop level.”

This is how the added protection works: On each of the district's 3,000 computers, the intrusion detection feature of Symantec Client Security detects and blocks known worms and Trojan horse software by comparing incoming and outgoing traffic against a frequently updated database of signatures of known threats. Meanwhile, the firewall feature of Symantec Client Security shuts down unneeded ports on each machine, closing the doors that can be exploited by illegitimate traffic. Additionally, the antivirus and antispyware features of Symantec Client Security scan requests to the computer's file and operating systems to make sure no viral or spyware code is attached.

Pointing to the attacker

Should attacks occur inside the network, Symantec Client Security software can also trace attacks back to the offending machines. This enables administrators to quickly locate the source of a problem on the district's network and mitigate it.



In 2004, Symantec Client Security spotted and blocked 10 incidents of malicious code before they could make their way onto the network from floppy disks, any one of which could have caused serious problems on the network. Overall, Symantec Client Security firewall and intrusion detection system (IDS) capabilities blocked an average of 50 attacks per month during late 2004. In 2005, Mount's team performed some additional tuning of firewall rules and reduced these attacks to zero.

"We save time because we can deploy and manage Symantec Client Security across the entire network from a single monitor," Mount continues. "We've cut security administration time by 80 percent. That gives us 80 staff hours a week, worth about \$216,000 a year, to allocate for more strategic tasks."

"The overall result is that we've spent no time this year mitigating security events," Mount says. "Given the kind of attacks we were seeing before, I calculate that the staff time saved translates into a 100 percent payback on Symantec Client Security in one month."

Increasing the returns

Other Symantec solutions are helping Mount's team realize additional savings. The district uses Symantec pcAnywhere™ as its remote control solution—an investment that paid for itself in about one year.

Mount's team also uses Symantec Ghost™ Solution Suite to provision and repair computers remotely, from a single location, no matter where they are located in the school district. "Symantec Ghost Solution Suite is a fantastic imaging program," Mount says. "Reinstalling data once took as much as four hours per machine, plus travel time. Now it takes a half-hour with no travel required." This cuts IT staff time for provisioning PCs by 88 percent, resulting in a 100 percent return on investment in first few months.

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Business Drivers

- Maximize quality of learning
- Minimize productivity loss and IT overhead due to network security problems
- Minimize IT overhead due to machine repair/provisioning
- Minimize overhead for doing bank check runs

Technology Challenges

- Block malicious code from disrupting network
- Minimize and control unauthorized network intrusion
- Streamline security administration and machine provisioning/repair

Symantec Products

- Symantec™ Client Security
- Symantec Backup Exec™ 10d
- Symantec Ghost™ Solution Suite
- Symantec pcAnywhere™
- Symantec AntiVirus™ Corporate Edition

Technology Environment

- Applications: Microsoft Office XP
- Databases: Winschool (student database), Microsoft SQL Server
- Server Platform: 24 Dell PowerEdge 2600 and 2800 (with array drives) running Novell NetWare 6.5; 11 Dell PowerEdge 2800 (with array drives) running Microsoft Windows 2003
- School computers: Approximately 2,300 desktops (Dell Optiplex 260, 270, and 280) and 700 laptops (IBM R40, IBM R51, and Dell C840)

Symantec Services

- Symantec Gold Support Plan

Symantec Partner

- CDW, Vernon Hills, Illinois (www.cdw.com)

Protecting vital school data

Symantec Backup Exec™ software also saves staff time for the school district. "Before Backup Exec, a lot of our servers weren't backed up," Mount says, "and those we did back up took five hours each. For the past seven years, though, Backup Exec has been our workhorse." Today the school district uses Backup Exec to protect the data on all 38 of its servers, whether they're running Novell NetWare 6.5 or Microsoft Windows 2003.

Backup Exec software is easy to use and makes backup streamlined, centralized, and automated. "It also provides a valuable measure of security for our teachers," says Mount, "because we can retrieve any data they accidentally delete. I'd say Backup Exec reduces our backup administration time by 30 percent and paid for itself in three months."

BUSINESS VALUE AND TECHNICAL BENEFITS

Cost Savings

- \$216,000 annually saved through 80% reduction in security administration time

Return on Investment

- 100% ROI in one month for Symantec Client Security
- 100% ROI in 12 months for Symantec Backup Exec 10d
- 100% ROI in one month for Symantec Ghost Solution Suite
- 100% ROI in 6 months for Symantec pcAnywhere

Increased Efficiency

- 30% faster backups with Symantec Backup Exec
- 88% faster provisioning with Symantec Ghost Solution Suite

Enhanced Security

- Up to an average of 50 incidents per month stopped by Symantec Client Security
- 10 malicious code incidents on laptops in 2004 stopped by Client Security;
- No security incidents on servers in six years of Symantec protection
- No time spent on mitigation and no security incidents on the entire network in 2005

“With only 10 percent of our time focused on security, we now have the opportunity to be proactive. We have the time to help students, support teachers, and even see our families at night and on weekends. Symantec solutions have made a big difference.”

Thomas Mount

LAN/WAN Support Analyst
Joliet Public School District

CDW supports all Symantec solutions at the school district. “They’ve been a big help,” Mount says, “in showing us how to maximize our time savings. We also have our Symantec Gold support plan, which we’ve never had to use, but it’s comforting to know it’s there.”

What time is really worth

“The staff time saved by Symantec solutions represents more than money,” Mount continues. “It translates directly into better education for our students. One of the most important ways we use technology in this school district is to help students not be left behind. Children learn well with the instant feedback and diagnosis our PC programs provide. For instance, our team supports a *Destination Reading* PC program that helps 1,200 students catch up to or exceed their grade’s reading standards. We have *Read 180* on another network, and that program has proven to be a big help for our special needs students.”

“Computers also aid our students in developing sophisticated school projects,” Mount adds. “In fact, three of our grade-school students used PowerPoint a few years ago to create a science fair project so impressive they were asked to present it at the state capitol. Supporting projects such as these is what my staff really wants to do.”

“With only 10 percent of our time focused on security,” Mount concludes, “we now have the time to help students and support teachers, and even see our families at night and on weekends. Symantec solutions have made a big difference.”