



Durham Public Schools Use Multi-tiered Administration Feature to Streamline Web Access Management

Client:

Durham Public Schools

Web Site:

www.dpsnc.net

Number of Users:

2,300 Teachers

32,000 Students

Requirements:

Internet Filtering and Reporting

Solutions:

M86 Internet Filtering and Reporting Suite.

Multi-tiered Administration Feature

“M86 solutions have been easy to use from an administrator’s point of view. Training downstream administrators has been very simple.”

Ron Wahlen
Executive Director of Educational Technology

Profile

Durham Public Schools (DPS), the seventh largest school district in North Carolina, includes 53 schools with more than 32,000 students and 2,300 teachers. In addition to traditional K-12 institutions, the district comprises two elementary Montessori schools, a health sciences academy and its own School of the Arts.

Challenge

Balancing the need for Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) compliance with the ability to allow online access to requested educational curricula can be time consuming. In such a large and diverse school district, relying on one administrator to manage all access requests was inefficient and detrimental to a fast-paced learning process.

According to Ron Wahlen, Executive Director of Educational Technology for DPS, “Teachers would send requests to unblock websites based on alignment with the curriculum. At the same time, other teachers would send requests to block the same websites based on inappropriate materials. Juggling these requests pushed us to evaluate alternative products.”

Wahlen continued, “Because one person administered the web filter, it would sometimes take a week or longer to unblock or block a requested site. By the time this was accomplished, the educational usefulness of the site had often passed.”

Wahlen and Jerry Williamson, Educational Technology Specialist for DPS, realized that using a distributed management system would create efficiencies for their district and its members. Unfortunately, their current Websense solution offered no such option.

Solutions

“We heard about M86 Security from other school districts across the country. When we conducted our evaluation, we called several school districts before choosing this solution,” said Wahlen.

Ultimately DPS switched from Websense to M86 to enable the district to use the company’s multi-tiered administration feature.

How it Works

Administrators can define sub-administrator access control for specific groups and users in addition to the existing IP Group users.

At DPS, each school designates one M86 web filter administrator to manage site block/unblock requests. This administrator receives an M86 user name and password which enables him/her to control web access profiles for the school’s users.

“M86 Internet Filtering and Reporting seems to be more flexible than our old system. We are able to use M86 solutions in ways that best fit the needs of our students and teachers while adhering to mandated laws and policies.”

Ron Wahlen
Executive Director of Educational Technology

ABOUT M86 SECURITY

M86 Security is the global expert in real-time threat protection and the industry's leading Secure Web Gateway provider. The company's appliance, software, and Software as a Service (SaaS) solutions for Web and email security protect more than 24,000 customers and over 17 million users worldwide. M86 products use patented real-time code analysis and behavior-based malware detection technologies as well as threat intelligence from M86 Security Labs to protect networks against new and advanced threats, secure confidential information, and ensure regulatory compliance. The company is based in Orange, California with international headquarters in London and development centers in California, Israel, and New Zealand. For more information about M86 Security, please visit: www.m86security.com.

Wahlen explains, “To create a standard for what is an appropriate web site and what is an inappropriate web site (what should be unblocked and blocked, respectively), DPS created a rubric by which each web site can be judged. The rubric is based on CIPA law and DPS Internet Acceptable Use Policies.”

DPS IT administrators were able to delegate individual web access requests quickly while maintaining the integrity of its AUP, ensuring safe boundaries for its students' online activities.

“Internet Filtering and Reporting seems to be more flexible than our old system. We are able to use M86 solutions in ways that best fit the needs of our students and teachers while adhering to mandated laws and policies,” noted Wahlen.

Other key benefits of the M86 Internet Filtering and Reporting Suite include:

Improved productivity

- Manage student access to the Internet, while eliminating time wasted on unauthorized sites and applications
- Free up school/district IT management for mission-critical projects

Ensured student safety

- Enforce district Acceptable Use Policies
- Support CIPA and 1:1 Initiatives
- Avoid legal liabilities due to exposure to inappropriate Web content

Preserved network resources

- Control access to bandwidth-intensive sites
- Keep firewall, proxy or cache available for core functions

Result

By implementing the M86 Internet Filtering and Reporting Suite, DPS IT administrators protected its students and staff from objectionable online content, while quickly granting individual schools the ability to allow or disallow specific sites.

“M86 has allowed our district to delegate the administrative role to the schools and lessen the time it takes to complete a block or unblock request,” said Wahlen. “The sub-administrator ability has helped make this process more efficient.”

“From a curriculum perspective, the M86 solution has helped make the Internet more beneficial to our teachers and students,” concluded Wahlen.

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