BACKGROUND
The Franklin County Public Schools, located in southwest Virginia, is a government-funded educational system that supports grades K-12. The mission of Franklin County Public Schools is to prepare students for lifelong learning and employment.

THE CHALLENGE
The Franklin County Public Schools has steadily incorporated the use of desktops, laptops and mobile devices into their administrative operations and within the classroom. The school system supports 1,300 employees, serves more than 7,500 students, and secures over 5,500 endpoint devices, including both school and personally owned devices (PODs) that access its network.

In recent years, the number of devices has increased exponentially, and the five-member information technology (IT) team was faced with the challenge of providing support for thousands of devices that were regularly used by staff and students, across numerous campuses. Coming up against severe malware infections originating from suspicious sites and links, as well as periods of concentrated attacks, the IT team regularly spent up to twelve hours per week on remediation, reimaging devices and managing multiple security solutions.

Frequently confronted with security issues that stem from students and staff unknowingly browsing malicious websites and clicking dangerous links, Franklin County Public Schools realized their traditional signature-based antivirus solutions were allowing malware into their network. To improve operational efficiency and maximize protection throughout the district, the IT team needed a virus and malware detection solution that provided real-time protection against new threats, eliminated the need for additional security software, and enabled the small IT team to easily manage endpoint protection across more than a dozen campuses.

“*Our biggest concern is ensuring school systems and personally owned devices do not affect our internal network,*” said John Vehmeier, network administrator for Franklin County Public Schools. “*This concern is compounded by the worry that we don’t have the manpower to concentrate on securing and monitoring all of these devices.*”

AT A GLANCE
Vertical: Education (K-12)
Network Administrator: John Vehmeier
Endpoints: 5,500
Employees/Students: 8,800+
Website: http://frco.k12.va.us/

BEFORE
* Spent 8-12 hours per week remediating threat damage and managing security
* Required multiple antivirus tools to solve security issues
* Antivirus scans took 1 hour for workstations and 5-6 hours for servers
* Infected workstations remained unusable for days while remediation was performed

AFTER
* Security management requires only 1 hour per week
* Complete Webroot SecureAnywhere® solution eliminates need for additional security
* Antivirus scans complete in only 2-5 minutes
* Rollback feature restores systems to a previous state, eliminating need for remediation

Franklin County Public Schools Protects Endpoints with Webroot
THE SOLUTION

After years of working with different antivirus products that either overburdened older hardware and software offerings (including Windows XP) or simply were ineffective, Franklin County Public Schools chose Webroot SecureAnywhere® Business – Endpoint Protection after several product trials. Its unique cloud-based architecture not only provides significantly improved protection, but also simplifies management of the entire system.

“Previously, we’ve used Symantec, Vexira and most recently Vipre. Vipre had been a lightweight and reliable solution but subsequent versions of the software put more of a burden on our network servers and older workstations and they were not catching as many threats as they had in the past,” said Vehmeier. “We were treading water and requesting additional funding to increase our support team just to keep our devices malware-free and assist users in the classroom. That’s no longer an issue. Webroot’s cloud-based security platform blocks new threats more quickly, and enables administrators to manage endpoint security anytime, no matter where they are located on campus.”

In addition to resolving time management issues, the light footprint and powerful security provided by Webroot SecureAnywhere Business – Endpoint Protection covers PCs, Mac® computers, and Android™ and iOS® smartphones and tablets. The comprehensive protection capability was incredibly important to Franklin County Public Schools, making the Webroot solution an ideal fit for its diverse and highly-distributed IT environment. The Webroot System Cleaner feature, which can save disk space by cleaning up unnecessary files and protect privacy by wiping out records of browsing and PC usage, also heavily influenced the final purchase decision.

“Webroot SecureAnywhere Business – Endpoint Protection solved several problems we had, including maintaining another application and physical server and protecting older workstations that did not have the processing power to run a traditional antivirus solution. With the cloud-based Webroot architecture, we were able to manage and remediate devices that rarely came onto our network,” added Vehmeier.

RESULTS

Before switching to Webroot, Franklin County Public Schools spent up to twelve hours each week remediating attacks and managing security. Since deploying Webroot SecureAnywhere Business – Endpoint Protection, they have reported a significant reduction in the number of malware infections and the journaling and rollback functionality drastically reduced support overheads by removing the need to reimage infected machines. The web-based management console has also had a dramatic effect on productivity levels, providing real-time reporting of security issues and enabling the IT staff to administer security on endpoints no matter where they are, on or off the district’s network.

The Webroot solution’s quick install time and system scans – both requiring less than two minutes to complete – and background updates do not tax the schools’ network bandwidth and, most importantly to its IT team, require minimal manual supervision. The five-member IT team currently has no issues supporting detection and remediation. Since adopting Webroot, Vehmeier estimates that time spent managing security has been reduced to an hour per week, rather than the previous twelve hours per week.

“With other security solutions, we’d spend hours and days on individual infected stations, recovering lesson plans and crucial data. Once we transferred exclusively to Webroot, we just stopped having those types of issues and have been able to focus our resources on taking care of non-virus issues and testing new systems,” said Vehmeier.

The time saved as a result of switching to Webroot has allowed Franklin County Public Schools to provide faster, more efficient support to faculty and students. The IT team is now able to take a significantly more proactive approach to their work, and have begun implementing a pilot BYOD (bring your own device) program, allowing additional devices into the network for the convenience of the schools’ educational and administrative staff.

“Webroot is hands down the best solution we’ve seen,” Vehmeier reports. “Traditional solutions just don’t work in today’s environment. Webroot’s innovative cloud architecture is different, and that’s a good thing. If you need to protect your workstations anytime and anywhere, use SecureAnywhere.”