

Company at a Glance

Eden Prairie Schools
(edenpr.org)

From early childhood programs through high school, Eden Prairie Schools has a strong reputation for academic excellence, personalized opportunities for all students, and supportive school communities. Each of the nearly 9,000 students ages pre-K through 22 are inspired to learn continuously so they are empowered to reach personal fulfillment and contribute positively to our ever-changing world.


Challenges

- Increase in ransomware targeting public schools and education organizations
- A lack of 24x7 monitoring and SOC support
- Needed to secure large volumes of private data from threat actors
- Lacked budget and personnel to achieve cyber hygiene goals in-house

Results

- Full suite of solutions that offers security monitoring, strategy, and support
- The continuous human assistance through Arctic Wolf's Concierge Security® Team (CST)
- Ability to prioritize workloads and security goals to increase posture over time
- Peace of mind knowing private data is protected

Arctic Wolf's Full Suite Keeps Private Data Safe at Eden Prairie Schools

 "It's continuous support where you know that if a situation were to arise or if you have a question, someone is going to be there and get back to you as quickly as possible."

— Alex Townsend, Director of IT, Eden Prairie Schools

School districts are top targets for threat actors. Operating data-heavy environments while short on funds and staff for cybersecurity initiatives leaves public entities regularly making headlines for all the wrong reasons. Eden Prairie Schools, a K-12 district in Minnesota, is acutely aware of the risk their data faces in an evolving threat landscape.

"The biggest challenge for us is, how do you stay on top of it all?" Alex Townsend, Director of Technology, said. "We're a target rich environment. We have a ton of data that's great for bad actors."

Though Eden Prairie Schools has a strong IT department, including district-wide staff as well as those at different schools interacting with students, parents, and the community daily, the organization knew outside help that combines the human element with cutting-edge solutions was the best path forward to mitigate the risks of a breach.

"If you have days or weeks of downtime, that's a huge impact on the school," Townsend said. "That means kids aren't learning."

Townsend stated that within months of his hire, the district had decided to re-prioritize security and to implement a 24x7 SOC solution. From his perspective, it was easy to convince the school board and others to go with Arctic Wolf®.

"When you look at Arctic Wolf compared to other solutions, it's not a hard decision to make," he said.

Turning to a Third-Party Solution Provides 24x7 Support

Bad actors don't take nights and weekends off, but maintaining 24x7 monitoring internally was not a possibility for Eden Prairie Schools. With Arctic Wolf® Managed Detection and Response (MDR), the organization found a solution that was not only cost-effective for them, versus hiring internal staff, but filled skills gaps and allowed their team to focus on other aspects of cybersecurity.



“Having a platform where you feel you’re protected, and you have someone watching over your environment at all times is great,” Townsend said.

MDR works around the clock, monitoring the endpoint, network, cloud, and more. For a spread-out organization with a variety of devices (like varying endpoints at different schools), having consistent eyes on every component is critical to stopping an incident before it becomes a breach.

“You know right now someone is watching our environment and is there to support us,” Townsend said. “You can’t hire enough people to provide that.”

The alerts generated from Arctic Wolf MDR have also allowed Townsend and his department to identify gaps within their security architecture and determine where priorities should be, creating efficiency while adding to the overall security. The department can also fine tune the alerts, including monitoring certain applications or even groups of users within the active directory with more scrutiny.

“Since we started our partnership, the fine tuning of alerts has helped us see where our largest gaps were.”

— Alex Townsend, Director of IT, Eden Prairie Schools

From evaluating their access policies to understanding their firewall and network better, the full time set of eyes provided by Arctic Wolf creates better visibility for Eden Prairie Schools, which then turns into actionable improvements.

Constant Support from the CST

The Concierge Security® Team (CST), which consists of named security experts, works together with Eden Prairie Schools, helping them stay on track and consistently improve their security posture.

“There’s a huge conversation around the security journey,” Townsend said. “There’s been past products we’ve purchased where once you go through the onboarding you never hear from them again. Something that’s been helpful is that I get emails from the CST once a week.”

Those emails are in addition to bi-weekly meetings where specific topics are addressed — from vulnerabilities that need patching to future projects to going over reports — allowing the department to focus on what’s most important. The vulnerability management side is generated through Arctic Wolf® Managed Risk —which is focused on hardening your environment against digital risks by contextualizing your attack surface coverage — with action plans delivered by the CST

“There is a to-do list on my whiteboard that I need to accomplish for Arctic Wolf by the next time we meet,” he said. “From the security posture point of view, it’s nice to have someone there to constantly remind you what to do. It’s like having another employee in your department.”

For an organization in a highly targeted industry, proactive measures are critical and will allow them to stay ahead of the curve. Townsend knows human support of the CST is helping at every step of the journey.

“I feel like we haven’t encountered a problem where someone on the CST team isn’t willing to help us with it.”

The Full Suite of Solutions Offers Holistic Security

The third component of cybersecurity is user education, provided by Arctic Wolf Managed Security Awareness®.

“You can put a ton of technical controls in place, but changing human behavior is really difficult,” Townsend said.

With Managed Security Awareness, relevant, timely content and phishing simulation tests are automatically sent out to users on a regular basis, with reports on participation and simulation results sent to the IT department. This allows the department to see gaps and adjust as needed. For Townsend, this means having the opportunity to get other departments and individuals involved in the security culture and set them up for success.



“Arctic Wolf creates the right email to send at the right time for phishing tests. They’re very timely and they really help us highlight some strategies we need to put in place to help our employees.”

– Alex Townsend, Director of IT, Eden Prairie Schools

Townsend said the sophistication of the phishing emails Eden Prairie Schools sees, in addition the phishing simulations, highlights how security is not a one-track process. It’s a holistic, complex journey.

“It’s not as easy as not clicking on something anymore,” he said. “It’s about being cognizant about the different steps you need to put in place to prevent that kind of attack.”

As Eden Prairie Schools continues their journey and works on their core tenant of “security first,” they’re thrilled to continue to have Arctic Wolf in their corner.

“With Arctic Wolf it made a lot of sense to move forward with the whole suite of solutions,” Townsend said. “It’s that ability to maintain a cohesive cybersecurity platform.”



©2023 Arctic Wolf Networks, Inc. All rights reserved. Arctic Wolf Networks, AWN and the Arctic Wolf Networks logo are trademarks of Arctic Wolf Networks, Inc. in the United States and/or other jurisdictions. Other names used in this document are for identification purposes only and may be trademarks of their respective owners.

SOC2 Type II Certified



ISO 27001
CERTIFIED
CYBERGUARD
COMPLIANCE

Contact Us

arcticwolf.com
1-888-272-8429
ask@arcticwolf.com