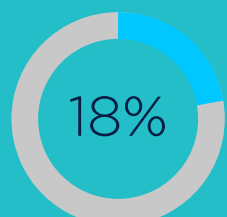


# How to protect your K-12 network from cyber threats

The digitization of K-12 education makes schools an attractive target for cybercriminals. Widespread internet access, mobile devices, online learning and smart classroom tools enhance teaching — but, they also create a huge attack surface.



18% increase in data security incidents in K-12 schools in 2020.<sup>1</sup>

2 per day

rate of cybersecurity incidents at public K-12 educational institutions in 2020.<sup>2</sup>

K-12 IT leaders can keep materials easily accessible and sensitive student data safe by doing the following:

## Understand why K-12 institutions are at risk

Lean budgets, aging network infrastructure and the growing sophistication of cybercriminals have driven up the number of attacks year over year. Cybersecurity has been the top technology priority for IT leaders since 2015, nevertheless:<sup>3</sup>

**408** publicly disclosed cybersecurity incidents hit K-12 educational institutions in 2020.<sup>4</sup>

**1,164** cyberattacks occurred in K-12 districts over the last five years, involving 988 education organizations across all 50 states.<sup>5</sup>

**127** U.S. K-12 districts have experienced more than one cyberattack in the last five years including one large urban district that has experienced seven different incidents.<sup>6</sup>

## Track the evolving threat profile

Understanding current and emerging types of threats can help you put the right protection in place to shield your district from a wide range of attack vectors.

### Data breaches

The unauthorized disclosure of student data accounted for 36 percent of reported school-related cybersecurity incidents in 2020.<sup>7</sup>

### Ransomware attacks

In August and September 2020, 57 percent of all ransomware incidents reported nationwide involved K-12 schools.<sup>8</sup> These attacks on school networks are among the most expensive and disruptive types of incidents, often leading to compromised critical systems, cancelled classes and closed schools.

### Phishing scams

The fraudulent attempt to obtain personal information by getting someone to click on a link, phishing is considered a significant risk by 45 percent of K-12 edtech leaders.<sup>9</sup>

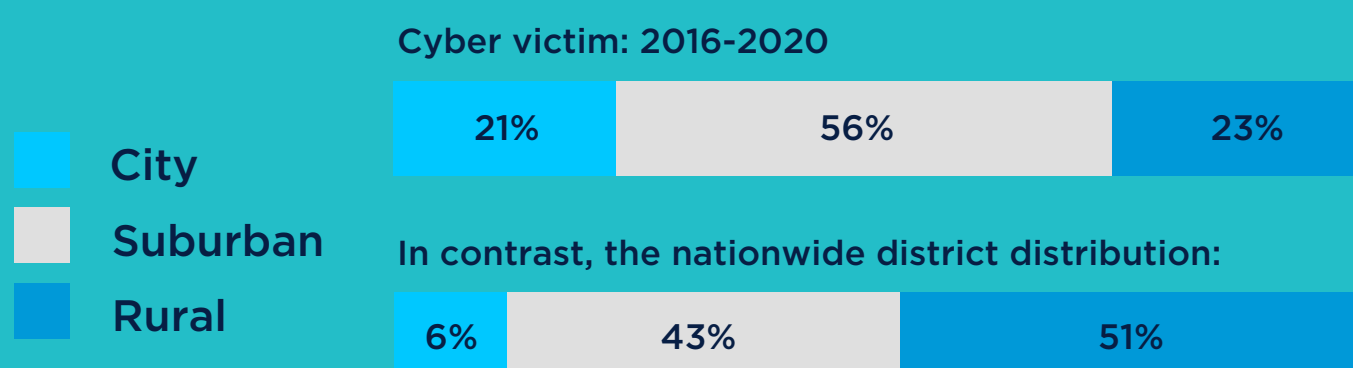
### Distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks

Intrusions such as session-exhaustion attacks essentially turn firewalls inside out, making them a tool for hackers rather than a network defense. The FBI warned schools about the risk of DDoS attacks in December 2020.<sup>10</sup>

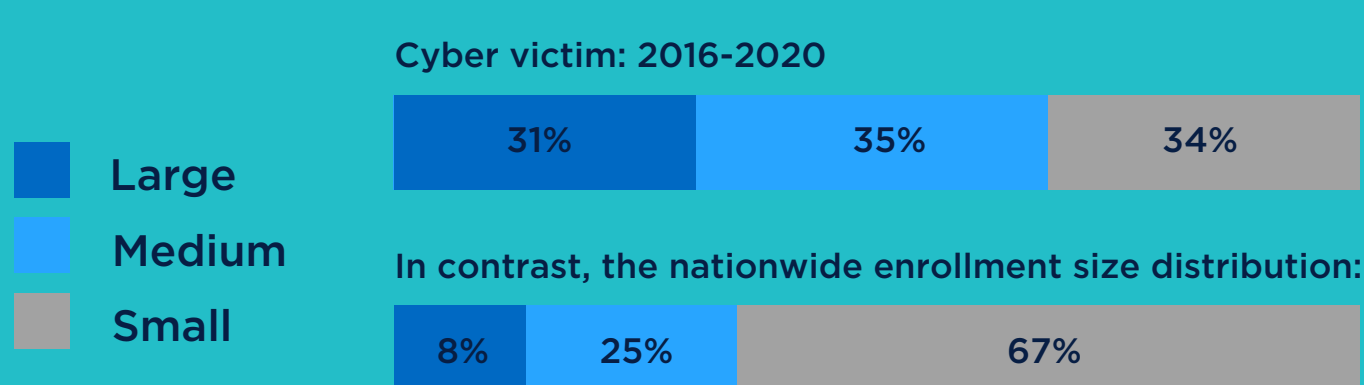
## Know your level of risk

All educational institutions are at risk for cyberattacks. Here's how cybersecurity incidents broke down at public schools from 2016-2020.<sup>11</sup>

### Community type



### Enrollment size



## Find comprehensive coverage and support

Widespread, coordinated network protection can keep you one step ahead of evolving and growing education network threats. Learn how to protect your school or district and what to look for in a network security provider in our [How to stay a step ahead of cybersecurity threats in K-12 education](#) guide.

[GET THE GUIDE](#)

#### Sources

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