Happy Users Become Even Happier Customers

According to EdSurge, US educational technology startups that target K—12 schools raised more than $500 million in 2015. Many of these companies won't be around by the time you read this story, but for Gaggle, seeing student users turn into administrator customers is becoming more common.

Enter Idaho technologists, New Plymouth School District's Mark "VW" Van Weerdhuizen and Salmon River Joint School District #243's Jenna Cereghino, both of whom were high school students using a safe student email product from Gaggle more than a decade ago.

"I remember Gaggle.net," recalled Mark. "It was part of our student ID." Mark admits he had no intention of a career in educational technology, but after an eight-year stint as a teacher, he became the district's technology director. "One of the first initiatives in my new role was a big push from administration to have student email," he said.

That's when a familiar company entered the picture.

As with most school districts, regardless of the student population size or geography, the safety of their students remains a high priority. After talking to other school districts in the area and throughout the state, Mark discovered that, more than a decade later, Gaggle had become much more than an email company.
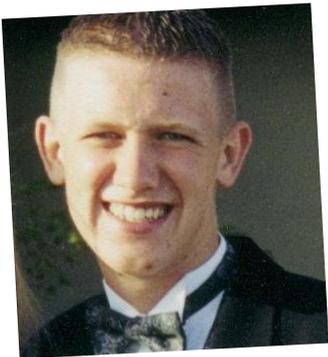
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An Extension of Staffs

About three hours north of New Plymouth is the small city of Riggins, ID, where Jenna Cereghino serves as the technology coordinator for Salmon River Joint School District #243. Despite a student population of only 120 students, Jenna points out that Salmon River has the same technology needs as much larger districts. "Big or small, the need for any school district to keep their students safe online is so important," she said. "We also pride ourselves on staying on top of all the latest technology."

When you consider teachers are often also parents of students at Salmon River, the need to assure a school district is doing everything possible to keep students safe is even more in the spotlight. "Our parents get to see first-hand that the school is being proactive to stop cyberbullying and other issues," she said.

Using Gaggle Safety Management also helps Salmon River and New Plymouth comply with Idaho House Bill 246, which requires schools to share bullying and harassment information with parents and students and to report bullying incidents to the State Department of Education.

Like Mark, Jenna remembers using Gaggle as a student, but her relationship with the company has indeed changed. As a technologist, she now views Gaggle as an extension of the district staff. This was made evident when Salmon River needed to migrate from their antiquated email service to Gmail. Frustrated with Google support and endless phone prompts and options from an automated system, Jenna contacted Gaggle's award-winning customer service department. Shortly after, her issues with DNS and MX records were resolved, and email was fully migrated without a single missing message.

Protecting Students

In New Plymouth, middle school students get access to Google Drive, while high school students are given school-issued Gmail as well as Google Drive. Salmon River students at the joint junior-senior high school are provided G Suite accounts starting in sixth grade. "Gaggle protects our students and allows us to be more aware of what's going on in their lives," said Jenna.

Similar to Jenna, Mark was surprised to realize how simple it is to get up and running with the 24/7 analysis and review of Google Apps.

"Implementation was an absolute breeze," he said. "The Gaggle implementation and technical team just walked us right through everything and helped us a ton. It continues to be one of the easiest technology implementations I've been involved in."

With Gaggle Safety Management reviewing student content, Mark is free to work on other tasks and can even devote more time to coaching the high school boys basketball team.

"The preventative measures you can put in place and the teachable moments that come from students abusing technology take a lot less time than putting out the fire if something were to happen," he said. "When you think about how much technology has changed not only in education, but even in our personal lives, to have a company like Gaggle still helping schools after more than 15 years is pretty remarkable."

Request your Gaggle demo today.

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