About Cincinnati Public Schools:

The history of the Cincinnati Public School District dates back to its official start in 1829. The district now serves more than 30,000 students in 55 schools spread across a 91-square-mile section of southwest Ohio. Cincinnati Public Schools is the third largest public school system in the state and ranks among the top Ohio school districts for students' learning growth.

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📞 800.288.7750

✉️ sales@gaggle.net

🌐 gaggle.net/demo

CINCINNATI PUBLIC SCHOOLS
A Recipe for Keeping Students Safe

CHALLENGE:

Before implementing G Suite for Education, administrators at Cincinnati Public Schools knew that teachers and staff didn't have the time necessary to monitor student activity on the free suite of productivity applications.

SOLUTION:

Along with school assemblies and digital citizenship courses, the school district added Gaggle Safety Management for G Suite to apply additional controls, including 24/7 content analysis and review by Gaggle Safety Representatives, which help create a safe online learning environment for students.

RESULTS:

Cincinnati Public School District continues to make student safety and education a priority, furthering its commitment through a strong Student Acceptable Use Policy and Internet/Network Safety Agreement that outlines responsibilities of students, teachers and administrators.

A Recipe for Keeping Students Safe

When the Cincinnati Public School District made the switch to G Suite for Education, there was one important, missing ingredient from bringing safe communication and collaboration to teachers and students. Cincinnati Public Schools needed additional controls, including 24/7 filtering and monitoring, to make G Suite a safe online learning environment.

The district's G Suite for Education initiative started in grades 7-12 and has since expanded to all staff and teachers as well as to students in fourth through sixth grade. "We wanted a proven collaboration and document storage solution, but we also understood the safety risks," explained Sarah Trimble-Oliver, CIO at Cincinnati Public Schools. "It was important to us to provide safety controls that surpass those that come with G Suite, so we turned to Gaggle."

One big difference is the image filtering found in the proprietary Gaggle Anti-Pornography Scanner, which looks at embedded and attached images and URLs to determine whether content created, sent and stored in G Suite for Education contains pornographic images. But what really stands out to Cincinnati Public Schools are the Gaggle Safety Representatives who review content for the district.

Sarah and Christine Shields, Network Administrator, are two of the district's designated emergency contacts that get notified by email for Questionable Content, or via email, phone or text message in cases of more serious and imminent Possible Student Situations. Gaggle Safety Management for G Suite discovers suspicious words and images in student Gmail, email attachments and Google Drive.

"It's scary," said Christine, regarding the naivety and vulnerability of some students. "But it's absolutely wonderful how quickly Gaggle's team catches things and forwards them on to us."

A long-time Gaggle customer for safe student email, Cincinnati Public Schools' recipe for promoting digital citizenship and online student safety is a perfect blend of education, communication and control. In addition to relying on Gaggle Safety Management, the district integrates EasyTech digital citizenship curriculum from Learning.com, conducts school assemblies throughout the year and has a very strong Student Acceptable Use Policy and Internet/Network Safety Agreement.

"We continue to do a lot around digital citizenship and cyber safety education," said Sarah. "Without Gaggle, we probably would think that the communication and education that we have in place is adequate, but thanks to Gaggle we know that we need to do more."

While Sarah understands that funding resources for educational technology vary at every school district, she believes Gaggle is the right solution for Cincinnati Public Schools. "It would be impossible for us to monitor queues or logs with internal resources," she said. "It would be cutting corners, and your students' safety is not something you take shortcuts with."