



About Schuyler Community Schools

Located in Colfax County, Nebraska, Schuyler Community Schools is home to a diverse international population of students in preschool through the 12th grade. Schuyler is home to a vibrant agricultural and industrial economy. The district includes five separate attendance centers, one high school and a distance-learning classroom.

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SCHUYLER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS Staying Ahead of the Student Safety Curve

CHALLENGE:

As a high-minority, first-generation school district, it's common for administrators and faculty at Schuyler Community Schools to be unfamiliar with their students' backgrounds. Often, interactions students have with each other, both in-person and online, reveal details that help school leaders learn more about them.

SOLUTION:

In an effort to educate students to become skilled, knowledgeable and responsible citizens, Schuyler Community Schools enhanced its technology initiatives with the addition of Gaggle Safety Management for G Suite, which assures students are safe using email and other communication and collaboration tools.

RESULTS:

The school district now is more aware of where to devote the necessary resources to keep students safe while being more proactive in its efforts to stop cyberbullying and other potential harmful incidents.

Staying Ahead of the Student Safety Curve

Not unlike most districts across the country, Schuyler Community Schools aims to educate students to become skilled, knowledgeable and responsible citizens in a global society. And educational technology plays a significant part in accomplishing that mission.

With website filters in place, the district decided to give students access to G Suite for Education, including Gmail and file sharing using Google Drive. Around the same time, Superintendent Dr. Dan Hoelsing learned about Gaggle during the School Research Nexus (SRN) Symposium. He returned home with a bigger plan.

Dr. Hoelsing wanted to implement Gaggle Safety Management for G Suite, which combines machine learning technology with expert Safety Representatives who review content to assure students are safe. One of his toughest challenges was convincing some of his district administrators and principals, who thought there weren't issues of any significant concern, to add the safety controls.

"Some administrators would understandingly mistake our content filter as a solution for monitoring student email," confirmed Mr. Jeff Droge, Schuyler's IT director. "Also, I think it's human nature to want to believe our kids are not saying or doing anything inappropriate, but unfortunately, it does happen."

Everyone agreed on a pilot program to a limited student population. "Gaggle opened our eyes to what was going on," said Mr. Droge. "We're now able to get our students the help they need and even stop bullying before it gets started. The list goes on and on."

After hearing the pilot was a success, Dr. Hoelsing visited with his building principals to get more information. "They absolutely wanted to continue," he said. "I know if I took Gaggle away from my principals, they'd feel like I just disowned them."

Based on the success of the pilot, Schuyler expanded Gaggle Safety Management to all middle school and high school students. "Once we started seeing the kinds of conversations some students were having and some of the issues they were discussing, we became more aware of where to devote resources," said Dr. Hoelsing.

An additional benefit is that Mr. Droge and his team are able to spend more time on other projects. "Gaggle was set up with very little work on our end," he said. "Now we know that trained persons are reviewing our students' email messages and Drive files, and administrators are notified immediately of any potential serious situations. In the end, our students are safer, and that's a good feeling."

In retrospect, after spending four decades in education, Dr. Hoelsing knew that the district was making the right choice. "When I look into the cost of deploying any service, I also look at what it could potentially cost if I don't," he said. "You pay for it one way or the other. You either pay for it after it's happened, or you pay for it up front."

And now he believes Schuyler Community Schools is ahead of the curve.

"Instead of being reactionary, we're proactive and even heading some things off that would have gone down a dangerous path," said Dr. Hoelsing. "Before, we would just look at how to fix it, how to help a student in trouble. Now, it's more of a proactive approach to keeping the good kids good, while getting help to those who may harm themselves or others."