



About East Irondequoit Central School District

Serving 3,200 students across six schools, East Irondequoit CSD is a 1:1 district where students can take home their district-issued device beginning in the third grade.



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 gaggle.net/demo

 sales@gaggle.net

 (800) 288-7750



EAST IRONDEQUOIT CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Stopping a Child Predator in His Tracks

Challenge

After rolling out Office 365 for students in grades 6–12, the district wanted to protect its students in the online environment.

Solution

Implemented Gaggle Safety Management to address concerns about student use of email and OneDrive on district-issued devices.

Results

A digital safety net designed to prevent harmful content from being delivered to students—and keep it off the district server. Using Gaggle, this district helped take down a child predator while blocking his attempts to reach a young student.

EAST IRONDEQUOIT CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Stopping a Child Predator in His Tracks

When New York's East Irondequoit Central School District implemented Gaggle for the 2018–19 school year, the goal was to make sure the district's students were safe in the digital world. What the district wasn't expecting was a months-long investigation that resulted in an arrest and conviction of a child predator.

A 1:1 district, students in K–8 have iPads while those in 9–12 receive laptops. Students are allowed to take their district-issued devices home during the school year beginning in the third grade. “We had talked about student email for a long time, and there was always a concern about how we would monitor that,” said Executive Director of Technology Christine Osadciw. “We got to the point where a lot of our web-based products were requiring an email from a student. It was blocking us from using some of the instructional tools, so we decided it was time to figure out how to implement this while making sure that students would be safe.”

East Irondequoit CSD decided to roll out Microsoft Office 365 for students in grades 6–12, including email and OneDrive accounts. The district then implemented Gaggle's student safety platform in an effort to protect its students as they used these digital tools on their district-issued devices. “This solution was perfect because it monitors for us without us having to block the students from corresponding as they need to,” noted Osadciw.

With Gaggle, school districts can help students become better digital citizens. “I like that the system gives students a warning when they use inappropriate language,” said Osadciw. “It holds them accountable and keeps them aware of what they're doing, reminding them that this is a professional setting.”

School districts can also use Gaggle to ensure that students are using their equipment in a responsible manner. “It's school-issued equipment,” said Director of Communications Dave Yates. “What we're filtering is for our students' own protection and well-being. We're not doing it to try and be Big Brother. We're looking for red flags for their own safety—or someone else's safety. It's for their own good.”

AN EXTRA MEASURE OF PROTECTION

In one particular instance, Gaggle helped keep an 11-year-old student out of harm's way when a child predator attempted to send her pornographic content. “It's so easy to just think that technology is going to make things easier for learning and instruction, but there are so many pitfalls that go hand in hand with that,” said Yates. “This child is a perfect example. They were totally innocent, but you can only control so much. Having Gaggle in place gives us an extra measure of protection from things we don't know are going on and could never anticipate happening.”

Gaggle intercepted the file in question to ensure that the sixth-grade student wouldn't be exposed to the content. “That, to me, is the biggest benefit,” said Yates. “Once a child receives a message like that, the damage is done. By not delivering the message and preventing the damage—that's the invaluable part of it.” Gaggle not only stops inappropriate messages like this from ever reaching students, it also blocks the content from the district server, placing it into quarantine to ensure it won't be in the system. “Gaggle is like a giant screen door that keeps the bugs out,” added Yates.

“Pornographic files, such as the one in this particular instance, go into an archive folder—you have to go in and pull it out if you want to save it,” said Osadciw. “The file was sent to our local police department so they could do their investigation.” The district worked with the police, who conducted an investigation over four months that resulted in

the arrest and conviction of a 36-year-old male in Michigan. “The system shows the exact date and time of the file coming in, which gives a firm timeline of events for their case as well,” noted Osadciw. “That was their proof. If we didn't have that video, I don't know if the predator would have been caught.”

“In the process of that investigation, they discovered that this man had also contacted a youth in his own area,” said Yates. “The fact that this man was caught doing the same thing to another child adds another layer. We've now stopped him from affecting more children going forward.”

BEING PROACTIVE TO SAFEGUARD STUDENTS

During the 2018–19 school year, Gaggle had 5,211 Possible Student Situations that were categorized as “Nudity & Sexual Content” across all school districts using the student safety platform in the United States. When underage children are involved, these situations are reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC). The content is blocked and quarantined, ensuring that students aren't exposed and districts aren't liable.

“As a tech director, it's difficult. With all of these different online tools that our students have access to, it gets harder and harder to keep them safe,” said Osadciw. “If I didn't have a tool like Gaggle, we wouldn't be able to do this. We have to have something in place that's looking at what's coming and going.”

“The benefits of being able to be alerted to the possibility of student situations in this day and age is priceless. It's just a matter of being able to be proactive instead of waiting until it's too late,” said Yates. “With so many incidents, the main thing that you hear is, ‘Oh, if only we knew. If only we'd done something sooner.’ Gaggle gives you the opportunity to intercede when needed to keep things from happening instead of regretting what you didn't do later.”