About Fillmore Unified School District:
As Fillmore USD's 3,700 students across seven schools transitioned to remote schooling, Dr. Adrian Palazuelos implemented Gaggle to protect students as they continued their education at home.

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FILLMORE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Protecting Students Remotely: How One California District Took Action During the Pandemic

Challenge

With the COVID-19 shelter-at-home orders in place, students were doing all schoolwork remotely, spending more time than ever on their devices.

Solution

Gaggle monitors student activity on Office 365 and Teams even outside of the traditional brick-and-mortar school.

Results

Fillmore USD knew it made the right decision when two alerts of student situations came in right away. The district can now intervene and help students even if administrators and teachers are not seeing their students every day.

FILLMORE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Protecting Students Remotely: How One California District Took Action During the Pandemic

It's not too often that an investment in new technologies yields immediate results, but that's exactly what happened when Fillmore Unified School District in California decided to implement the Gaggle student safety platform.

"From the moment that our administrator accounts were activated and our training started, we immediately received two notifications about questionable student content," said Superintendent Dr. Adrian Palazuelos. One of the cases involved a student who contributed to the Teams portal chat about self-harm and the loneliness and desperation of being at home.

"Had it not been for Gaggle, we would not have been able to jump in and intervene when we did," Dr. Palazuelos said. "Our administrators sprang into action and were able to contact the parents and the student, which was for us the most important step." From there, the district provided a robust support network of counseling and other resources for the student.

Not expecting to begin receiving reports so quickly, Dr. Palazuelos said his team is now well-versed on how to work with law enforcement, mental health professionals, and other key resource partners.

RECONNECTING AT THE RIGHT TIME

A K-12 district in Southern California, Fillmore USD has been using Office 365 since 2015 and recently started using both Office and Teams. The district provided devices to students during the pandemic, and currently has over 2,000 registered users on Teams. Fillmore USD partnered with Gaggle in January 2020 and is also using the platform to monitor content within ContentKeeper.

Dr. Palazuelos first learned about Gaggle 18 months ago, but said he wasn't ready to "take the plunge" at the time. He then reconnected at the perfect time: right when schools were moving from brick-and-mortar buildings to individual households. "Gaggle could not have come at a more appropriate time," said Dr. Palazuelos.

"We've been handing out more devices to our students, so having the partnership with Gaggle created another safety net for us," he explained.

> "We knew we were going to be debilitated and frankly, unable to address student safety concerns on a daily basis, 24/7. Having Gaggle as a component when we put the device in a student's hands gives us that additional reassurance."

Initially, the district was using the platform with students in grades 6–8 who were on its 1:1 program. Fillmore USD then began using Gaggle at its comprehensive high school and then—when the shelter-at-home orders were put in place—rolled out the platform to protect all students in the distance learning space. The district now uses the platform across all grade levels.

"Although initially we were only looking to use the platform at the secondary level," said Dr. Palazuelos, "our Gaggle client service representatives sprang into action and worked with our IT director to create the increased access and the additional contract for our elementary students."

15+ INCIDENTS AVOIDED

When selecting a student safety program, Dr. Palazuelos said Fillmore USD was looking for more than just a technology platform. The district wanted a technology partner that would support its efforts, provide access to resources, and ensure a good experience using the platform's products. "That's something that really set Gaggle apart from others," he said. "Once we started learning about Gaggle, we realized the product had real people and positivity behind it."

Fillmore USD's student safety platform has only been in place for a few months and it's already identified more than 15 incidences where students were possibly in danger, viewing inappropriate content, or using inappropriate language on their district-owned devices.

Thanks to Gaggle, the district can react swiftly and appropriately in such situations, even when students aren't in the physical school building. "We're able to have a presence in a space that normally we wouldn't be part of," he added. "We're not in their homes with them, but when students are creating these calls for help, we want to be able to act and provide the necessary support."