

## **Griffin-Spalding County School System Google Apps for Education: Parent Letter**

Dear Students and Families:

The Griffin-Spalding County School System has been a Google Apps for Education District since the 2011-2012 school year. Transitioning to Google Apps for Education position our students to garner the skills needed to operate successfully in a 21st century learning environment.

### **What is Google Apps for Education?**

Google Apps for Education is a suite of tools for educators and students. While there are many applications included in Google Apps, the main tools are Gmail (email), Google Drive (or Docs), which can be thought of like Windows "My Documents," Calendar, Sites (websites), and Google Classroom. The power of Google Apps is that it is a web-based "platform neutral" solution. The TOOLS foster consistency of platform across the district and for students and staff at home. There is no longer the need to save documents on thumb drives or wonder on which computer you saved a file. All documents are saved in "a cloud" and are accessible via the Internet anywhere in the world using various devices.

### **Security**

Google Apps provides computing Safety and Security for users. In the education environment, Google never collects user data and blocks advertising from the Google Apps suite. Google Apps for Education includes dozens of critical security features specifically designed to keep your data safe, secure and in your control. And, in Drive, documents are saved automatically and immediately with every revision; there is never a need to "save." Large organizations such as Rutgers University, and many school districts across the State and Country have successfully implemented Google Apps for Education.

### **Why are these tools important for students?**

Google Apps will be an important instructional management tool that enhances student-to-teacher, teacher-to-student, and student-to-student communication and collaboration, and can enhance the instruction process for students. However, parents/guardians have the right to opt their child out of being assigned an email account. In such case, the student would still be provided a network account for electronic document storage, which is important for many classroom assignments and regular classwork.

### **Expectations for Email Use**

Students will be expected to adhere strictly to the District Acceptable Use Policy and the guidelines learned through Digital Citizenship when utilizing their district email. All email correspondence can and will be monitored for appropriate content at the system level. Students will utilize their email for appropriate correspondence with teachers and peers at their teacher and parents' discretion.

### **Accounts**

Google App accounts are necessary for all students so that they may log in to computers, even if they do not access their Google Apps. The username is formatted as a student's first name, followed by a period (.), and their last name. (example: [john.smith@gscs.org](mailto:john.smith@gscs.org)) Student passwords are their 6 digit student ID, followed by "00" for high school students, "11" for middle school students, and "22" for elementary students.

**When will students receive accounts and how will they be taught to use the tools?**

When student accounts are activated, our students will have access to all the functions of Google Apps that our District has enabled. Student accounts will be provided for K-12. Accounts are necessary for logging in to computers. However, Google applications can be turned on or off for specific students as needed.

Each building will plan how students will be taught to use the tools. This may be done through technology courses, through regular classroom instruction, or some other means as determined by the buildings based on the developmental levels of the students, scheduling, and/or other considerations. You may begin to explore Google Apps for Education on your own by visiting the following link, which provides an overview of Google Apps for Education:

<http://www.google.com/apps/intl/en/edu/k12.html>

As we prepare our students to be citizens in the 21st Century global community, we are pleased to provide our students with these powerful tools that foster communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. If you have any questions about Google Apps for Education or our plans for students, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Lonny Harper  
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