securly

School District of Pickens County

A case study

September 2020

Table of contents

Change is hard, but saving lives can be easy

Replacing a tried and true solution with a newer one can bring an element of anxiety to any IT Admin. However, the need to keep up with the evolving needs of staff and students drives this need for change, especially when it comes to student safety technology. The School District of Pickens County, a school district in South Carolina, made the leap to replace their existing solution and ended up saving a student's life.

A big district with big tech problems

Pickens County School District is the 15th largest school district in South Carolina with an annual enrollment of over 16,300 students and 1,300 staff members. The District has 14 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, and four high schools with over 20,000 devices being filtered by Securly every day.

Pickens County partnered with Securly in April 2015 after having struggled with an appliance firewall to manually block websites and applications from students' devices. In spite of a large IT staff, the District was constantly bogged down by requests for student activity reports, blocking specific websites and applications, and other peak traffic time bottlenecks.

Saving lives

Shortly after switching to Securly, Pickens County was able to prevent a student suicide with Securly's social media monitoring for bullying, self-harm, and violence.

Out of 16,300 students in the school district, Securly was able to identify a single Facebook post from a student contemplating suicide. The school and parents were alerted, and they were able to intervene in time to save the student's life.

> *"To be able to catch clues on social media that would enable administrators and teachers to work with parents is absolutely worth everything to us as a community."*
>
> ## Dr. Barbara Nesbitt,
> Assistant superintendent for technology services

The Securly impact

- Securly's cloud-based web filtering eliminated problems of maintaining clunky hardware appliances.

- Easy-to-use web interface made managing website and application blocking/allowing a breeze.

- Web-filtering management delegated to school-level staff that allowed IT staff with time to concentrate on other IT setup priorities.

- Parent engagement will continue to increase with Securly's Parent Portal as parents remain informed of their kid's online activity on school devices.

- School authorities will have continued awareness of student bullying and self-harm incidents as Securly's sentiment analysis solution monitor students' social media, Gmail, and other browsing patterns for distress. Student safety remains prioritized.

Conclusion

Anticipating worst-case scenarios is normal when preparing for change. However, the benefits often outweigh the risks.

And when a student is willing to risk their life, there is no greater benefit than switching to Securly.

> *"Being cloud-based makes it much easier to distribute the information to people who need it the most. They are not bogged down with the details of access rights."*
>
> **Dr. Barbara Nesbitt,**
> Assistant superintendent for technology services

securly

✉ sales@securly.com   📞 1-855-SECURLY   🌐 www.securly.com