

Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board: 2014 - 2015

Project Title	Google Apps for Education
Description	<p>The primary focus on moving to the Google Apps for Education (G.A.F.E) environment is one of equality of access; however, the benefits range far beyond that initial focus and include: collaboration, dynamic feedback, and access to a powerful suite of tools. The goal of the project was to introduce staff and students to the new technology and to begin to develop capacity towards a system-wide adoption of G.A.F.E. To that end the project incorporated elements of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for administration, staff and students • Discovery of appropriate third party apps • Exploration of integration with current technologies
Context	<p><i>Number of students:</i> 1000</p> <p><i>Number of teachers:</i> 80</p> <p><i>Number of schools:</i> 20</p> <p><i>Grades/Program:</i> The focus for evidence is 9 - 12</p>
Impact on Students	<p>Students working with GAFE have been impressed that they can now work more effectively with a tool that they have been using for years. The interaction with teachers is a benefit and the potential for <i>interactive descriptive feedback</i> is exciting. Sharing with teachers, peers and parents is simple. GAFE removes blocks to student learning and allows students to access resources ‘on their own terms’. The descriptive feedback is having an impact on student learning, as students are able to do more with the feedback in a faster fashion, which is helping close the gaps for students.</p> <p>Further, introduction of tools like Google Classroom and Calendar allow students to organize their time, work and assignments in meaningful and dynamic ways. With increased access to technology –in the form of additional Chromebooks in the system- students are able to have choices in the how and when they will be accessing the suite. These additional devices become a support to those without their own personal devices or as an alternative when the work is too heavy for these smaller devices.</p> <p>The ecosystem of a Chromebook is familiar and does not intimidate students in the least. As evidenced by our Administrative Reports, students are using G.A.F.E. to interact, collaborative and create their work. They have become a driving force behind the change in H.P.E.D.S.B.</p> <p>In many cases, our findings indicate that we have more secondary students using the technology, staying engaged in school and earning credits in a variety of learning environments including blended learning, collaborative learning, and self-directed or student inquiry based learning. We have noticed increased task submission, as detailed in our BIPSA monitoring question feedback from a school where Google and Chromebooks were used. We have also noted improved quality of student work where technology has been mindfully integrated into the learning experiences of students.</p>

	<p>We were intentional in a few specific, targeted areas where we used Google Apps and Chromebooks. For our Children and Youth in Care, access to learning through a collaborative environment has been significant in supporting these students in their academic success. Students were able to work in diverse places which increased student engagement, and work completion. As well, we noted in several areas the impact for students who are in the Locally Developed course type. Student learning increased, as did task completion, as students no longer had to struggle with their organizational skills. This helped them to be more successful.</p>
<p>Impact on Instruction</p>	<p>Teachers worked on learning the ins and outs of this powerful and dynamic ecosystem of tools. The impact of working with GAFE isn't just substituting Google Docs for Word, it changes the way teachers can interact with students, deliver feedback and collaborate. Expanding these tools out to the rest of the ecosystem and third-party apps, teachers are being offered a complete toolbox of dynamic, collaborative tools for the classroom.</p> <p>Since September 2014 -when it was first launched- teachers using Google Classroom in H.P.E.D.S.B. has grown to 466. This shows a significant dedication to the kind of collaborative teaching and learning that G.A.F.E. offers our students. In order to use Classroom effectively a teacher needs to be invested in working with Docs, Slides, etc. in order to make full use of the service.</p> <p>G.A.F.E. has more deeply impacted the pedagogy of learning. The collaborative nature of the system is changing the way students interact with teachers, the way teachers interact with students, the entire nature of the traditional model of the classroom. In a G.A.F.E. classroom, the teacher becomes a guide and can provide individualized instruction to students in a safe, convenient and efficient manner. Students feel safe and are willing to take important risks with their learning. The sheer volume of teachers moving over to Classroom and using Docs shows the impact of the tool on the way they approach their interactions with students and with each other.</p>
<p>Impact on System</p>	<p>G.A.F.E. by far has proven to be one of the most dynamic game-changers in Education.</p> <p>When looking at use of GAFE, the February numbers show approximately 79000 shared files; the June numbers show approximately 178000 shared files. This shows an increase of approximately 125% growth in five months. But beyond the numbers, this shows a deeper connection to the G.A.F.E. environment. Not only are students creating and working with files on-line, they are doing so together, collaboratively.</p> <p>Even more information can be gathered when we look at Google Drive and storage is being used. The bulk of Drive is taken up by Google Docs and File Uploads (Videos, Pictures, PDFs, etc.). This shows us that staff and students are turning to G.A.F.E. to produce Google Docs and to store non-G.A.F.E. files. This is an expected outcome and a welcome one as it shows a growing dependence and use of the G.A.F.E. environment. It also shows that non-G.A.F.E. files are being 'shared' through G.A.F.E. again illustrating staff and student growing use of this feature.</p>

NOTE: Information in the summary is taken directly from the data contained in the final project report.