

A Guide to Best Practices:  
**REALIZING THE  
PROMISES OF  
G SUITE FOR EDU**



# INTRODUCTION

School districts, colleges and universities [around the globe](#) are adopting G Suite for Education. Those leading the way include [Christopher Gleeson](#) at the Robert H. Smith School of Business, University of Maryland; [Brian Van Vlimmeren](#), formerly with the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta and now Manager Information Technology at Cairns; and [Jay Duff](#), Network Administrator for Mannheim School District 83. Their reasons for adopting G Suite are ultimately centered on their information technology teams supporting their district's or institution's mission and vision.

Although the end benefits sought may be common to all, their journey to G Suite for Education was as unique as each institution, and it will be for yours. In this white paper, you'll learn more about the promise of G Suite for Education, challenges along the path to the promise, and best practices in getting value from G Suite for Education for your institution or district.



# PROFILES IN G SUITE FOR EDUCATION ADOPTION

Here are some pioneering leaders building capacity, agility and resilience into how information technology supports their institution's mission.

## G SUITE FOR EDUCATION AT A TOP-TIER BUSINESS SCHOOL

The motto of the Robert H. Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland, one of the top 10 business schools in the US, is "Lead Fearlessly." Christopher Gleeson, Network and Systems Engineer for the School, exemplifies that motto. He's responsible for a wide-ranging portfolio of IT services and systems, including:

- End-to-end management of their data center
- Deployment and end-point management
- Their virtual desktop initiative and hosted application publishing
- End-to-end management of the messaging and collaboration platforms (G Suite)

The University of Maryland adopted G Suite in 2016 to improve efficiency and increase collaboration for their world-class faculty and top-tier students, and it's been in use by [approximately 17,000 faculty and students](#) since.

## G SUITE FOR EDUCATION AT A GEOGRAPHICALLY DISPERSED CATHOLIC EDUCATION DIOCESE

The Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta includes some of the oldest schools in Australia. With its adoption of G Suite, it has a collaboration platform that can take it into the future. Its geographic distribution — the area the Diocese serves covers more than 3,000 kilometers — would be difficult to manage without robust technology. With an average of one new school opening each year, IT agility and ease of onboarding is key to supporting its mission.

The Diocese at Parramatta adopted G Suite to enable a wider, and deeper, collaboration among the students and communities they serve. It had to meet the needs of Parramatta Diocese's 80 primary and secondary Catholic systemic schools, its 43,000+ students and its 4500+ teachers and staff. Brian van Vlimmeren, formerly Learning Technologies Senior Manager there, and currently the Manager Information Technology at Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns, was responsible for G Suite's implementation at Parramatta.

## G SUITE FOR EDUCATION AT A SMALL MIDWESTERN US SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mannheim School District 83, based in Franklin Park, Illinois, comprises five schools, an Early Childhood Center and an alternative school for students with disabilities. Enger School, the alternative school, serves the local community by providing students with special needs a “highly structured, nurturing environment... In addition to a functional curriculum, Enger School offers related services including physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech/language therapy, vision therapy, music, and orientation/mobility...” The district’s mission: to “develop a passion for learning in a creative, safe, and nurturing environment.” Jay Duff, Network Administrator for the District, manages and maintains the servers, workstations, network infrastructure, and its use of G Suite for Education. The technology in use all supports the District’s mission, including providing technology to support the Enger School’s related services teams.



# THE PROMISE OF G SUITE FOR EDUCATION

A primary use case for G Suite for Education is improved collaboration. As Jonathan Rochelle, Director of Product Management, Google for Education, [writes](#), “The collaborative power of these tools and reinforces our dedication to teachers and students. ...we believe that when students and teachers break down silos and have collaborative tools for their classroom, amazing learning can happen.”

Ultimately, the promise of using G Suite for Education is improved teacher and student performance through seamless collaboration among staff, instructors and students. But the promise of G Suite for Education goes beyond fostering creativity and improved collaboration. It builds capability by freeing IT resources for innovation and reduces risk by layering in Google’s robust security with an institution’s own.

“With a [large percentage of ed tech leaders](#) saying that **cloud-based software has helped their school districts increase efficiencies**, it’s no surprise that the global cloud computing market in the education sector is [expected to grow more than 26 percent](#) a year until 2021.”

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Megan Cortez  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR, [EDTECH MAGAZINE](#)

Using a cloud-based suite of apps can result in **lower maintenance and costs for IT**, since there are no local servers needed, and no IT-managed software updates and patches. “With a service provider hosting applications, IT teams no longer have to be responsible for backend upkeep, freeing up time and resources for other areas,” writes [Dave Doucette of CDW-G](#). At [Google NEXT 2018](#), Joshua Humphrey, Enterprise Computing, Georgia State University, said “...we’ve seen an average yearly savings of 44%. Whenever people ask why we moved to the cloud this is what we point to: usability and savings.”

Because Google’s security is proven and is world-class, sensitive data (information like student social security numbers and other Personally Identifiable Information (PII), grades and performance reviews) is more secure than it may be on-site. With [multiple third-party certifications](#) for security, such as FedRAMP, SOC 2 and SOC 3, and ISO 27001, a district or institution’s data security practices will get a strong boost, and will be more likely to recover quickly from interruptions [than if the applications were local](#).



“At the University of Minnesota, on-premises data centers have experienced everything from flooding to a rogue squirrel that caused a data center transformer to catch fire during an application update. ‘This caused IT to have a huge black eye,’ said Steve Nguyen, IT service director for collaboration and web content services.”

Eli Zimmerman  
CONTRIBUTOR, [EDTECH MAGAZINE](#)

# COMMON PITFALLS THAT CAN UNDERMINE THE PROMISE OF G SUITE

If your institution or district has adopted — or is planning to adopt — G Suite for Education, be sure you and your stakeholders address those gaps and failures that can put the promise of G Suite at risk.

## GAPS IN PLANNING

Even though installing G Suite for Education is relatively straightforward, it may take an in-depth pilot program to surface all your stakeholders' requirements and to identify potential issues. For example, G Suite implementation was part of the [Simi Valley Pilot Program](#), and in-depth planning helped ensure its success. "Successful pilots require time (Simi Valley's took almost three years) and careful inclusion of every stakeholder: teachers and their unions, superintendents, the community, and technology professionals." Philip Scrivano, director of information technology at Simi Valley, [noted that a methodical pilot](#) "prevents costly mistakes and ensures the eventual rollout actually supports learning needs." Best practices, which we'll cover in detail further on in the ebook, include:

- Plan out the program in detail.
- Get support from the top.
- Involve teachers as advocates.
- Identify technology champions.
- Require teacher training.

## FAILURE TO CONTROL SCOPE

Scope creep can occur if there's haste in implementation or in poorly controlled late-stage "nice-to-have" requests from stakeholders. By setting expectations alongside stakeholders, defining requirements and limiting scope (or instantiating phased rollouts), your institution or district will optimize the chances of not just a smooth deployment, but successful realization of the benefits of G Suite for Education.

## PROBLEMS WITH DEPLOYMENT

Without an up-to-date inventory of your IT environment including configurations, planning for account provisioning, or determining data migration readiness, your plans to deploy G Suite for Education may fail — and worse, damage the trust that exists between IT and other departments within your organizations. Even with a detailed inventory, you'll still want to determine your institution's training and documentation needs and prepare to meet those requirements. Google offers a handy [G Suite Deployment Checklist](#) to reduce the chances your district or institution adoption will slow due to a failure in deployment.

## FAILURES IN IMPLEMENTATION

A failure in implementation often stems from a “build it and they will come” approach to technology adoption. Since G Suite for Education is available for free, the temptation to adopt it may lead to inadequate preparation, and may hamper further efforts to scale its adoption.. Successful implementation of G Suite in your district or institution requires understanding the daily, weekly, and monthly activities undertaken by your educators and learners — and defining how G Suite can support them.

## FAILURES IN SECURITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Increasingly, schools districts and higher education institutions are being targeted by malware, including [ransomware](#). In a warning issued early January 2018, [the FBI and the Department of Education Inspector General](#) said hackers have attempted to sell more than 100 million private records from nearly 100 schools and businesses. Because data in education is largely unprotected, and because it may contain sensitive data such as Social Security numbers, birthdates, or student loan data, it’s a target of interest for cybercriminals and hostile governments.





# BEST PRACTICES IN ADOPTING AND IMPLEMENTING G SUITE

As with any major change to the IT environment for an institution, successful adoption and implementation of G Suite requires thoughtful change management and communications planning.

## GET SUPPORT FROM LEADERSHIP

Making a change to “go Google” can provide significant benefits in improved IT efficiencies and in collaboration between learners and educators. However, since change is often disruptive, you need to ensure your project is fully supported by your district’s or institution’s leadership before starting.

## PLAN WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders may not be limited to administrators and educators. Depending on your scope, you may wish to include students, parents / guardians of students, and / or community groups.

- Define adoption and usage milestones.
- Define risk mitigation strategies for security and data protection.
- Set and share rollout schedules.
- Build-and-test prototypes with pilot schools or departments.
- Report on and share learnings with stakeholders.

## PILOT FIRST, ROLLOUT IN PHASES

This is a best practice to ensure successful IT projects and high user acceptance. For details from Google on their recommended steps and transition guides, see their website [here](#). Also see their detailed G Suite for Education Deployment Guide [here](#).

## IDENTIFY AND WORK WITH TECHNOLOGY CHAMPIONS

To ensure a successful rollout, you’ll need to identify, train and pilot your program with a small group of technology champions across a variety of departments. These champions can then assist IT teams in supporting adoption of G Suite for Education.

## REQUIRE EDUCATOR TRAINING

Even though G Suite for Education is designed to be easy to use, plan for some required training to help end users maximize G Suite for their classroom or syllabus. This way, all instructors will be “on the same page,” easing collaboration.

## IMPLEMENT AND ITERATE

The IT team’s job isn’t done once G Suite for Education is deployed. Build ways to collect and aggregate end user feedback, and plan transparent processes to address the feedback you receive. Engaging technology

coaches for your school, as some districts have done via the [Dynamic Learning Project](#), may be useful.

## MANAGE AND MONITOR ADOPTION

To ensure your organization is getting the most it can from G Suite for Education, track usage in G Suite Admin console to see which users and groups are using the tools and collaborating. You might choose to gamify participation, by those incentivizing groups or users with gift cards who are fast to adopt or who are “power users / champions.”



## PREPARE FOR SUCCESS, PLAN FOR RISK MITIGATION

The decision to implement G Suite for Education means that data which might have previously been managed and protected on-site will now reside in Google's cloud environment. While Google provides robust [security](#) — in many cases, more security than could be provided by local IT resources — it might surprise you to learn that Google offers very few options to protect your organization from data loss caused by accidental deletions, sync errors, rogue employees, or malware attacks. [Google notes that](#) “You have a limited time [<25 days] from when the data was permanently deleted to restore files and messages. **After that, the data is gone forever.**”

Further, the folder structure containing the data is also potentially at risk. As one Google Drive administrator [wrote](#), “If you had hundreds of thousands of files shared in the cloud within hundreds of folders and sub folders and all of a sudden all of that organization and context was gone, and while the files still existed they had all been ‘orphaned’ and returned to their owners, would you consider that ‘lost’ data? I certainly do. This happened to us yesterday, and it will take months to recover.”

With malware attacks targeting educational institutions [on the rise world-wide](#), protecting your G Suite data and folder structure is an imperative as a best practice. An e-discovery tool like [Google Vault is not designed](#) to meet the use case for rapid restore of lost data to a last-known-good state, but a solution like Spanning Backup for G Suite is — and has been widely adopted by K-12 districts, colleges and universities.

[Google notes](#) that “You have a limited time (<25 days) from when the data was permanently deleted to restore files and messages. **After that, the data is gone forever.**”

# LEADERS IN G SUITE FOR EDUCATION ADOPTION PROTECT THEIR DATA

The leaders mentioned earlier in this ebook understand the need for data protection. That's why they chose Spanning Backup for G Suite to backup the data in Gmail, Google Drive, Team Drives, Calendars, Contacts and Google Sites.

## G SUITE FOR EDUCATION AT A TOP-TIER BUSINESS SCHOOL – PROTECTED

Christopher Gleeson led the data protection evaluation effort for the Robert H. Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland. They chose Spanning. As Christopher noted [here](#), “Using Spanning Backup has allowed me to focus my time and energy on improving and developing new services for our users and community, comfortable that the ‘headache’ of data protection is being handled so well and so thoroughly.”

## G SUITE FOR EDUCATION AT A GEOGRAPHICALLY DISPERSED CATHOLIC EDUCATION DIOCESE – PROTECTED

Brian van Vlimmeren, currently Manager Information Technology at Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns, managed the data protection evaluation process for the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta. “We wanted something that provided not only backup and recovery but also archiving and user management,” according to Brian Van Vlimmeren, learning technologies senior manager for the diocese. “Spanning Backup has it all.” And their selection of Spanning

makes recovering lost data a non-issue. According to Van Vlimmeren, restoring data took just one click and less than 24 hours. [As he put it](#), “It’s so easy it’s ridiculous.”

“We are pleased to have world class Faculty at the Smith School, and the protection and availability of their data is critical for them to be able to maintain the high standards that the school is known for. Our students work very hard to complete their programs, and the last thing we would want to happen is for anyone to lose their work, either accidentally or through an IT-related issue.”

**Christopher Gleeson**

MANAGER OF MESSAGING AND COLLABORATION,  
ROBERT H. SMITH SCHOOL OF BUSINESS,  
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

## G SUITE FOR EDUCATION AT A SMALL MIDWESTERN US SCHOOL DISTRICT – PROTECTED

Jay Duff, Network Administrator for the District, said, “Backup is about protecting against human error. It’s all about protecting us from ourselves. Also, if somebody does a FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) request, we could open ourselves up to some big trouble if we don’t have a piece of data that somebody asks for.” Data loss is catastrophic not only because it wipes away precious student and staff data, but also because it can ruin the institution’s hard-won reputation, as well as the reputation of your IT teams. “With your backup, you shouldn’t ever have to see it, use it, touch it or anything. And, when you do, it should be seamless. I want to be able to figure it out on the fly when all hell’s breaking loose, when I’m in a panic because the superintendent is like, ‘I need this file, I needed it yesterday.’ I just want to be able to do it, and that’s why Spanning’s interface was such a big deal.”



To learn more about why leading educational institutions trust Spanning Backup for G Suite to protect their G Suite for Education implementation, get started and [request a demo](#).



Spanning Cloud Apps, a Kaseya company, is the leading provider of backup and recovery for SaaS applications, helping organizations around the globe protect their information in the cloud. The company provides powerful, enterprise-class data protection for Microsoft Office 365, G Suite, and Salesforce. With data centers located in North America, the EU, and Australia, Spanning Backup is the most trusted cloud-to-cloud backup solution for thousands of companies and millions of users around the world.

[Spanning Backup for G Suite](#)

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