

Jackson Preparatory School helps teachers achieve better work-life balance with Google for Education



About Jackson Preparatory School

- Private school
- Serves 836 students
- Located in Jackson, Mississippi
- [Website](#)

What they wanted to do

- Save teachers time on administrative tasks to help them achieve better work-life balance
- Prepare students for college and careers

What they did

- Introduced Google Apps for Education, Google Classroom for all students and teachers.
- Required all faculty and staff achieve Google Certification

What they accomplished

- Created a 100 percent Google-certified faculty
- Provided more work-life balance for teachers
- Taught students how to work in groups and give presentations
- Gave parents a feedback mechanism



Background

At [Jackson Preparatory School](#) in Jackson, Mississippi, technology plays a big part both in preparing students for college and in providing valuable work-life balance for the talented teaching staff. With 836 students in grades 6-12 and rigorous programs in academics, athletics and the arts, the teachers at Jackson Preparatory School have their hands full. Google's cloud technology helps teachers save time.

Challenge

Faculty members at Jackson Preparatory School juggle hectic schedules — from grading papers to coaching extra-curricular activities to balancing their active personal lives. Jackson Prep's goal is to utilize technology to provide a working environment that minimizes teacher stress and make class time more productive, helping teachers achieve a better work-life balance. The administrative team sought to replace the school's aging technology (a free, Linux-based solution) that was both time-consuming to manage and difficult for new teachers to learn.

Solution

In 2011, Jackson Preparatory School introduced [Google Apps for Education](#) to all of its 836 students and 110 teachers. [Google Classroom](#) was a welcomed addition to the GAFE Suite in 2014. To help the entire faculty team and staff learn how to use the new tools, the school held a professional development workshop on the morning of a late-start school day. The session helped teachers get up to speed quickly without needing to stay late or come in on a weekend.

Benefits

Creating a Google-savvy teaching community

100% of the faculty and staff at Jackson Preparatory hold a Google Certification, meaning they took advantage of [Google for Education's free online professional development resources](#) to learn how to use the tools in their classrooms, and subsequently passed online tests to earn certifications. Jackson Preparatory School is first in the State to achieve the goal of a 100% Google Certified faculty and staff. Doing so has empowered the teachers to confidently use Google Apps and Classroom with their students. If a technical issue arises — which is rare — teachers are prepared to solve the problem themselves.

The faculty at Jackson Preparatory School is so thrilled with the results they've achieved from switching to Google, they regularly host faculty from neighboring schools to share how they're using Google Apps, Chromebooks and Classroom so that others in their community can benefit as well.



"I have dramatically reduced the amount of time I spend in front of the paper copier this year by distributing documents, worksheets and outlines through Google Classroom and sharing quizzes through Forms."

— Hunter Upchurch, Spanish Instructor at Jackson Preparatory School

"Google Forms is the most efficient way for us to get hard numbers on how we're doing and it's often positive."

— Dr. Jason Walton, head of Jackson Preparatory

Google for Education

A solution built for learning and designed for the classroom that includes easy-to-manage affordable devices like Chromebooks and tablets, a "mission control" for class through Google Classroom, a powerful suite of productivity tools with Google Apps for Education, and new ways to engage students like Google Expeditions. Together these tools help teachers save time, increase collaboration, and inspire curiosity while students discover and learn together on any device, from anywhere.

Providing more work-life balance for teachers

With Google Apps for Education, teachers no longer need to spend hours on mundane tasks like printing, stapling, and organizing paper assignments. "I have dramatically reduced the amount of time I spend in front of the paper copier this year by distributing documents, worksheets and outlines through [Google] Classroom and sharing quizzes through [Google Forms](#)," says Hunter Upchurch, Jackson Preparatory School Spanish Instructor.

Jackson Preparatory School teachers note they now have more time to spend with their families and communities. Many faculty members volunteer, train for marathons, and participate in local music programs outside of work. "We believe in having an externally connected faculty and staff, and we're always looking for ways to give our teachers more time to be involved with their families and community," says Laura Bishop, Head of IT at Jackson Preparatory School.

Preparing students for college and beyond

At Jackson Preparatory, students use [Google Slides](#) to work together on group presentations. Students can simultaneously edit the same presentation and get instant feedback from teachers. One economics teacher hosts an annual "Shark Tank" day where students present their ideas to local business owners using Slides. This helps students gain real-world experience that prepares them for college and their future careers.

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Giving parents a voice and feedback mechanism

In the past, it was "difficult for the administrative team to understand whether the school was meeting parents' expectations," explains Dr. Jason Walton, Head of Jackson Preparatory School. Today, the school regularly sends parents surveys through Google Forms requesting their feedback, input, and questions, to ensure all parents feel heard and that they're able to make changes, if ever necessary. Parents are now able to share their feedback on specific programs, like sports or the arts, as well as how they view individual teacher performance. "Forms is the most efficient way for us to get hard numbers on how we're doing, and it's often very positive," Walton says.