



K-12 SUCCESS STORIES

Windsor Public Schools WINDSOR • CONNECTICUT



# OF SCHOOLS	6
GRADE LEVELS	Pre-K to 12
ENROLLMENT	3,300
CHROMEBOOKS	7,000
PRODUCTS	Admin, Teacher, and Beacon

Windsor Public Schools has been a user of GoGuardian’s classroom management and filtering products for some time. When Beacon was released in early 2019 as a suicide prevention tool for schools to deploy on students’ learning devices, transitioning to Beacon was an easy decision for Windsor Public Schools to make.

Windsor Public School District used Beacon's Active Planning Alerts to check on a student's mental wellbeing.

Instances happen everyday at school that staff aren't in tune with, according to Matt Dadona, Director of Information Technology at Windsor Public Schools. That's why Windsor needed a tool to capture student interactions that exist in the vast landscape of the internet.

Matt Dadona chose Beacon because it looks at the entire sentiment of what students are doing and then creates a flag for the school to take action. With built-in workflows, alerts can go automatically to the responding staff, schools can connect with parents, and responding staff is able to quickly assess the threat and take the appropriate steps. Finally, the dashboard view allows schools to record what happened, what actions were taken, how the students are supported, and what impact has been made.

"I felt that it was really our obligation to monitor and to make sure our kids are being safe and we're not missing out on something. It comes from a good place where we're trying to make sure that they're not in a situation where they're going to harm themselves," says Dadona on his decision to add Beacon to his school district's GoGuardian package.

Matt Dadona
Director of Information Technology + CATE
Windsor Public Schools, CT



About Beacon

Beacon is a part of GoGuardian Suite, a toolset for districts to maximize the learning potential of their students. Beacon helps school staff identify students who are silently suffering, alert those who can help, and quickly activate your school's custom response plan. Unlike other solutions that focus primarily on G-Suite or Office365, Beacon works across all of the content your students are creating, searching for, and consuming online. This includes search engines, chat, online docs, social media, email, web apps, and more.

CHALLENGE

“We were able to catch the student when they were in a vulnerable position.”

Being a one-to-one school, Windsor students have a school-issued device to use as their primary learning tool in the classroom, and they also take these devices home to use as a secondary communication tool. Much of their communication is happening on these platforms; but students also receive, research, and deposit information on their devices. It's where they journal, learn, and discuss. Because students are comfortable acting and interacting digitally, schools and parents need a solution to capture the information in those interactions. Dadona saw this need for Windsor's students and sought a solution, which is why he turned to GoGuardian's Beacon.

After having used Beacon for some time, Windsor had been receiving multiple alerts on different students, but the one that stood out was a new student's writing project. The student had recently moved to Windsor and was trying to get acclimated to the town, and the story they had written for class showed that they were struggling. They seemed to be having a tough time, questioning what they were doing and having trouble making friends. In this case, there were no flagged keywords that would cause concern. Instead, Beacon went beyond keywords and picked up the sentiment of what the student had written.

ACTIONS

“We'd be doing a disservice to our families if we don't have these tools to help our families.”

Windsor's workflow begins with an alert that gets sent to the counseling office. The administration at that office works as a dispatch putting out calls and getting someone to respond to them. In some instances, the school calls 211 emergency support to activate state resources. The student is called down, and the family is brought in if the concern is elevated. The key is to make it a community conversation. When the alert from Beacon came through, Dadona felt concerned for the student



and activated an assistant principal who had access to the Beacon dashboard. The assistant principal was: technologically savvy, interacting with students on a daily basis, and able to work with the counseling department to engage those resources. She immediately spoke to the counseling department, and together they worked with the student. It began with a conversation with the student, and then the team contacted the parents to continue the conversation.

RESULTS

“Kids are communicating in different ways now, and so we need to meet the kids where they’re at.”

The student is currently in a better mental and emotional state. Had Dadona and his team not used Beacon to see what was happening, the instant would have been lost, the information wouldn’t have been captured, and the student may have gone down a darker path. But because the school was able to identify a student in a vulnerable position and work with them to get them help, the student now has resources and support to work through some of the concerns that they were having.

REFLECTIONS

“It gave us the ability to have these conversations with kids that we normally wouldn’t be able to have or capture even before.”

“As an IT director, I don’t know how you couldn’t consider Beacon. It has given me more insight than we’ve ever had before. Without Beacon, there’s a lot of instances that are happening in our schools that counselors, teachers, staff aren’t in tune with. We’ve been able to capture this information and really support the students that we wouldn’t be able to support before.

Many of the flags that have come up, counselors have come to me afterwards and said, ‘I didn’t think anything was going on with students.’ You [GoGuardian] are making a difference, and kids’ lives are affected because of the product that you’re creating.”

Write Your Own Success Story

For more information on how GoGuardian can help your district achieve better learning through technology, contact us today for a customized product demo and free trial access:

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