

# School District of Pickens County

## A CASE STUDY

### About

Change can be scary, even when it comes to technology. Replacing a tried and true solution with a newer one can bring an element of anxiety to any IT Admins. However, sometimes it is necessary. 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. One South Carolina school district took a leap of faith by replacing their existing solution.

### The Need

The School District of Pickens County is the 15th largest school district in South Carolina with an annual enrollment of over 16,300 students and 1300 staff members. The District has 14 elementary schools, five middle schools, and four high schools with over 20,000 devices being filtered by Securly every day.

Pickens County partnered with Securly three years ago 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 adopting Securly, the District was able to avert a student suicide due to Securly's social media monitoring for depression, self-harm, and bullying. Securly alerted the school authorities of a Facebook post by the student contemplating suicide, which allowed the school and parents to intervene in time to save a 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."*

-Barbara Nesbitt, Director of Instructional Tech

## 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 monitors students' social media, Gmail, and other browsing patterns for distress. Student safety remains prioritized.



*"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."*

-Andy Coleman, Network Specialist

## Conclusion

What if this goes wrong? What if that doesn't work? Worst case scenarios are normal with any big change in life. Almost always, however, change as it turns out is for the best. In the case of Pickens County, making a change from appliance to the cloud was the right decision. In fact, the only risk came from deciding what to do with the now empty space that once housed the appliance.