

A small school with a lot of heart

How Google for Education is helping a community educate and connect

Located in a far-reaching but tight-knit community, the Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Puaha o Waikato primary school is a nurturing environment, dedicated to providing the best education to their cohort of students. What they lack in size, they make up for in heart and a desire to embrace technology for better education outcomes.



Challenge

A lack of funds, resistance to change, and a disengaged student population was making life hard for Gaylene Smith, Chief Administrator at Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Puaha o Waikato primary. “As a school, we were way behind,” says Gaylene, who has been one of the driving forces behind introducing Google for Education into the school. “We had a PC, and we had 10 Chromebooks, but only one of the teachers knew how to use it.”

Solution

When a new Acting Principal with a taste for technology stepped into the role, she joined forces with Gaylene to start making necessary changes. “We needed funding for professional development, which we had to apply for from the Ministry of Education,” explained Gaylene. “Once that was approved, we asked our IT partner Telco Technology Services Ltd (TTS) to get us started straight away.”

Creating significant impacts in teaching and learning processes

Gaylene, and the other dedicated staff at the school knew that with the correct training, they could use Google for Education products to bring the school into the 21st century and create significant impacts in teaching and learning processes and outcomes. The staff were soon receiving daily assistance from TTS who offered 1:1 coaching as well as group sessions. From everyday administration tasks, to student engagement, to how teachers marked assessments and collaborated on lesson plans, Google Workspace for Education Plus has touched every part of the school and the community, who are just beginning their technology journey.



The kids missed out on a lot. It was really sad. Now when I go into Google Classroom and I see them – they’re just so happy. And we’re talking about kids who didn’t come to school. Since we started using Chromebooks, they don’t miss a lesson.”

Gaylene Smith,

Administrator, Te Kura Kaupapa Maori o Te Puaha o Waikato

A seamless teaching and learning experience

Solution deep dive

Gaylene and her team were looking to solve a variety of problems caused by a lack of technology. Administratively, simple tasks were taking far too long. “Most of our service providers, (who provide us with everything from light and power to stationery) send invoices via physical post” explains Gaylene, who had no access to a photocopier or scanner within the school. “I used the local library.” Gaylene estimates that for every invoice received, it would take her around two weeks to properly process the paperwork and provide it to accountants. “I was taking a lot of work home. I just couldn’t get it done in working hours.”

Teachers were having similar issues, using an outdated system to log student results that could not be digitally copied, meaning Gaylene had to manually type the information into a document. Student engagement was also at a low. In short, everything had to change, and the solution came in the shape of Google Workspace for Education.



What they wanted

- Access to professional development training, focusing on technology fluency
- A modern administration system that would save time and money
- The ability to provide education to children homeschooling digitally
- Better access to, and communication with, families in the community
- Devices, tools and apps to excite their students and increase engagement in the classroom and at home

What they did

- Applied for funding from the Ministry of Education NZ and provided students with access to Chromebooks
- Acquired Chrome Education Upgrade licenses to leverage the full capabilities of Chromebooks and Chrome OS
- Liaised with IT partner TTS to start daily professional development training for teachers and administrative staff
- Introduced Google Docs for office admin tasks and supplied Google Classroom to children learning remotely due to lockdown
- Enabled teachers to access Google Sheets and Docs for collaborative purposes
- Started to explore apps for Chromebooks, such as Jamboard, to better engage students

What they achieved

- A new, collaborative process for teachers, whereby they can now work from Google Docs to plan curriculum and lesson pathways
- The ability to provide remote learning to children
- A cohesive rollout of Google Classroom to homeschooling students who have access to wi-fi, removing the need for “hardpacks” to be purchased and mailed home
- Better relationships with families who now have daily access to teachers and their children’s work via Google Classroom introductions each morning
- Significant cost and time savings across all areas of the school, meaning budgets can now be funnelled back into professional development for teachers and more devices for students

Key Benefits

While Gaylene still hopes one day Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Puaha o Waikato primary school can provide a 1:1 Chromebook with Chrome Upgrade licencing ratio to all students, she has already recorded some significant wins across all areas of the school. “The old processes were so tiring for me and the teachers, so I can see they’re just loving products like Google Docs because it’s made life so much easier and so simple.”

1 Significant cost savings

During the first pandemic-led lockdown, with children learning from home, the school spent almost \$3,000 on hardpacks that had to be mailed out to students. With no access to technology, everything was done with little collaboration between teachers and families. In 2021 alone, the school saved almost \$2,000 by using Google Classroom for those children with access to wi-fi and a suitable device at home.

3 100% greater engagement from student and staff

A happy school is a successful school and Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Puaha o Waikato primary is setting the benchmark for a significant turnaround in both staff and students. “We had children who weren’t attending class. When they did, they wouldn’t speak or engage. Today I have teachers who can’t believe the changes. I have parents calling me up saying they can’t believe the change. It’s all because of the Chromebooks and the apps and tools they’re using. They’re excited. They love it.”

2 Thousands of hours claimed back

With more than 10 suppliers regularly sending invoices, Gaylene was spending a monumental number of hours manually copying, entering, and filing the data. The process of invoice handling originally took two weeks, however the entire process now takes as little as three or four hours on Google Docs and Sheets. Chrome Education Upgrade licenses have also simplified device management, giving educators more time to focus on learning outcomes.

4 Access to the community and the ability to provide assistance

The pandemic has hit parts of the community hard, with people losing jobs and experiencing a loss of income. With parents joining their children for the daily Google Classroom morning introduction, teachers can now check in with families and ask if assistance is needed. “We can see if anyone needs food packs, or if someone can use a device at home so children with access to no device can use one of the school Chromebooks. Parents and teachers have really rallied. I think Google Classroom has made parents more comfortable in asking for help, which can be tough to do, because they see the teachers every day. We’re more approachable now.”

Get in touch



Contact Telco Technology Services on 0800 887 435 to find out how Google for Education can help you achieve your teaching and learning goals.

