

## Google's G Suite for Education (GSFE) – FAQs

Q: What is this lawsuit about?

A: The Office of the Attorney General has been conducting a confidential investigation into potential violations of the Mississippi Consumer Protection Act by Google with respect to Google's Apps for Education (GAPE) products, now called G Suite for Education (GSFE). Through its GSFE program, Google allows access to a free suite of web-based educational applications for students and classroom-management tools for teachers. Based on the office's investigation, the lawsuit alleges that Google has been deceiving GSFE users (students, faculty, and staff), as well as the parents of GSFE users. Specifically, the investigation indicates that Google has potentially failed to disclose what data it collects from GSFE users and how that data is maintained and used.

Q: How is this going to affect my school?

A: Mississippi has more than 140 school districts, all with differing circumstances, needs, and resources. Our state values community involvement and local participation in the education of our children. Attorney General Hood has brought this lawsuit to ensure that Google abides by Mississippi's laws, but this lawsuit in no way seeks to dictate local school decisions.

Q: What information is Google collecting?

A: It is unclear at this time exactly what information Google is collecting from its GSFE users. Through this lawsuit, the Attorney General seeks to uncover exactly what information Google is accessing and collecting. The lawsuit also seeks information as to how Google is using that data.

Q: Is my child at risk?

A: As with any internet activity, privacy is certainly a concern. The lawsuit seeks to have Google fully explain what it is doing with your child's data.

Q: Is Google sharing my child's personal information with third parties?

A: One of the issues the Attorney General will be looking into is whether Google is sharing such information with third parties, and how any such information is being used. The extent of any such sharing is not known at this time.

Q: Is Google profiting from the data it collects?

A: Google is a for-profit company, and its primary source of revenue is advertising. One of the allegations in the lawsuit is that Google tracks, records, uses, and saves the online activity of Mississippi's children, all for the purpose of

processing student data to build a profile, which in turn aids its advertising business. However, whether Google profits directly or indirectly from the alleged activities will be addressed in the lawsuit.

Q: If the GSFE products are free, why is it wrong for Google to collect and use the data?

A: The lawsuit alleges that Google has made various misrepresentations about its practices in collecting and using student data. If these misrepresentations have occurred, this conduct violates Mississippi law regardless of whether Google has charged anything for use of its GSFE products.

Q: Why didn't the school know what Google was doing?

A: The lawsuit contends that Google did not fully disclose its practices or misrepresented its activities to the citizens of the State of Mississippi. The alleged deceptive nature of Google's practices has made it impossible for school officials, teachers, parents, or students to have known about Google's conduct.

Q: Should we stop using the GSFE products?

A: The decision of which technology partners are chosen is a local school decision. The Attorney General will continue to update school officials as this lawsuit progresses, so that they will be equipped with the best available information to make that decision.

Q: Is Google going to take GSFE away from the school?

A: Attorney General Hood does not wish to limit the products or services available to Mississippi schools, and he cannot control where or with whom Google chooses to do business. However, the Attorney General does intend to ensure that the companies who do business with Mississippi schools follow Mississippi law.

Q: How is Google using the information it collects?

A: The lawsuit seeks to have Google fully explain how it is using your child's data.

Q: What is Attorney General Jim Hood going to do to stop Google from collecting the data?

A: Attorney General Hood has brought this lawsuit to enforce Mississippi's laws relating to the statements Google has made about its practices, including Google's alleged misleading statements regarding its collection and use of data. The court will determine the appropriate relief in light of Google's conduct.

Q: What alternatives are there to GSFE?

A: It is the Attorney General's understanding that there are available alternatives to

GSFE. However, the decision of which technology products are chosen is a local school decision. It would not be appropriate for the Attorney General to recommend particular products, and he would not presume to intrude on the decision-making authority of local schools. However, the Attorney General encourages schools and parents to thoroughly research any technology products they may consider using.

Q: Are the accounts of administrators, staff, and/or teachers affected?

A: At this stage, the primary focus of the litigation involves student accounts.

Q: Will Google have to pay the children for collecting and using the data without permission?

A: The Attorney General is not seeking compensation on behalf of Mississippi school children. This lawsuit is brought on behalf of the State of Mississippi for alleged violations of the Mississippi Consumer Protection Act. The Attorney General is prohibited under Mississippi law from representing or giving legal advice to private parties.