



Education Interim Committee

69th Montana Legislature

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Name	City/State	Representing	Time & Date	Subject	Comment
Janelle Beers	Dillon, MT	Self	3/13/2026 06:20 PM	Montana Safe Schools Center	The letter below is in support of the Montana Safe Schools Center. See Attachment 2
Cory Rountree	Helena, MT	Self	3/12/2026 03:44 PM	School Safety Discussion	Thank you for the opportunity to submit. Sincerely, Cory Rountree Sr. Dr. of Govt Relations cory@gaggle.net 512-809-9308 See Attachment 1

Attachment 1

March 16, 2026

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am not the Representative from Red Lodge, but have been mistaken for him on occasion. I am Cory Rountree, father of an 8-year-old at Kessler Elementary here in Helena, and Senior Director of Government Relations at Gaggle.

Gaggle's mission is to ensure the safety and well-being of all students and schools. Our vision is for all schools to be safe and for all students to get the mental health support they need. We are an independent, owner-operated company that believes in serving the customer, even when it does not make sound financial sense. Our company does not take outside investors, and we are not private equity-owned.

In Montana, we currently serve 14 school districts and protect nearly 30k students with Gaggle Safety Monitoring. This system identifies harmful digital content and alerts district administrators so they can intervene to support students and save lives. In the past 3 school years, our work has helped save the lives of 30 Montana students.

Today, I would like to discuss how Gaggle supports the "Ten Essential Actions to Improve School Safety" listed on the Office of Public Instruction website and previously discussed in committee.

1. We have two offerings that can help with **School Climate**. These are:
 - a. ReachOut is Gaggle's 24/7 live, on-demand counseling support line. It immediately connects students to trained professionals for support during difficult situations.
 - b. ReachOut AI is a support bot for students, overseen by trained humans who help students process stressful emotions or situations.I have provided a [link](#) so you can request a demo, or I can help set one up for you.
2. **Anonymous Reporting Channels**: ReachOut can assist with this, as can SpeakUp, our anonymous tip line that filters out false positives and reports back to the districts.
3. **Mental Health Resources**: Gaggle Therapy is designed for districts looking to provide mental health support for students and staff. We quickly match those in need with licensed therapist providers for clinical support. Gaggle Therapy is flexible in overcoming logistical barriers often associated with therapy.
4. **Social Media Monitoring**: Our Web Activity Monitoring reviews student input online. This includes: social media, web activity, and AI chats. Concerning content is escalated via an alert so that district staff can quickly intervene.

I have submitted thorough one-pagers on each of these to the committee and am happy to discuss with each of you in a follow-up at your convenience.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cory Rountree, Senior Director of Government Relations, Gaggle
[Attachments Included]

What Is Gaggle Seeing in Montana?



References of suicide or self-harm



References of violence



References of nudity or sexual content



References of harassment



Lives saved

2022-2023	1,023	519	379	339	5
2023-2024	1,531	783	153	558	8
2024-2025	1,726	1,005	258	635	17
Total	4,280	2,307	790	1,532	30

Gaggle helped U.S. school districts **save 1,088 lives** during the 2024–2025 school year.

AI Protection From Gaggle

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping the classroom, helping students learn faster, think creatively, and prepare for the future.



Increasingly, it's not just what students are searching for, but the conversations they're having with AI tools that matter. Students are using platforms like Google Gemini, ChatGPT, and Microsoft Copilot to ask about personal issues. Without the right support, these tools can expose students to inappropriate material, reinforce harmful ideas, or be manipulated in unsafe ways.

Why Districts Rely on Gaggle

- ✓ Gaggle has been supporting students and schools with this emerging technology from the start
- ✓ Insights are provided on how students engage with AI, so schools can step in early when needed
- ✓ Our proprietary machine learning models detect signs of risk that others miss
- ✓ With over 25 years focused exclusively on student safety, Gaggle develops and manages all of our AI detection models in-house
- ✓ Our models are continuously trained, audited, and refined by safety experts

This approach allows students to learn with AI while being protected by the most reliable and accurate monitoring in the industry.

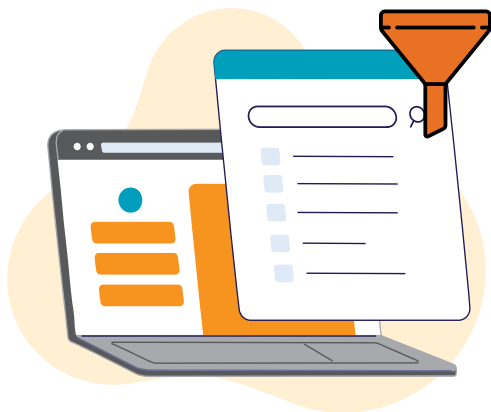
How Gaggle Supports AI Use in Schools While Keeping Students Safe



Web Activity Monitoring (WAM) for the Full Picture

- ✓ Monitors conversations with AI chatbots including Google Gemini, ChatGPT, and other platforms, providing context through screen captures
- ✓ Identifies unsafe or harmful AI interactions such as students seeking self-harm methods, engaging in bullying, or attempting to generate violent or inappropriate content
- ✓ Provides alerts with context and clear reports so schools know when and where to intervene

AI Protection From Gaggle



Web Filter for Real-time Filtering that Keeps Up with AI

- ✓ Blocks harmful and explicit content in real-time
- ✓ Reviews and categorizes websites dynamically as students navigate
- ✓ Adapts to emerging AI tools, supporting safe exploration and CIPA compliance



Trained Human Review that Adds Context and Confidence

- ✓ Every incident is reviewed by Gaggle's trained human safety team to ensure context is considered before escalation
- ✓ Our expert review reduces false positives, validates our models and makes our notifications accurate and actionable
- ✓ When incidents occur, districts are notified immediately

Why Gaggle's AI Approach Makes a Difference

When a student types a question about self-harm or risky behavior, it can be a critical signal of deeper struggles. Without proper context or timely alerts, schools may miss the chance to act. Gaggle bridges that gap by combining real-time monitoring, web filtering, and human review to protect students while encouraging positive, creative use of AI in learning.

Learn More about how we support student safety at [Gaggle.net](https://gaggle.net).



A Complete Safety and Well-Being Solution for Leaders Who Put Students First

Gaggle is the choice for district leaders who prioritize safety and well-being. For over 25 years, our solutions have given educators the tools they need to identify students in crisis, intervene before harm occurs, and create a culture of care.

By combining prevention, professional care, and in-the-moment support, Gaggle creates a holistic safety net.

OUR NEWEST SOLUTION



An AI-powered student support companion with human oversight. Designed to be approachable, friendly, and age-appropriate. Built to provide emotional support, de-escalation, and guidance, during one-time conversations, it operates within strict safety guardrails with always-on human supervision.

Available anytime, anywhere, 24/7, ReachOut AI is designed so students can always ask to speak with a person, too.



Gaggle empowers districts to provide proactive, timely, and comprehensive support that addresses students' immediate safety, mental health, and emotional needs. We partner with over 1,500 school districts to protect more than 6 million students.

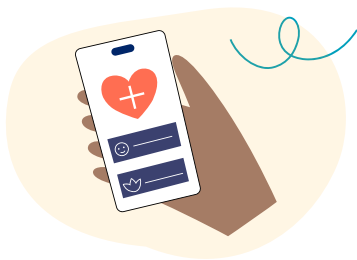
When Every Moment Matters: Instant Support for Students & Staff

Connection isn't just helpful it can be life-changing and life-saving.



Gaggle ReachOut is a support system that's always there, understanding, and ready to help. We provide immediate, compassionate support to students and staff when they need it.

Developed in partnership with Amazon Web Services (AWS), ReachOut offers:



24/7 real-time
emotional support via
text, chat, and phone



Trained crisis
counselors who truly
listen and understand



Local resource
matching, ensuring
relevant intervention

Why ReachOut Makes a Difference

Being heard is an act of care. Our crisis counselors don't just listen; they provide a genuine, human connection that can transform a moment of darkness into a path toward healing.

Benefits include:

- ✓ Instant access to professional support
- ✓ Confidential and compassionate care
- ✓ Localized, context-aware counseling
- ✓ Available across multiple communication channels



To be listened to is to be loved.

Let us help you create a safer educational community.

Gaggle ReachOut can make a difference,
in the moment, when it matters most.

Contact us today.



Protect Your Students With SpeakUp for Safety

Students hesitate to approach adults directly when they have a safety concern. SpeakUp gives them an approachable way to share concerns.



SpeakUp integrates directly with Google Workspace for Education or Microsoft 365. There is no app to download and no separate number to remember.

How it Works

- Students SpeakUp via email or phone
- Emails receive an automatic reply and calls a prompt to leave a voicemail
- Gaggle's trained safety team reviews submissions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- Submissions are evaluated to filter out false positives and escalate concerns.
- Concerns are addressed by level of urgency with emails for non-urgent concerns and phone calls for imminent threats.
- A monthly reminder with your districts dedicated SpeakUp contact information is sent to student to keep SpeakUp top of mind

Students Can Report Concerns Such As:

- ✓ Bullying
- ✓ Planned fights
- ✓ Students in crisis
- ✓ Threats of violence
- ✓ Weapons brought to school
- ✓ Other urgent safety situations



SpeakUp for Safety helps schools intervene early, respond quickly, and protect student lives and lifetimes.

[Learn More.](#)

What is Gaggle Therapy?



Gaggle Therapy is designed for districts looking to provide mental health support to their students and staff. We match individuals with licensed mental health providers for weekly teletherapy appointments, offering options for individual, group, and family sessions.

These sessions are designed to promote:

Personal Growth: Students and staff need a structured support system to navigate life's everyday challenges.

Academic Excellence: The academic pressures facing students are immense. Gaggle's behavioral coaching services equip students with strategies for time management, organization, and the skills to excel academically.

Emotional Well-Being: With rising mental health concerns, our licensed therapists provide a safe haven for students and staff to tackle emotional difficulties, stress, and resilience building.

Confidential and Accessible: Gaggle ensures individuals have prompt access to the help they require.

Supporting over 70 districts nationwide, Gaggle Therapy provides:



Accessibility

Gaggle has changed therapy from an elective support to an accessible resource. No matter where an individual is located, s/he can access critical mental health services.



Flexible scheduling

Individuals benefit immensely from the flexibility our therapists have in offering care on nights and weekends (as well as in-school sessions).



No out-of-pocket costs

Students and staff can participate in teletherapy sessions from home or at school with no out-of-pocket costs.


We deliver equitable, personalized, evidence-based therapy and coaching for students and staff. With a teletherapy approach that removes common barriers to mental health services.

Web Activity Monitoring

An additional feature included with Gaggle Safety management to identify students in crisis.

Web Activity Monitoring monitors student web searches and browser inputs, such as form entries, chat messages, and email drafts, for potential crises. Concerning content is reviewed by the Gaggle Safety Team and, if necessary, alerts are sent to Emergency Contacts with screen captures of the student's browser activity for context.

GAGGLE SAFETY ALERT



G | Gaggle Safety Alert
Questionable Content

What:

- This incident references harassment.
- Google Chrome Extension
- Message, Image, [Textscreenshot.jpg](#)

Who:

- Eliza Sample
- Any Middle School

Incident Details

Incident: Questionable Content
• Q7623844-2234-1008dolit3

Threat Type: Harassment

Keywords: bullied

Search Terms: the kids at school are mean to me.
i don't know what to do they are going to get worse if i tell someone.
i'm tired of being bullied

Url: <https://chatgpt.com/c/2621f48>

Browser: CHROME

Content: Google Chrome Extension

Username: Eliza Sample


Email: esample@anymiddle.us

Gaggle ID: 22450857

Gaggle Safety Rep: Alex

SCREEN CAPTURE

ChatGPT 3.5



How can I help you today?

the kids at school are mean to me. i don't know what to do they are going to get worse if i tell someone. i'm tired of being bullied

Web Activity Monitoring has uncovered concerning content and emergency situations for other districts. It is included as part of Gaggle Safety Management. Take proactive steps to safeguard your district by enabling Web Activity Monitoring now.

Attachment 2



Montana Small Schools Alliance

220 No. Montana Street - Dillon, MT 59725

Phone 406-988-0164

Email - mssa710@gmail.com Website - www.mt-ssa.org

March 13, 2026

To: Education Interim Committee

From: Montana Small Schools Alliance
Janelle Beers, Executive Director

Re: Montana Safe Schools Center

It is my pleasure to support the Montana Safe Schools Center and the work they do in our Montana schools. As the Executive Director of Montana Small Schools Alliance (MSSA), a Consortium of over 140 schools in the State, I have seen firsthand the important services they provide to our small/rural and frontier schools.

Most of the schools in our Consortium are under 100 students (122) with 88 of our schools under 50, and 58 under 20. These schools and communities do not have the resources or the manpower to provide and ensure safety for our students. Our smallest schools do not have local law enforcement and rely on county resources to meet their needs. The Montana Safe Schools Center provides policies, training, technical assistance in threat assessment, safety protocols, and support of these much needed tools. The Montana Safe School Center has provided training for MSSA, and is part of our schedule for next school year.

The training our teachers and administrators receive and practice is vital to the safety of our students. We hope these tools are never needed but with training, protocols, and practice our staff, students and parents can know that they are prepared in an emergency situation.

Consistent, timely, and on-going communication, training, and protocols are vital and I fully support The Montana Safe Schools Center and their ongoing work with our smallest and most vulnerable schools.

If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at jbeers@mt-ssa.org or 406-988-0164 or 971-241-9247.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janelle Beers".

Janelle Beers

Executive Director

Montana Small Schools Alliance