

**December 2014**

Dear Parents and Families,

We are pleased to announce an exciting new initiative underway at Westmoreland Central School. We've partnered with Google to offer our staff and students the opportunity to collaborate at a level unlike ever before by using the tool offered through Google Apps for Education (GAFE). Leveraging GAFE will allow your child to extend learning past the school day. Teachers and students will work together to utilize Google Drive, Google Calendar and Google Docs, eliminating the limitations imposed by our current network infrastructure.

GAFE is a cloud based learning platform allowing teachers and students to create a range of documents online, utilize email (turned off in the Elementary and Middle Schools), share calendars and have space for 30 gigabytes of data that can be accessed at home and at school on any device. Collaboration will now be more efficient, richer, and more meaningful than ever before by offering a range of new learning tools for students and teachers. These tools will help 21<sup>st</sup> century learners collaborate, communicate, and create in a safe, online environment. Many local school districts, and countless around the state and country, have had great success with this learning platform.

For many, when we think of Google, we immediately think of two things, email and search engine. GAFE, although powered by Google, is much, much more than this.

**Facts about Google Apps for Education**

- GAFE is used by many of the world's leading educational institutions, including universities, secondary and primary schools. Over 25 million students are currently using GAFE, including more than 70 of the top 100 colleges.
- GAFE is completely free for schools and does not contain advertising anywhere within it.
- Many of GAFE apps such as Google Docs and Google Calendar are familiar to many students and parents.

**How will Google Apps for Education enhance my child's learning opportunities?**

- GAFE allows up to 100 teachers and students the ability to collaborate on documents simultaneously. This type of collaboration has been impossible in the past.
- GAFE works on any device. This allows our students to continue learning beyond the classroom and the ability to access their content at any time.

- Students and teachers can work in teams, sharing calendars, documents and collaborating ideas during the school day, and beyond

**What should I be aware of?**

- GAFE allows students to communicate and store information in a secured cloud environment.
- Unlike many other web services, GAFE acknowledges its users as the owners of content they produce and store.
- GAFE does not share any data or user information with any other party unlike other public Google products such as Gmail. They are proud to comply with all FERPA (Federal Education Regulation and Privacy Act) regulations.
- Your child will be provided an email address as part of the GAFE package, but it will not be active for students in the Elementary or Middle Schools, unless it's for specific, short-term use in a monitored setting during the school day.

We will be working with students to educate them around using GAFE in a productive and responsible manner. We also feel it's necessary for parents to be aware of new technologies such as GAFE and encourage you to discuss and explore it with your child throughout the school year ahead.

Below are two links that might be helpful if you have further questions about GAFE. We ask that you please fill out the attached form for your son/daughter so that they can begin utilizing this tool to enhance their learning at Westmoreland Central School.

**Please complete and return the attached form to advisory teachers by Friday, December 12, 2014.**

Further information about GAFE can be found here

<http://www.google.com/enterprise/apps/education/benefits.html>

GAFE terms of service can be read here.

[http://www.google.com/apps/intl/en-GB/terms/education\\_terms.html](http://www.google.com/apps/intl/en-GB/terms/education_terms.html)

Sincerely,

Matthew Cieri  
Director of Technology

Colby Utter  
Computer Specialist

Eric A. Coriale  
Middle School Principal

**Please complete and return this form to advisory teachers by  
Friday, December 12th.**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I read the above information about GAFE and give my son or daughter permission to utilize this collaborative platform for educational purposes.

OR

\_\_\_\_\_ I read the above information about GAFE and have further questions about GAFE for the Director of Technology, Building Principal, and/or Classroom Teacher. Please contact me at \_\_\_\_\_.

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



# Google™ Apps



Documents



Forms



Presentation



Calendar



Spreadsheet