

The Curriculum Corner

North Brunswick Township Schools Monthly Curricular Update



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Technology Instruction In NBTSCHOOLS

In order to cultivate and develop students as digital citizens and 21st Century critical thinkers, we need to envelop them in a learning environment that uses technology in transformative ways. Embedding technology into the classroom has become a vital part of the curriculum planning process. It not only allows teachers to differentiate and keep students engaged, but offers students practice in developing the necessary skills to be successful in an ever-changing world. This month's edition will give you insight to the instructional technology happening in our classrooms.



Technology Coach: What is her role?

The technology coach supports the staff members in our district in many different ways and on different levels. The ever-changing nature of technology can make it difficult to stay on top of the latest developments. Our talented and diverse staff spans across multiple generations, all of which have varying comfort levels and needs when it comes to technology. The coach employs various strategies in order to offer meaningful professional development opportunities across the levels. While the addition of new devices over recent years (Smartboards, iPads, Chromebooks, etc.) hold exciting potential for our students, without adequate training, these devices are not necessarily used to their highest degree. Pulling teachers from classrooms to provide this training can be problematic as it takes away from valuable instructional time. To address this problem, the technology coach is available to staff during the school day;

teachers can make appointments to meet during their free periods, before after/school, or even while they are teaching so that the coach can troubleshoot and assist any issues teachers may be experiencing when utilizing a digital tool with their students. In addition to working with individuals, the coach has also worked with entire grade levels and departments to address common needs. This type of embedded professional development brings the learning and support to the teachers where they are and when they need it, rather than pulling teachers out of classrooms.

With the vast amount of educational apps and websites, teachers can easily be overwhelmed when looking for a way to integrate technology into their lessons. Another way that the technology coach provides support is by vetting these resources to find the tools that most align with the task or learning outcome. In addition to finding the best resources, the coach also locates or creates guides and tutorials which are curated along with the resources on the Staff Portal so that teachers can learn independently while saving the time of searching themselves. In fact, time is likely a teacher's most valuable and precious resource; in addition to tools to enhance learning and instruction, the coach also helps teachers learn how to use technology to become more efficient at administrative tasks like grading so that they can utilize this time more effectively.



While today's students are often referred to as "Digital Natives", (in other words, they have been born into a world of technology and don't know life without it), this doesn't mean that students know how to use technology innately. Another way that the coach provides support to the district is by co-teaching alongside

teachers and showing students how to use various devices and websites in a responsible fashion that will enhance their learning and help them to acquire the 21st Century skills necessary to be successful in an evolving job-market.

In addition to working with teachers and students, the technology coach also provides professional development opportunities to support staff and administrators. One area of focus has been helping staff transition smoothly to the adoption of Google Apps for Education (GAfE), which is a cloud based word processing suite that is free for schools. Although the collaborative nature of GAfE has helped to streamline processes and increase the efficiency of common administrative tasks, it has certainly been a shift in thinking and created a need for training. Once again, the technology coach is able to come directly to support staff and administrators at their locations rather than pulling them away from their desks for lengthy trainings. Part of the technology coach's routine when visiting the seven schools throughout the district is touching base with the support staff and administrators to see if they have any questions.

Assessment Updates PARCC Testing Begins in April!

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test has begun! The testing window for grades 3-8 to be held from April 4, 2016 - May 13, 2016 with grades 9-11 to be held from April 11, 2016 - May 20, 2016. NBTschools will administer the 2016 PARCC as per the schedule linked [here](#).

In the Schools...

Elementary



At Judd Elementary School, we have the opportunity to extend the learning for our staff through the presentation of a **Technology Demo Slam**. Through this Professional Development opportunity teachers share with other teachers how they are utilizing technology resources to extend learning opportunities and engage students to promote the learning of our future innovators.

Teachers present a variety of apps, tools and systems that they have been implementing with success in their classrooms. This Technology Demo Slam was during an early closing on February 25, 2016. The process of gathering data, soliciting presenters and providing a meaningful day of training was possible through the use of technology. Presentations were submitted via Google drive, volunteers solicited through Google forms and the presentations were created and shared via Google Slides.

Our belief is that "Technology in the Classroom" also extends beyond the student experience and the classroom walls, where teachers use technology such as Google Docs to collaborate with one another on lesson plans, share PLC meeting notes, and maintain a shared lesson repository in Google Drive. Also, to strengthen the school-home connection, both administrators and teachers can use features such as Google translate to translate school documents into more than 50 languages, and Remind to offer real time communication to parents. Technology increases accessibility on all levels—whether for ELL learners, students with special needs, parents who live in other towns, states, or countries, or who simply cannot attend a meeting yet want to be involved in their child's educational program—there are applications, programs, and features that make full inclusion possible for all members of the educational community.

Middle

World Language students are using technology to explore countries and cultures! Using an online video management tool called EdPuzzle, teachers assign videos from National Geographic and other educational sources for their students to watch as a supplement to enhance their lessons. These videos help to immerse the student in the culture and language; embedded questions and prompts within the video help to push their thinking further and provide valuable insight to the teachers about vocabulary and concepts that may be areas of difficulty for their students. EdPuzzle allows students to "travel" without ever leaving the classroom.



The math department has been using their new document cameras to enhance their teaching and develop math practices that lead to deeper understanding for their students. Teachers can use the cameras to model their step-by-step problem solving strategies, but perhaps even more importantly, the cameras are being used in a way that gives students the stage. In this way, students can explain their different ways of thinking and problem solving. This student centered approach allows concepts to be explained, processed, and visualized in multiple ways which increases comprehension.

High



Learning is a game at NBTHS! Many teachers are using online tools like [Kahoot](#) and [Quizizz](#) to review material with students. These sites allow teachers to easily create a game-show like environment complete with suspenseful music and a leaderboard. Students use devices to respond and they race to answer questions correctly because the faster they answer the more points they get. Teachers report that students beg to repeat the quizzes in order to beat their own high score!

Virtual classroom spaces are also becoming more common at the high school. Teachers use online learning management systems like [Edmodo](#), [Schoolify](#), and [Google Classroom](#) to post important resources and host discussions. These virtual classrooms are helping to extend learning beyond the school day as well as familiarize students with platforms similar to learning management systems being used at colleges today.

Technology Tidbit

Explore the following articles and resources to learn more about the importance of technology instruction:



[Digital Natives vs. Digital Immigrants](#)
[Technology: To Use or Infuse](#)
[10 Reasons Students Need Technology](#)
[Benefits to Tech in the Classroom](#)

