

Minutes from the Middle School Parent Director Meeting October 7, 2011

Dan Ceaser reported that Middle School kids are doing very well and he is impressed with the exceptional amount of creativity he is seeing among the students!

Greg Korchnak, 8th grade science teacher, was introduced to explain and demonstrate how the KCD Middle School is bringing technology into the classroom. Mr. Korchnak revealed that KCD has become a member of Google Apps Education which offers a suite of hosted email and collaboration applications exclusively for schools. It utilizes cloud computing which is controlled and managed privately by KCD. It offers private and secure (internal) email, use of Google Docs, Google Pages and Google Calendar all in a private, closed environment. It gives our students the organization and communication components of the web without total web access. The collaborative use of Google Docs allows several kids to work simultaneously on the same document from different locations while at the same time, the teacher can read and comment on the writing. Each student's additions, as well as the teacher's comments, are time stamped and noted in the "margin" by the program so the teacher knows who wrote what and when. Final documents are locked when submitted and returned to the students with comments and a grade. Mr. Ceaser noted that the use of this technology is meant to enhance and not completely replace our writing program.

Currently students in 5th and 8th grades are piloting the programs with 6th and 7th coming online over the next few weeks. There are enough computers for one cart per grade at this time - which seems to be sufficient. Mr. Ceaser and Mr. Korchnak are also looking at other comparable schools to see how they utilize technology in the classroom.

For parents, Google Apps is good because it is:

- Cloud based (no more flash drives)
- Secure
- Closed to the public

For kids it is:

- Easy to use
- Stress free
- Collaborative
- FUN!

For the teachers it:

- Allows for increased collaboration and communication
- Flexible due dates (i.e. due Friday at 7:00pm)

- Speeds up assignment “turn around” time since papers are submitted electronically and not on a flash drive.
- Fosters the use of 21st century skills

For the school as a whole it :

- Works on any machine with access to the internet
- Reduces worry over file formats
- Is free
- Eliminates the need for a flash drive.

Dan’s announcements:

1. Conferences should take 10 to 15 minutes each. If needed, parents should reach out to individual teachers to follow up on information first discussed with your child’s advisor.
2. All Parent – Drivers who are driving students on school sponsored field trips will be asked to provide drivers license and insurance information to the school. Parent drivers may or may not be needed for a field trip in the spring.
3. In the event that your student needs to take an extended absence from school, please contact Dan at least two weeks prior to leaving. Dan stressed that even though work is allowed to be made up, most students see a dip in their grades after such an absence simply because there is no good substitute for time spent in class. He noted that students will have a specific due date for all make up work and after school activities should be suspended until all of the work is made up.
4. The KCD LISC dance is for 7th and 8th graders. It will be on October 21st from 6:00pm to 9:00pm in order to begin and end before the football game.