Tech & PD Update

September 12, 2014

Student Email Concerns

A number of teachers have shared concerns with me about student emails. Here are some quick responses to FAQs

Student Privacy Questions

It is vitally important to teach students that THERE IS NO ASSUMPTION OF PRIVACY IN STUDENT COMMUNICATIONS WHEN USING SCHOOL-OWNED DEVICES. Teachers & staff should reinforce to students that ALL of their emails and chats are archived and searchable.

The devices belong to the school, and the school has only loaned the device to the student. Because the device is the property of the school and is intended to be used for educational purposes only, the school and its employees have every legal right to monitor how the device is used. Think of it like a microscope in a science class: if a kid misuses it, it will be taken away and they will be given an alternate activity or disciplined accordingly. If students choose to use a Chromebook or other computer for activities or communications that are not school-appropriate, they will be subject to disciplinary action according to the Code of Conduct.

The Lesson for Students to Learn: Chromebooks belong to the school and are for school work only. Period. If students want to be secure in their personal communications, use a personally-owned device to communicate.

Regarding Teacher Liability

Here's your liability protection: TEACH INTERNET SAFETY AND DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP. This has been law in Illinois since the 2009-2010 school year. If you teach the expectations of appropriate use, you'll have far fewer problems.

To help you, I've made a listing of lesson activities, which has been publicly available since 2008: http://tech205.weebly.com/internet-safety.html If you find other activities that do a better job of teaching, let me know and I'll add them to the listing. Department- and school-level expectations should be clearly outlined and woven into this instruction, too.

We cannot prevent students from passing notes, for example. Even if you provide them with the pen & paper, you're not liable for the content that students write and pass around. Electronically, it should be no different.

Classroom management is still the key, regardless of the presence or absence of electronic devices. If you become aware of a problem, stop the activity, reteach the expectations, and then resume teaching. If the misbehavior continues, enforce the Code of Conduct per your building's discipline procedures.

Managing Massive Amounts of Student Email

If you find yourself receiving a large number of emails from students, there's a 3-part solution:
1. Remind students that email is for important questions only. You're not their email or chat buddies - you're their teacher.
2. If they have a legitimate question relating to your class, they should include the name of the class or the class period in the subject line of every email they send. This will help them focus the question on legitimate classroom concerns, as well as facilitate your next GMail Ninja Trick:
3. Set up a filter in GMail to sort all student messages into a folder, and not in your Inbox. Here's how -
    a. Open GMail
    b. Click the gear icon - upper right corner
    c. Click Settings
    d. Click Filters
    e. Click Create A New Filter
    f. In the box under Subject, type *block 1* or *Social Studies* or *period 7*
        i. The * is a wildcard search operator, which means that anything could come before or after that - you're letting the computer sort of fill in the blanks
        ii. Learn more about Google Search operators here
    g. Click Create Filter with this search
    h. Check Skip The Inbox (Archive It)

      i.   Check Apply the label, click New Label, and type the class for the name of the new label

      j.   Click the button marked Create Filter, and all messages from students who follow your instructions and add that convention into the Subject Line will dump into a folder instead of into your Inbox. Then you can manage your time and your inbox accordingly!

Two or Three Simple Classroom Management Tips

Integrating technology into classroom activities can pose new challenges that often do not require a technological fix. Most of these challenges can be handled very simply with good classroom management techniques. Here a some quick suggestions to illustrate the point:

Screens Up/Screens Down

Integrate this into your daily classroom procedures whenever computing devices are utilized. This will be new to many students, so clearly explain and teach the expectation, and rehearse it, too. When you are teaching and kids don't need to use their devices, call "Screens Down," meaning the Chromebooks should be completely closed. When it's time to get to work, call "Screens Up," meaning students can open the Chromebooks, log in, and have at it. If you do not observe student following your instructions, reteach & reinforce the expectation. If problems persist, follow classroom or building procedures for non-compliance. It's not about the device, it's about the behavior.

No Sharking!

This means kids should not be allowed to leave the Chromebook partly open (like a shark's mouth) so they can continue to type while you're talking.

Red Light/Green Light

Often times when students have a question they will shut down and not be productive while they're waiting for the teacher's help. After all, it's hard to type on a keyboard when one hand is up in the air. SO, get a sleeve of red plastic cups and another sleeve of green plastic cups. Place a red cup open-end-down on a desk, and place the green cup over the top of it. When kids have a question, teach them to remove the green cup and continue to work. As you move around the classroom, kids who don't need your assistance will be showing you a "green light." Kids who have a question will be showing you a "red light." Just follow the traffic lights!

Passwords

Students are given a generic password to begin with, and are prompted to reset these passwords almost immediately. While there are a number of different ways to reset student passwords, but we are having some difficulties getting every procedure to work properly with our network systems during testing. This password reset routine has been tested, has been shown to work every time, keeps individual student data secure, and should be followed for all students (and staff, if needed):

- Go to the District Home Page: www.galesburg205.org
  - Type in the www. - if you don't you'll go somewhere wonky. Don't know why.
- Use your mouse or trackpad to point to **Internal Links**
- From the menu that appears, click on **Password Change Tool**
- Type in **ghs\username@galesburg205.org**
  - The forward-slash after "ghs" is the key that is found between the Enter and Backspace key on most keyboards
  - "ghs" is the name of the domain used for all teachers and students, no matter what school you attend.
  - For students, the "username" is the student's number in Skyward

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Work Email on Personal Devices

It is very important to remain aware: If you choose to read/respond to school email using a personal electronic device, there is a slim chance that device could be subpoenaed under a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request. This fact should not be misconstrued as a reason to not check/respond to emails. This simply means that, if you elect to use a personal device like a smartphone, etc., for your work-related emails:

1. Always communicate about students or school-related activities using your galesburg205.org email account. This will place your conversations into the District's email archive, providing you another layer of protection.
2. Remain professional at all times when communicating about students or school-related activities. There are some things that people might say, but would never put into writing. Don't text or email about those kinds of things, either.

Toilet Training

When it comes to using Google Docs, it's important that we all have the same foundational information. But honestly, during a busy school day, who has the time? If you get 2 spare minutes between classes, you barely have enough time to run to the restroom!

Hey, wait… we might be on to something there…

Coming soon to a stall door near you…

Professional Development Opportunities

Highlights:
Saturday, September 13

   9:00am

        Freshen Up Your Centers & Readers' Theater

Monday, September 15

   4:00pm

        Mentoring 101, part A

Tuesday, September 16

   4:00pm

        Mentoring 101, part B

Wednesday, September 17

   4:00pm

        NTLT Meeting

Thursday, September 18

3:00pm

    Rigby Training

Wednesday, September 24

6:00pm

    Help! Connecting Literacy to the Danielson Framework

Saturday, September 27

8:30am

    WIRC & KDP Conference

Wednesday, October 1

4:00pm

    NTLT Meeting

Wednesday, October 8

8:30am

    Engaging Reluctant Learners: Rebels with Applause, with Grace Dearborn

Thursday, October 9

8:30am

    Engaging Reluctant Learners: Rebels with Applause, with Grace Dearborn

8:30am

    Next Generation Science Standards "New Science Standards! Where Do I Begin?"

Friday, October 10

8:00am

    Institute Day

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