



Technology & Professional Development Update

May 29, 2015

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End of Year Tech Procedures

Please follow your principal's instructions and [these technology guidelines](#) before leaving your school-tech behind this summer.

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PARCC Changes

According to information released by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College & Careers (PARCC) and the Illinois State Board of Education's Assessment Division on May 21, next year's PARCC tests will be fewer, take less time, and will all be administered during a single testing window.

According to PARCC, testing will take an average of about 90 minutes less to administer overall. Most students in grades 3-8 will take 2 fewer testing units (7 in 2016 instead of the 9 taken in 2015, for example). This should result in less time in testing environments and more time in classroom learning activities.

While the two assessment types (performance-based and traditional forced-choice) will remain, they will be consolidated into one single testing window of about 30 days. This window will be scheduled between 75% and 90% of instructional time, or roughly between March & May for most traditional school schedules. (Block scheduled schools will run on a different schedule, likely with Fall and Spring administrations).

ISBE & PARCC promise more details soon.

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Google Takeout: Now you CAN take it with you

GHS Seniors & Outgoing Staff: Google Takeout is a service allowing users to create a downloadable copy of all their Google-icious files, creations, and conversations. Learn more by watching [THIS VIDEO](#), or following the instructions below.

- Open a browser and visit www.google.com/settings/takeout
 - If you're not already signed into your galesburg205.org account, you may be asked to do so before continuing.
- Click the blue Create an Archive button
- Everything is checked by default. If you don't want everything or if you have never used some of the tools (like Blogger, hangouts, etc.) uncheck the Select All box and just choose the things you want to archive, like Drive.

- This will be downloaded as a .zip file. Plug in a flash drive, or open & sign into a personal Google Drive, DropBox, or other cloud storage account. Open the .zip file and drag everything over to save to the new destination. That's it!

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Labs Are NOT Going Away

PC Labs will remain relatively unchanged for the 2015-2016 school year. While Technology Director Rick Lawsha's team is always looking for ways to keep hardware, software, and networking equipment running as smoothly as possible, budgetary restraints are always an obstacle. There is no current plan to do away with PC labs right now. While the Tech Department may experiment with smaller PCs or Chromeboxes in labs in the future, at this time it appears that the status quo will continue at least for another year in most buildings.

Staff are strongly encouraged to look for free (or very-low-cost) equivalents to desktop PC programs currently used in labs, though. Any efforts to help simplify the types and numbers of software programs and hardware platforms would be greatly appreciated!

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Printing PDF Files

Recently a number of staff have asked why it seems to be difficult to appropriately print PDF files on school copier-printers. Is it a Google thing? Is it something to do with the new printers? Is the flux capacitor on the fritz?

Honestly, I don't know. Our Technology Department offered the simplest and so far the most effective solution for this problem: **Download first, then print.**

When you're viewing a PDF file, look for the downward- pointing arrow. You'll also see this when you point to an email attachment. By default, most devices will save into the Downloads folder. (An easy way to find this on a PC is by double-clicking the "My Computer" icon.) Open this folder, then open the file you just saved, and print from there.

So far this has worked every time. If this doesn't work for you, please let me know!

Please Note: One of the goals of moving toward one-to-one learning environments is to reduce the amount of paper consumed as part of classroom activities. It is unlikely that a classroom will become completely paperless, and sometimes learning activities require hard-copy materials. Please consider carefully before printing.

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Regional Institute October 30, 2015

District #205's 2015-2016 school calendar has been approved by ISBE and is posted on the District #205 website. A minor change was made so all staff can participate in the Regional Institute on October 30, 2015 that will be offered by our new Regional Office of Education. (After surveying the Calendar Committee, the parent-teacher conference date was moved slightly.) This will allow everyone to benefit from collaboration with other Knox County and regional schools. We look forward to sharing knowledge with other professional educators in this area to help students grow and achieve. See details by downloading the [2015-2016 Calendar \(Front\)](#) and [2015-2016 Calendar \(Back\)](#) on the [District 205 Website](#).

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“OKAY KIDS - WHO’S MESSING WITH THE SMART BOARD?!?”

Here’s the scenario:

An unsuspecting teacher - often a substitute - is attempting to lead an invigorating and informative lesson that is vital to students' success...Or whatever... Suddenly the SMART Board goes dark, the kids go nuts with laughter, and the teacher spends the rest of the period trying to both fix the problem and regain control of the class.

What just happened here?

As the end of the year draws ever-closer, some of our students have found yet another tech-enabled way to pull pranks in our classrooms. Many commonly available smartphones (like the Samsung Galaxy S4 & S5, some HTC One models, and the LG G2, to name a few) have infrared emitters, or "IR blasters," that can be used to control home televisions, DVD players, and console gaming systems. These smartphones have built-in apps that can search for the IR codes that will let them control other devices with infrared remote controls.

...and that would include the projectors that go along with our SMART Boards...

So what do you do?

Unfortunately, there's no easy and perfect solution. To ease the frustration, though, try the following...

- While the law does allow students to have cell phones in class, they are supposed to be OFF AND AWAY during classrooms instruction. This can be understandably difficult to enforce, but in the end I'm afraid this is a classroom behavior management issue. Remind students that their behaviors and tech use are still subject to building-level discipline policies, even at the end of the year.

Also remember that sometimes low-tech solutions work best...

- Find the dark plastic "window" on the projector - it may look dark red or dark brown. This is the IR receiver. Cover the window completely - it may curve around from the bottom to the side - with strips of electrical tape or masking tape. This will block all infrared signals from reaching the projector.
 - Unfortunately, this will also disable the use of the remote that is intended to work with the projector, so remember to turn it off at the end of the period or day with the eraser end of a pencil, a pointer, etc.
 - Remove the tape from the projector before leaving for the summer!
 - Remember: For your own safety, do not stand on chairs or desks, please! Use a ladder, stepstool, or ask a custodian for assistance if needed.

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Google Classroom: 10 steps toward mastery

Alice Keeler is an educational blogger and Google Certified Teacher, who offers the following [10 Things To Start With In Google Classroom](#):

1. Create A Class
2. Create an Announcement
3. Invite Students
4. Create An Assignment
5. View Classroom Folder
6. Click On Assignment Title
7. Provide Feedback
8. Return Work
9. Provide a Link
10. Develop This Mantra: All things start in Google Classroom

When you can complete these tasks - AND teach them to someone else - you have successfully mastered the basics of Google Classroom!

Want a little help? Just let me know! I'd be happy to schedule some time to meet with you and map out how to use Google Classroom with your students!

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Google Classroom: What happens at the end of the year?

At the end of a year or semester teachers may want to save information used with Google Classroom to use next year or the next time the course is taught. Google Classroom allows teachers to create an archive of class materials, assignments, and all posts to a class Stream. Read the instructions [HERE](#) to learn how.

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Before Starting That Degree...

Many teachers use the summertime to advance their skills & knowledge by pursuing coursework. Please remember that coursework must be approved by the Curriculum Department before it can apply toward salary scale advancement. A good document to check before starting down that road is the [Directory of Approved Programs for the Preparation of Educational Personnel in Illinois Institutions of Higher Education](#) from the [Illinois State Board Of Education](#). While this does not list every program approved in the past, it is the first place consulted when considering approval.

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Free PD On Your Schedule

Looking to hone your skills over the summer so you can hit the ground running when students come back after Summer Vacation? Check out [The Teaching Channel](#). Your free account gets you access to videos and discussions about everything from New Teacher Survival and classroom management to how to teach critical thinking skills & integrate Common Core & Next Gen Science standards into your classroom. From simple tips to quiet a classroom to Socratic seminars, [The Teaching Channel](#) can help!

(No, I'm afraid we cannot issue Professional Development Hours for watching videos on your own time.)

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Access to Hapara Folders (Grades 6-12)

For secondary teachers who are currently using Hapara Teacher Dashboard and Interact: Roster updates will stop on the last day of student attendance, and you should be able to access information currently in student folders for a week or two. Hapara will automatically archive everything after June 26 unless we tell them differently. After that date all student folders will be wiped clean. I will then begin to prepare Hapara for our new school year in July.

All teachers using Hapara now are encouraged to archive assignments, course information, etc., that is currently in your own class folders. This is extraordinarily simple: Right-click (or two-finger-click on a Chromebook) on the folder and select Make A Copy. Then right-click on the new folder that is created and Rename it something unique, like “2015 Social Studies,” etc. Now you have an exact copy that will remain unaffected by any changes that might happen over the summer.

Folders for new classes will be available sometime after Registration has ended in August. Precisely when is dependent on a number of factors, many of which are outside of my control. The goal will be to have this up and running by the first day of student attendance. If this changes you will be notified as soon as I am aware.

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Cleaning Chromebooks

Here are a few tips for keeping Chromebooks looking nice:

- Keep the device inside a case when not in use. Do not put anything else in the compartment containing the device. NEVER put anything except fingers between the keyboard and screen!
- Only clean a device that is powered off completely and unplugged from a wall socket.
- Brushing & very light buffing are preferred cleaning methods. Any clean, soft cloth will do cut up old t-shirts, etc. Brush off the bits with a clean, soft, dry cloth first, or blow the crumbs & junk off the keyboard gently (like you're whistling). Then buff the smudges off the case gently with that same clean, soft, dry cloth.
 - AVOID using compressed or “canned” air. This usually just forces crud deeper into the device.
- If liquid cleaners are needed to cut through encrusted gunk, always spray the liquid very lightly onto a cloth first, then wipe.

- NEVER spray water or liquid cleaners of any type onto a computing device.
- Premoistened wipes solely designed for cleaning electronic devices might be okay on the outer case, but avoid getting those near the keyboard, cooling vents, or any of the ports on the sides of the device. These can tend to get too saturated & drippy near the bottom of the container, too. Use extreme caution!
- Never use abrasive cleansers. Never use anything containing bleach or similar, including premoistened wipes, on computing devices.
- AVOID pressing on the LCD screen of any device. Touchscreen Chromebooks are much more delicate than touchscreen tablets & smartphones that use “gorilla glass,” etc. Be gentle.
- Gently use the edge or corner of a sheet of paper to get the gunk out of cracks/spaces around keyboard keys, trackpads, etc.

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Professional Development Opportunities - Highlights

Below is an overview of locally-offered professional development activities offered over the summer months. For more regional opportunities, please see the [Professional Development Calendar webpage](#)

Thu Jun 11, 2015

8am - 3pm Raspberry Pi Workshop; Lombard Middle School Library

9am - 4pm CyberCamp; Carl Sandburg College, 2400 Tom L. Wilson Boulevard,
Galesburg, IL

Fri Jun 12, 2015

9am - 1pm CyberCamp; Carl Sandburg College, 2400 Tom L. Wilson Boulevard,
Galesburg, IL

9am - 3pm Meeting the Needs of Hispanic Students; Galesburg Community Foundation,
246 East Main Street #101, Galesburg

Thu Jul 23, 2015

9am - 3:30pm; ELA Shift Kit: Informational Text and Creating Text Dependent Questions; Monmouth Roseville Board Room 105 N. E St., Monmouth, IL

Tue Jul 28, 2015

9am - 3:30pm; ELA Shift Kit: Informational Text and Creating Text Dependent Questions; ROE Moline

Jul 29-31, 2015

8am - 3pm Leyden 1:1 Summer Symposium; Where: East Leyden High School, 3400 Rose Street, Franklin Park, IL 60131

Fri Aug 7, 2015

8am - 12:50pm Next Gen Science Standards Workshop; Board Room, Lincoln Education Center

Tue Aug 11, 2015

9am - 3:30pm ELA Shift Kit: Close Reading and Writing from Sources; ROE Moline

Thu Aug 13, 2015

9am - 3:30pm ELA Shift Kit: Close Reading and Writing from Sources; Monmouth Roseville Board Room, 105 N. E St, Monmouth

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