

# Log-on



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Mifflin County School District Technology Department

Issue 16

## Technology Update

by Kirk McMinn  
*Director of Information Systems*

Another school year has begun. It was kind of shaky for me health wise but I'm finally on the road to recovery. I would really like to thank everyone for the cards, flowers and prayers. They all gave me hope and helped me through a very rough time.

### New Projects

My absence has delayed some of the new projects but they are all moving forward, thanks to the other members of the Department. I think everyone will find that technology will make a big impact this year. A new student management system is being implemented; a new busing system will be introduced; a new cafeteria system will be phased in; a data mine has been started; a new Internet filtering system has been installed; and an improved wide-area network will soon be completed.

### Grades Online

This year every teacher will be required to use a computer. With the implementation of the new student management program, SASI, grades will be done on the computer for the first time. Middle and high school teachers will use the program **ClassXP** to enter grades for the first marking period. Elementary teachers will still do the report cards by hand but they will also have to enter grades into the computer system. Teachers who have never touched a computer will need to log in to a computer, try surfing the Internet and get familiar with using the network so they will have the skills needed to enter their grades.

In-service classes will be offered to help teachers master the new system. Workshops will be held in the middle and high schools towards the end of the first marking period. Teachers will be able to enter grades with mentor teachers available to help them.

We will also be offering six hours of in-service in October to help teachers use ClassXP. Teachers who attend all six hours of in-service will be given a personal day that can be used on the October in-service day.

Cafeteria employees will also need to learn a new check out system. We plan to install touch screens in many of the schools. This should improve the speed of the lunch lines and provide accurate inventory.

In spring we will be implementing a new busing system that will automatically plan bus routes and assign students to a bus. The system will also give us access to maps of the county and accurate locations where every student lives.

A data mine will be initiated that will allow principals to utilize data driven decision making. All data from state tests, local courses, and student statistics will be entered into a data mine. Curriculum decisions will be made from information drawn from the data mine.

### Increased Network Speed

The most noticeable of the changes will be the speed of the new wide-area network. The new network will connect LAHS, LMS, Buch, IVHS, HPAE, SME and SMMS to the Administration building via a gigabit fiber network. This should make the network much more efficient and almost 1000 times faster. Eventually, we will move our Internet connection from 1 Mbps to 10 Mbps to eliminate most of the bottle neck and slow speeds that we experience in the afternoons.

We have a very aggressive agenda. The improvements are very exciting and will help us all do a better job.

# Elementary Computer Teachers

Four computer teachers have been added to the elementary computer program. The teachers, Nancy Ressler (Union, Brown, Armagh, East Derry), Stephanie Moon (Highland Park, Strodes Mills Elementary), Lanielle Reese (Strodes Mills Elementary) and Suzanne LaMarca (Seventh Ward, Buchanan, Derry) are all experienced classroom teachers who bring a wealth of experience at different grade levels to this program.

The goal of this program is to provide meaningful, standardized instruction that is integrated into the curriculum and consistent across the district.

Computer teachers meet with all students one period in a six-day cycle. The classroom teachers also teach one computer class in a six-day cycle.

The computer teachers are following the Scope and Sequence which reflects the technology standards and skills that must be taught at each grade level. They will also do at least one project per grade level. The projects will be curriculum-based and consistent across the district.

Students will receive a report card grade of Outstanding, Satisfactory or Needs Improvement. They will be assessed according to their mastery of the skills necessary at each grade level.



*Mrs. Ressler and fourth graders at East Derry work on a cyberhunt.*



*Mrs. LaMarca works with first grade students at Seventh Ward.*



*Mrs. Moon works with Kindergarten students at Highland Park.*



*Mrs. Reese and fifth grade SMMS students log on in the library.*

## ▶ Advanced Placement Courses

For the first time, eight MCSD students are registered to take Advanced Placement courses on-line through Apex Learning. Six students are taking American Literature while two students are enrolled in Government and Macroeconomics.

The students meet in a computer lab one period a day to work on the courses. Homework assignments, tests, and projects are emailed or faxed to the instructor. Students interact with the instructor through email. They spend about ten to fifteen hours a week reading and doing assignments. At the end of the course the students will take the AP exam.

All of the students are seniors. IVHS students include: Tom Bergman, Ashley Noerr, Kathleen Hall, Robert Morningstar and Eric Leckrone. The LAHS students enrolled in the class are Hannah Settle, Rebecca Dillon and Kori Birch.



## ▶ IVHS Television Studio

IVHS media students no longer have to travel to LAHS to attend Media classes. This past summer the District started construction on a state of the art television studio at IVHS. The studio will be completed in October and will house new equipment such as Sony and JVC cameras, a Panasonic MX70 Digital AV Mixer, and eight Dell media computers. The students utilize programs such as Adobe Premiere, After Effects, and Dazzle to create multimedia projects.

Students have created some great projects including a video introduction to the high school for incoming students. In addition to their individual projects, students are also creating a documentary of the pond and outdoor learning area being constructed in the school's courtyard.

Having a television studio at each high school has given twice as many students the opportunity to take the media classes taught by Ms. Tona Williams and Mr. Roger Herto. This year 120 IVHS students will take Media I.

The media classes also produce morning video announcements and eventually the District would like to obtain a local TV channel so that school events and student projects can be transmitted on local cable.



## New Web Filter Makes Its Debut

Have you noticed that the way that you use the Internet within the district has changed? These changes are due to the installation of a new web filtering program called Websense, which replaces our former filter, Symantec Web Security. While you will still be able to use the Internet as before, there are a few significant differences:

1. **No need to login in order to browse the Internet.** Websense uses your original login (when you press Control-Alt-Delete) to authenticate you.
2. **No need to “logout” once finished browsing the Internet.** Websense terminates your connection when you logoff Windows.
3. **New error messages.** If you visit a blocked site Websense provides a new error message to indicate why it is blocking the site. Send this error message to the technology department if you would like to request that a site be opened.
4. **Quota time.** Websense has three options for web filtering: denied, allowed, and quota time. Quota time allows access to certain web sites for a preset period of time each day. Once you have used your allotted quota time you will be unable to use these sites until the next day.
5. **Increased speed.** Websense server based cache engine will increase the perceived speed of browsing the Internet.

As with any new technology there will be issues during the initial implementation period. Should you encounter any incorrectly blocked sites please send an email to [mcsdnet@mcsdk12.org](mailto:mcsdnet@mcsdk12.org). Be sure to include the site's URL as well as the Websense error message that you receive.

## Tips & Hints



**Q:** Now that I have created a web, how do I open it ?

- A:**
1. Open the FrontPage Application
  2. File/Open web  
(be sure it is “Open Web”, **not** “Open”)
  3. Open Your Web from your user folder
    1. Go to the H:\ , faculty, web and open the folder with the funny green circle on it. This is called your user path.
  4. Select open and say OK.
  5. Work on your pages as needed.

**Q:** How can I open Microsoft Works files in Microsoft Word?

- A:**
- Microsoft has a solution for those who have trouble opening Microsoft Works files with Microsoft Word. (For instance, you save something in Works at home and try to open it at school.) It's called **Works 6.0 Converter** and can be downloaded on your home computer from the Microsoft download area for Word or Office. More information and a direct link to the Microsoft site are available from the MCSKD website at this address: [www.mcsdk12.org/staff](http://www.mcsdk12.org/staff).

### Our Goals

Our goals are to provide staff with up-to-date information regarding all areas of technology, share helpful hints and ideas, showcase teachers and students and communicate staff development plans. Any questions or suggestions can be directed to **Karen Galbraith \* 248-6480**