



Classrooms for the Future at Westmont Hilltop SD

WESTMONT HILLTOP SCHOOL DISTRICT

JUNE, 2008

Classrooms for the Future: What difference does it make?

During the 2007-2008 school year, the Classrooms for the Future (CFF) initiative brought both technology and training to the members of the Science and Math Departments at the high school. Some significant changes in classroom practices were supported by those efforts as teachers integrated technology into their lessons and projects. Students responded to this influx of technology with a renewed enthusiasm for learning, genuinely appreciating their teachers efforts to bring their classroom into the 21st Century.

Students were able to access the internet through the use of mobile laptop labs and incorporated science and math concepts into a variety of formats using CFF software. Students incorporated images, spoken word and music to create dynamic multi-media presentations using

Photostory 3.

Students used Inspiration 8 to organize content in a digital concept map where they could include sound bites, video clips, web links and images.

Students used Google Docs to work collaboratively on projects for their classrooms and used laptops to search for up to date information to support their work.

Teachers have used the Promethean and SMART boards to add visual impact to their lessons throughout the school year. These interactive, digital whiteboards allow teachers to create dynamic classroom presentations that link directly to the internet, include video and audio clips, and allow them to create colorful and interactive presentations in real time.

WHAT DOES CFF LOOK LIKE?



CFF What's Next?

The second year of CFF at Westmont Hilltop School District will expand the equipment and training to target two additional content areas. Teachers in the Language Arts (English) and Math departments are slated to receive a similar package of equipment and training. Therefore, high school students will see more technology in their math and science classrooms next year along with additional technology experiences with a new group of teachers. The new teachers in CFF for next year are:

William Aurandt, English

Claudia Christner, Math

Ginger Harnish, English

Karen McNair, Math

Patricia Molnar, Math

Angela Sloan, English

Debra Taczanowsky, English

Ashley Washburn, English

Bruce Wechtenhiser, Math

Jacqueline Young, Math



**ALWAYS REMEMBER
THAT YOU HAVE WITHIN
YOU THE STRENGTH, THE
PATIENCE, AND THE
PASSION TO REACH FOR
THE STARS AND CHANGE
THE WORLD.**

-DENIS WAITLEY

Technology: The Challenge Behind the Scenes

As the Windber Area and Westmont Hilltop School Districts have moved toward creating a 21st Century learning experience for their students, there is an important component of a functional technology program that deserves some attention. The Technology Directors at both districts, which include Frank Tallyen for Windber, and Joe Molnar and Roger Cowder for Westmont (pictured left).

Although they work for school districts with very opposite demographics, they related the same types of challenges facing them as they facilitate the incorporation of more technology at their districts. The nearly exponential growth of technology in the classroom has created a huge need for skill and patience in the technology departments of school districts. The CFF program has accelerated this process, and has created a demand on each school's computer network and greatly increased the number of instances when teachers require help with technology.

The diverse 'to-do' list for technology directors includes the creation of the infrastructure to support technology (like wiring, running cable, etc.), purchasing computers, printers, scanners, and peripheral items (like digital cameras, digital video cameras, memory cards, etc.), reviewing and choosing appropriate software programs, maintaining the district's website, and assisting teachers and administrators as they use these tools. Technology directors are also tasked with monitoring the use of the internet which might include a filtering system and/or a monitoring program.

When asked about the challenges of their jobs, the technology directors said that the toughest part of their job is the unrealistic expectations that many teachers have about technology. When something goes wrong, it's important to fix it quickly, but many teachers don't realize that there are five people ahead of them. When asked about what might make things go more smoothly, they responded that having all teachers trained to a certain minimum skill level would remove some of the simpler questions from their responsibility. That would allow them more time to focus on more complex technology issues that only they can handle. Even with many challenges, all of the technology people at both districts really enjoy helping people and are glad that they get to help teachers do their work every day.



Are you interested in helping improve teaching and learning by advancing the effective use of technology in education? You can join the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). They support their members with information, networking opportunities, and guidance as they face the challenge of transforming education. Get more information at www.iste.org.

For more information on any of the articles included, please contact the CFF coaches for WASH and WHSD:

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Find the Rambler-Hilltop Wiki at the following location:
www.ramblerhilltopcfffiki.wikispaces.com

What's is Web 2.0?

Web 2.0 is a term coined by Tim O'Reilly, book publisher and host of conferences on computer technology topics. It refers to the changing structure and usage of the World Wide Web. Web 2.0 sites allow users to do more than just retrieve information. The web is no longer a static, proprietary, individual intelligence of sites. Instead, it is a dy-

namic, open-source, read, write, sharing of collaborative communities. Wikipedia explains further that, "Web 2.0 is a term describing the trend in the use of the World Wide Web technology and web design that aims to enhance creativity, information sharing, and... most notable, collaboration among users." A video describing Web 2.0 is available on the CFF Wiki.

Web 1.0 vs. Web 2.0

Reading	Writing
Companies	Communities
Netscape	Google
Hardware	Bandwidth
Wires	Wireless
Home Page	Blog
Dial-up	Broadband



CFF SPECIAL FEATURE!!

Technology and the High School Library: How Collaboration Can Advance Student Learning

The role of the school librarian is changing, especially as school districts integrate technology into their curriculum. How then, can a traditional librarian find a role in the new age of digital media and information? By jumping in head-first and becoming a resource for their teachers and administrators. The American Library Association sponsors a related organization called the Library and Information Technology Association (LITA). LITA works with education and business professionals that are interested in leading-edge technology and applications for librarians and information providers. The mere existence of such an organization speaks volumes about the need for librarians to be proactive in the technology movement in their districts.

At Westmont Hilltop High School, Diana Smeal, the librarian, is embracing the influx of technology brought about by CFF. In addition to her normal tasks, Mrs. Smeal ventures to stay abreast of the new tools and programs that the CFF teachers are using in their classrooms. Throughout the 2007-2008 school year, Mrs. Smeal became a 'guinea pig' as the CFF coaches ran test-runs of many training programs and presentations. Mrs. Smeal's personal technology resume for this year includes the use of Photostory to promote new books (book commercials), created a flipchart for orientation to the Library, used Google Docs and delicious (bookmarking site), used the Promethean board to host library presentations to students, and focused on copyright and proper citation of digital information.

In addition to her curiosity and problem-solving with CFF programs, Mrs. Smeal has taken the time to reflect on her role in the high school and gives some keen insight into how she envisions the role of the librarian, and the library itself changing as schools respond to the needs of students and teachers. As the year has gone on, Diana has noticed a shift in student needs in the library—more and more students need technology help when they come to the library. "You have to know how to use the programs they are working with in their classes so you can help them when they come to the library," she says. Another area of expertise for librarians, copyright and properly citing sources, can be confusing and frustrating to students and teachers. Librarians can show how copyright rules apply to internet resources, media, and other technology-based information.

Mrs. Smeal sees the Library becoming the 'hub' of technology in years to come. As integration and training are needed, the library becomes the perfect location to find access to multiple computers, give presentations using the interactive whiteboard, and both locate and critically evaluate online resources with teachers. A skilled librarian/media-specialist along with strong computer instructors, can be helpful to CFF coaches (or other training personnel) and also provide skill training to learning support instructors or other district staff.

You can learn more about the American Library Association by visiting www.ala.org.

You can learn more about LITA at www.lita.org.

e-Books, online books



A digital book reader (above)

outstanding e-Books logo

