Technology Services Bulletin

"Any growth requires a temporary loss of security."
– Madeline Hunter

From the Director

It's hard to believe we're nearing the end of the school year. Since I joined the district mid-year in 15-16, this is my first full school year. As I reflect on the year, I think we've made good progress in several areas. First, our district student to Chromebook ratio is now under 1.5:1. I'm encouraged to see fewer of our student devices being rolled across campus in carts. Chromebooks are getting used more frequently in more classrooms across the district. The more technology becomes a daily classroom tool like a whiteboard or a textbook, the more opportunity it has to transform teaching and learning in our district. Second, from my perspective, and hopefully from yours as well, our technology is generally more reliable. Things still break, as evidenced by our network issue last week, but overall testing this year was smoother than the year before, which was smoother than the prior year. The server that failed last week will be replaced during the upcoming school year. Desktop PCs in school offices which are now 8 years old and more than ready for retirement will be replaced over the summer. We're re-cabling the last 4 schools this summer as well. Finally, while our department experienced significant staff turnover, I think we're in a better position. In the past couple months, I've seen our open ticket count drop substantially and it's continuing to drop as our team spends a larger percentage of their time at your sites. Thank you for your help this year. We hope you enjoy your summer and we'll make sure things are ready when you return in August!

Google's Buried Treasure: 18 hidden tricks and tools

At this point, after 18 months working in a G Suite for Education district, I feel I know Google pretty well. I was impressed by Matt Miller's post, "Google's Buried Treasure: 18 hidden tricks and tools" and particularly because it had some things I hadn't seen before. The nGram Viewer, for example, lets you enter a word or phrase and see its popularity in books published from 1500 to 2008. It's interesting to compare words with historical events.

Summer Professional Development

The EdTechTeam is offering two weekend summits, July 29 & 30, or August 5 & 6 at Mountain View High School. Each summit offers two days of training including all of the apps in the G Suite for Education with a focus on "Project Based Learning (PBL), Digital Literacy, STEM, Math, Digital Citizenship, Assistive Technology and more!" Attendees also receive a light breakfast and lunch on both days and a raffle on the final day. Early bird registration is available until May 29th at $279/person and regular registration is $329/person. There are discounts available for groups of 5, 10 or 20 people. More information and registration is available here.

Asking Students about Technology

The Bonsall Unified School District created a video in which students were asked to identify ancient technology devices such as typewriters, film projectors, and Palm Pilots. The students' reactions are quite humorous. They also asked questions including, "How did people research before Google?" It provides an interesting perspective on how students see technology.

How Do You Tell if Your Account is Compromised?

When you hear stories about hackers stealing account information, do you ever wonder if your account was included? HaveIBeenPwned.com can tell you! The site has created a database of nearly 4B accounts. To check your account, just enter your email address and they'll not only tell you if you were included, but they'll tell you which breaches your account was found in and what sort of information was leaked. What should you do if your account is listed? Change your password on the listed account, as well as any other accounts where you use the same password. You should also consider installing a Password Manager program that allows you to store your passwords behind a single secure password and easily enter them into websites when you need them. Lastpass and Dashlane are free options to consider.

12 Ways to Create Videos on Chromebooks

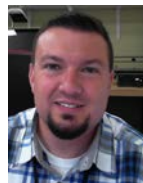FreeTech4Teachers.com posted a great resource recently called "12 Ways to Create Videos on Chromebooks" that, as you might suspect, provides 12 different tools for creating videos on Chromebooks. Creating video on Chromebooks has been a challenge for quite some time with WeVideo being nearly the only solution available. Richard's post shares that one, and 11 more strategies for creating classroom video on those Chromebooks.

The G Suite Status Dashboard

If you've ever wondered whether what appeared to be a problem with a Google service is on your end or on Google's end, you need to bookmark the G Suite Status Dashboard. The page provides a simple view of problems with the various Google apps. It not only tells you about current issues but provides information on issues during the past week. You can click on any of the events and it will provide details on its status. The status is updated regularly for open issues.

Technology Services Staffing

The Technology Services department is pleased to welcome Brandon Husvar to our team. Brandon comes to us from Connecticut, where he worked in industry and in school districts there. He and his wife have recently relocated to the Bay Area and we were lucky enough to snap him up. We have been keeping Brandon busy learning about our systems and meeting people throughout the district. Be sure to say hello if you see him on your campus.

Sharing Technology Resources

Please visit the Technology Services department blog. New instructional resources and tips are added there daily. If you have something you want to share, let us know! You can also see the blog posts by following us on Twitter! The archives of this newsletter are available on our web site. Follow BUSD on Facebook and Twitter!