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Hampton

MAGAZINE



***School District Embarks Upon
a Digital Transformation!***

Featuring:

**Hampton Highlights
Seasonal Programming**

District Dispatch School News

School District Embarks Upon a Digital Transformation

By Shari L. Berg



Students in Kathleen Dickensheets' Calculus class participated in an "escape room" scenario in which they had to solve complex puzzles to stop the spread of a virus.



Students in the Robotics class built and programmed robots in preparation for an "escape" exercise.



Students in the Design and Engineering program at the High School used a router to cut out wood panels used in the assembly of mobile STEAM carts for the elementary schools.

Technology has played an important role in student engagement over the last 50 years, long before the World Wide Web or bulky desktop computers were even in existence. In the 1960s, Seymour Papert, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, developed the **Logo programming**. The language was simple enough to be used effectively even by those who did not possess complex math skills. Children were able to take the language Papert created and use it to write and debug code that controlled the movements of a turtle robot.

Since those early days, the availability of technology for use in the classroom has exploded. **Bee-Bot**, **littleBits** and **Makey-Makeys** are now among the technology tools of choice for enhancing and enriching education in the primary grades. At the secondary grade level, software programming, 3-D printers and CNC routers have been incorporated into the classroom environment, along with Hummingbird robotics kits and online interactive learning resources such as **A.D.A.M. software**.

"The Hampton Township School District prides itself on providing its students with transformative and cutting-edge learning opportunities that will allow them to grow into the kind of creative and innovative problem-solvers who will impact the world," said Dr. Michael Loughead, Superintendent of Schools. "We are always looking for new ways to use technology to enhance the classroom learning experience."

Transformative Teaching and Learning

In February, Dr. Loughead approached the School Board with plans for a strategic vision for the District that incorporates transformative teaching and learning into the curriculum. The District has been working with educational consultants Alan November of November Learning, and Dr. Michael Gielniak of the One-to-One Institute, to guide the District on its journey into transformational teaching and learning.

"I want to be clear that this is not simply the District moving toward a technology initiative for our students," Dr. Loughead explained. "Computers, along with other forms of technology, will be used to help our students achieve deeper levels of understanding while developing essential skills for success beyond the walls of the Hampton Township School District."

In a traditional learning environment, teachers serve as the content expert, the focus is on subject mastery, and all students perform the exact same tasks. In a transformative learning environment, the teacher becomes the facilitator of learning in a flexible classroom environment, where technol-

ogy enables self-direction and pacing of students who are engaged in a variety of individualized and collaborative tasks.

The availability of technology allows for the re-definition of learning, so that technology can be used for the creation of new tasks that previously would have been inconceivable. For instance, students studying about Native American history and culture may find it beneficial to video conference with students in a classroom in a Native American tribal community. By having the opportunity to share and learn with a group of their peers in another part of the country, the overall learning experience is greatly enhanced.

"Transformational teaching and learning isn't just about equipping our students with the equivalent of what Mr. November calls a \$1,000 pencil," said Dr. Loughead. "Making technology easily accessible does not automatically equate to improved learning experiences for our students. Providing professional development opportunities for our staff, and supporting their efforts to find creative ways to infuse technology into everyday learning, is a crucial step toward ensuring that we're not simply taking new tools and using them to do old work."

Mr. November has provided not only consultation with administrators, but also was on campus for a professional development day on January 16. During his visit, Mr. November worked with staff on innovative ways to incorporate technology into their



Poff Media Specialist Erin Prosser opens the library media center to students at the start of the school day who wish to expand their learning through the use of Bee-Bots, Makey Makeys and other digital devices.

classrooms, and how to effectively use some of the most common online resources, such as Google and social media. A vital part of properly incorporating technology and online resources into the classroom environment is making sure staff and students have the training necessary to determine what a reliable resource is and what is not. Mr. November will continue to work with the District as it begins a digital transformation.

District Technology Director Mr. Ed McKaveney said the biggest challenge facing the District will be to

ensure equity and ubiquitous access to resources. "There are readily available resources and content out there to enable deeper learning. We just need to tap into this resource and incorporate it into our instruction," he said.

Part of that process, Mr. McKaveney explained, will be to provide every student in the District with access to a digital device to ensure equality of access. Computer labs in the District eventually will be phased out and students will be able to access online resources from any classroom or any location, including their homes. Providing devices to students will be implemented in phases, to ensure success without a major disruption to digital learning efforts already underway. The roll out for this phase of the strategic plan still is being evaluated.

"As we shift the thinking and start to collaborate more on a global level, we will be able to engage our students in a different type of learning that better prepares them for the future ahead," said Mr. McKaveney.

Enhancement, Not Replacement

Hampton teachers are embracing this move toward incorporating more technology into their classroom lessons. Kate Powell, an art teacher at Wyland Elementary, has found creative ways to infuse technology into her art curriculum. "I teach with tech in the art room because technology has become

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ubiquitous in the lives of my students; it incorporates everything from flicking on a light switch to iPads and smart-phone cameras,” she said.

In one lesson, Ms. Powell used littleBits with her third grade students. “I started with a conversation about photography and cameras to get the students to discuss the relationship between art, science and invention. It was an incredibly fruitful conversation. We then invented art-making machines using the littleBits and familiar drawing materials.”

The end result of combining traditional art tools with technology was total student engagement and investment in the lesson. “The students became creators and collaborators, rather than merely consumers,” said Ms. Powell. “My goal is to prepare the artists and thinkers of the future and, though I don’t know exactly what that will look like yet, I am confident that technology will play a crucial role in that future.”

Powell is not the only teacher combining traditional learning with unconventional tools.

Last fall, seventh graders in the seven-week rotations courses, Engineering, were involved in the design of mobile STEAM carts for each of the District’s three elementary schools. After the Middle Schoolers finished designing the carts based on specs provided to them, High School students in the engi-

neering and design program constructed the carts. The carts were then delivered to the Elementary Schools in mid-February for student and teacher use.

The Tools of the Trade

High School students enrolled in Kathy Dickensheets’ Advanced Placement Calculus BC course engaged in a “Breakout EDU” exercise in February using kits that included numerical and letter locks, pens that write with invisible ink, UV flashlights, boxes, hasp locks, small lockable boxes and flash drives. The materials for the project were funded through a Hampton Alliance for Educational Excellence (HAEE) grant. The students used the materials in the specially-designed Critical Thinking Lab at the High School to complete the exercise.

Mrs. Dickensheets said students were required to solve a variety of calculus questions to find codes to the locks, use critical thinking to put the clues together, and find QR codes as part of the exercise. “The students were extremely motivated by the activity, reviewed several key calculus concepts, worked together, used critical thinking, and had a lot of fun,” she said.

Innovative ways to use technology just keep popping up in the District. At present, students at Hampton Middle School are collaborating with Brian Colonna, co-owner of the North Hills-

based escape room “Codebreakers,” to create their own escape room at the Middle School. More information about the project is available in the “Hampton Showcases Creativity and Tech-Savviness for Regional Remake Learning Days” article in this issue. The Middle School’s Mission to Maya: Escape Room will be revealed on May 17 during the Remake Learning Days.

Mr. McKaveney said as the District moves forward with its strategic plan, it is important to remember that transformational teaching and learning is a new way of enhancing learning, rather than a replacement for the way students are learning now. “If we don’t continue to evolve, then we’re falling behind, which would be a disservice to our students,” Mr. McKaveney noted.

Dr. Loughead said he is excited for the changes and looks forward to working with the school community to transform teaching and learning in the District and create an interconnected “Hampton Hub.”

“We don’t know exactly what future careers will look like for our students, or even how technology will advance and grow,” said Dr. Loughead. “But we have made the commitment to our students to continue to provide them with whatever tools necessary to fulfill our mission statement and help them become creative and innovative problem-solvers, who will impact the world.”

Hampton Showcases Creativity and Tech-Savviness for Regional Remake Learning Days

The Future of Learning *NOW*



There was a time when the Silicon Valley was considered the uncontested champion for technology innovation. Times are changing, and the Pittsburgh region – once associated only with steel mills and manufacturing – is moving to the forefront in the technology race.

Fostered by universities like Carnegie Mellon and the University of Pittsburgh, the tech movement in the Pittsburgh region continues to flourish. Companies like Duolingo and 4 Moms are operating in the area, and investment firms like Innovation Works continue to make Pittsburgh a desirable place to launch new start-up companies.

In addition to innovations in the business community, many of the region’s schools are using technology in the classroom in new and creative ways. With funding by Chevron and the Benedum and Grable Foundations, organizations such as the Allegheny Intermediate Unit’s (AIU) Center for Creativity have helped schools break new ground by incorporating online resources and technology to create a transformative learning environment.

The Remake Learning Council – a blue-ribbon commission of distinguished leaders from the education, government, business and civic sectors – is raising awareness, building partnerships, and setting the agenda to help accelerate creativity in our region’s schools. According to information on the council’s website, Remake Learning helps communities connect with innovative learning programs in schools, museums, libraries, community centers, and online.

One of the ways the Remake Learning Council is raising awareness is through its Remake Learning Days,

being held from May 15-26 all across the region. The 12-day celebration includes a variety of events and activities, showcasing the things which make Pittsburgh a recognized

What: “Future of Learning Now at the Hampton Hub”
Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2017
Time: 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Location: Hampton Middle School

national leader in innovative teaching and learning. Over 250 organizations including schools, museums, libraries and after-school centers in southwestern Pittsburgh and West Virginia will participate in this year’s event.

Hampton is also participating in this year’s Remake Learning Days.



Students at Central Elementary have the opportunity to start their mornings with Puzzlets, Makey-Makeys and other digital learning tools.

from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Hampton Middle School. This free event will feature interactive exhibits, hands-on learning opportunities, robotics and 3D printing, and the opportunity for parents and community members to try their hands at using some of the many technological tools being incorporated into the classroom learning experience at Hampton.

Food, games and prizes will also be a part of the evening’s celebration, along with a special visit from the Steel City Time Machine – a vehicle reminiscent of the “Back to the Future” DeLorean time-traveling car. Parents, students, and community members are all welcome to attend.

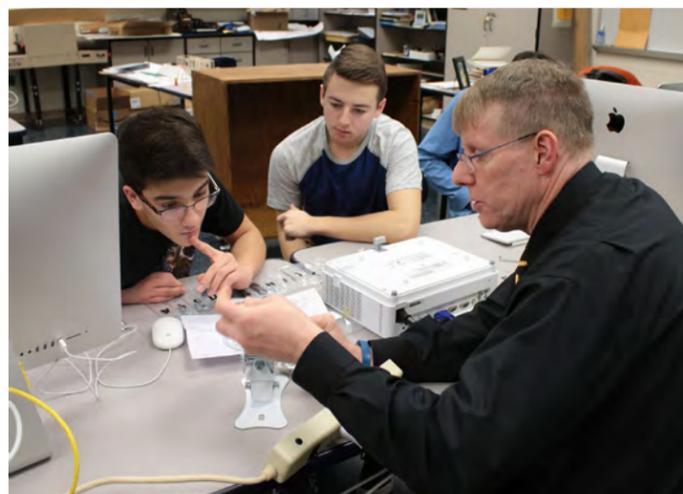
Making its grand debut at the May 17 *Future of Learning Now* event at Hampton is the “Mission to Maya” escape room. Visitors will have the opportunity to see if they are capable of solving complex puzzles to escape the room and bring the team safely home.

The room is being built by Middle School students and a few High School students, and centers around a Mayan theme, which was selected for its tie to the Middle School social studies curriculum.

“The concept fits in well with the District’s open-ended, problem-solving focus in the curriculum, while also incorporating a gaming module that will help to engage students further in the entire process,” said Dr. Michael Loughead, Superintendent of Schools. “I am very excited that our students have this unique opportunity.”

Ed McKaveney, District Technology Director, said the escape room is a great project-based learning experience which combines engineer-

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Students in the Engineering Design class work with teacher Joe Aflerbach to assemble a projector that will be mounted to a portable STEAM cart. Students helped to design and build the carts, which made their debut in the three elementary schools in February.



Students in the Engineering Design class use notebook computers to tweak the design for portable STEAM carts for the three elementary schools - Central, Poff, and Wyland - before they begin the manufacturing process.

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LEARNING NOW (CONTINUED)

ing, construction, design and artistry with critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving; and he is excited to be able to present its grand opening as part of the District's participation in Remake Learning Days.

The escape room is groundbreaking not only because it is being built by students and incorporated into the Middle School curriculum, but also due to the collaboration with the co-owners of the North Hills-based escape room, CodeBreakers. Dr. Loughhead approached CodeBreakers about helping Hampton to bring the idea to fruition. Co-owner Mr. Brian Colonna, who also works for Google, enthusiastically agreed to undertake the project with the District as a consultant during the design process.

Mr. Colonna said it is the first time a school district has requested his help to build its own escape room. "I thought that it was a wonderful idea and was eager to help," he said. "If I were in school, I know it's something I really would have enjoyed doing."



Mr. Colonna worked with the students to provide insight into which concepts work and which do not work to guide the students while the room is being planned and constructed. Mr. Colonna noted that this type of project builds teamwork skills and helps students incorporate in an engaging way in which math, science and language arts and reasoning skills that they have learned in the classroom. "Escape rooms are great team-building exercises. Kids are really great at delegating tasks, sometimes even better than adults."

Staff members who are directly involved in the project spent time in the "Return to Planet Earth" escape room at CodeBreakers to gain perspective on how to incorporate the escape room concept into the Middle School curriculum.

Mrs. Marlynn Lux, Hampton Middle School Acting Principal, said it was a valuable experience for her to be able to participate in a hands-on task of this nature. "It helped me to visualize how to frame the escape room project for students. The more ownership we can give students with this project, the more excited they will be about it."



Hampton's Tenth Annual Recycle Rama Returns



By David G. Young

Be sure to mark your calendar for Saturday, May 20, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. That's when Recycle Rama returns to Hampton Township. Now in its tenth year, Recycle Rama's organizers are encouraging residents to once again drop off their unused electronics, equipment, batteries, craft supplies, scrap metal and numerous other recyclable items.

This year, however, Recycle Rama will expand operations to two locations. Last year this popular event was very well-attended and turned out to be the biggest event to date. However, that growing popularity also resulted in considerable traffic congestion. This year, with the help of Hampton Township and Hampton Township Police Department, Recycle Rama will be conducted at TWO locations. In addition to the High School parking lot Recycle Rama will also be held at the Community Pool parking lot, on the other side of the Municipal Campus. The Pool lot will host the electronics collection drop-off along with Construction Junction, which will collect building supplies and construction materials.

The items that can be accepted for recycling change from year to year so readers should definitely check out the updated recyclable list to make sure they understand what can and what cannot be recycled through this year's event. A complete list may be found on the following pages as well as on school district's website at .ht-sd.org by following the prompts. But please note that there will only be one television per car permitted for drop-off at the electronics station.

Also, any adult Hampton residents looking for a way to contribute to Recycle Rama are invited to participate as volunteers on the day of the event. Contact Danelle Jameson at (412) 487-0752 or via email to dmjameson3@verizon.net.

Also new this year is a revised traffic flow designed to avoid the congestions and traffic jams that have occurred at past events. Hampton Township Police Chief Tom Vulakovich and Sargent Pete Halli have designed a traffic flow for the park area and surrounding roads that should cut down dramatically on congestion and wait time to drop items off. Members of the Hampton Township Police Department and the Fire Police will be stationed at traffic control points to direct vehicle traffic flow. Anyone attending Recycle Rama should enter the High School and Community Pool parking areas from Wildwood Extension Road, not from McCully Road as in past years. A map detailing the new traffic flow follows this article. As in past events you may recycle, paper, construction materials, electronics and rechargeable batteries, among *numerous* other items.

Readers may be surprised to learn that the original concept for Recycle Rama originated with a man walking his dog. That man was Hampton Middle School teacher Glenn Geary and here, in his own words, is that story beginning a decade ago:

"At that time I resided in the City of Pittsburgh and actually stumbled upon the idea while walking my dogs one day. It was on the South Side and a group there was holding an event to collect hard-to-recycle items. When I returned to school the next day I told my students about the program I had discovered. They began asking me about plastic, aluminum and other hard-to-recycle items and how they could also be reutilized. Recycling seemed like a practical way to prevent the waste of potentially useful materials while also reducing air pollution from incineration and water pollution from landfills.

"The students began by brainstorming ideas for holding a similar event to encourage Hampton residents to dispose of their hard to recycle items. They began by encouraging the school district to recycle some of their disposable waste, such as printer cartridges, monitors, and similar items.

"We also sent open invitations to the administration, the Parent Teacher Organization and others, which led to formation of the Hampton Recycling Committee. With everybody soon on board the concept for a "Recycle Rama" event was launched.

"From the beginning, the dedication of many volunteer parents and groups made this project a continuing success. Together they've nurtured this little activity and transformed it into a significant, ongoing event. Not only do our students look forward to Recycle Rama, but parents, residents and our neighbors throughout the region enthusiastically support it.

"Recycle Rama's parent volunteers plan the meetings, contact the vendors and meet with the police to mitigate traffic issues. They should especially be acknowledged for making Recycle Rama, a cross-generational event. When they first became involved with Recycle Rama many of their children were only 8 or 9 years old. Now many of those children are young adults who remain committed to recycling in many forms.

"That's rewarding in many ways, considering that parents started this event to also teach the next generation about caring for the environment. Now many of those children are young adults continuing that tradition by supporting recycling here in Hampton and throughout other communities in which they live."

