Instructional Technology Coaches' Update - December 2020

<u>Remote Learning Days</u>

Google Meet Screen Share
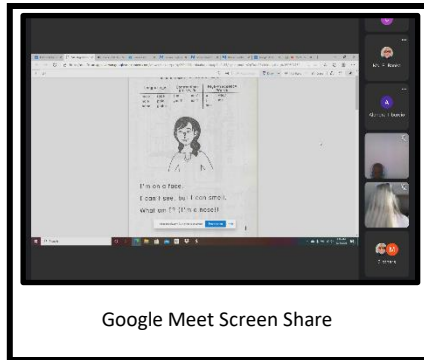
The week following Thanksgiving break all students and staff worked remotely due to COVID concerns. During this period Ms. Butcher and Ms. O'Day assisted staff, students, and parents remotely. Most of the assistance given to teachers centered around basic troubleshooting. Several teachers needed assistance with accessing YouTube videos from home. The coaches worked with the district technicians to allow the teachers access from home via Family Zone. A few other teachers also reached out for assistance with microphone and speaker issues. Additionally, there were a few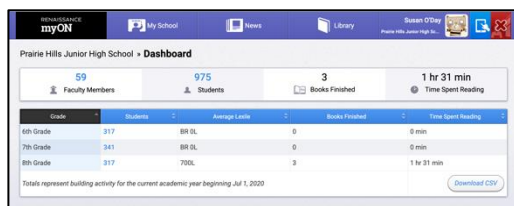 students that needed to have apps added to the iPads that were taken home for remote learning. Ms. Butcher was notified by classroom teachers when students were missing applications on the iPads. Once Ms. Butcher was notified of the situation, she was able to quickly add the missing applications to the students' iPads remotely. In order to complete this process, Ms. Butcher contacted several parents via phone to ensure that the applications were installing correctly on the devices. In doing so, students were able to continue learning remotely with little interruption.

<u>ISTE Virtual Conferences</u>

This year's ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education) Conference was held from November 30th - December 4th. The ISTE Conference is a comprehensive educational technology conference that enables educators and education leaders from around the world to get together to engage in hands-on learning, the exchange of ideas, and network with educators from around the world. Due to COVID concerns, this year's conference was held virtually so an even greater numbers of educators were able to attend with access to the virtual materials being available for up to six months after the conference ended. The coaches had the opportunity to "sit in" on sessions on online and blended learning, digital citizenship, social/emotional learning, project-based learning, equity and inclusion, media literacy, collaboration, and coaching strategies. Mrs. Butcher and Ms. O'Day focused on keynote, poster, and breakout sessions on coaching strategies, technology integration, and accessibility. The sessions that the coaches attended on technology integration and accessibility mainly focused on different tools, programs, and methods that teachers can use to create more engaging, personalized lessons for their students. For coaching strategies, the coaches attended sessions on building teacher buy-in; preventing teacher burn-out; supporting the change process; and professional development strategies that focus on different incentives, methods, and tools.

<u>myOn Training</u>

The district recently purchased the myOn Reading Program by Renaissance Learning for students and teachers. To become familiar with the program Ms. Butcher and Ms. O'Day participated in a training session that was provided by Renaissance Learning. During the session, the myOn

representative explained that students are provided with books that are appropriate for their reading level and interests. When students first access the program, they are required to complete a short diagnostic test to determine their Lexile Level. Students are also given a short interest survey. MyOn then recommends books that are appropriate for each individual student. The student then selects a book to read that is of interest. Once the student is finished reading the book, a comprehension assessment is required by myOn. Additionally, teachers have the option of creating and assigning projects. The projects may consist of independent reading, whole or small group collaboration, close reading strategies, and completing graphic organizers. MyOn also offers the MyOn News which is a collection of age-appropriate articles based on current events. Within the articles students have access to photographs, short video clips, and short presentations to deepen their understanding of the topics. As the students continue to read and complete assignments, they can see their progress on the student dashboard. Teachers also have access to a teacher dashboard. Within the dashboard teachers can monitor student progress by monitoring the number of books completed and books started by each student. The teacher also has the option of viewing student responses pertaining to the assigned projects. After the coaches attended the training, they began recommending the program to teachers. Several teachers were interested in the program and the coaches assisted the teachers in becoming familiar with how the program works. The coaches will continue meeting with teachers in January to introduce the myOn program.

Seesaw Product Meeting

Several pre-k through second grade teachers have been using the Seesaw application on the iPad to enhance remote learning for their young students. At the beginning of the school year, many of these teachers signed up for a free premium trial of Seesaw. As the school year has progressed the teachers have realized that the application is a great resource for assigning lessons that encourage students to take photos and videos, create drawings, and create an ongoing portfolio documenting their work. Additionally, the teachers have used Seesaw as a means of communication with parents during remote learning. Now that the school year is well under way many of the teachers' free Seesaw accounts are about to expire. As a result, teachers inquired about a potential district level license for Seesaw. Mr. Huffaker began investigating the various Seesaw licenses and set up a meeting with a Seesaw representative. Ms. O'Day and Mrs. Butcher also participated in the meeting by asking questions that related to Seesaw being integrated into the curriculum. In the near future, the coaches would like to promote the Seesaw application to other interested teachers in the district.

Kami Product Meeting
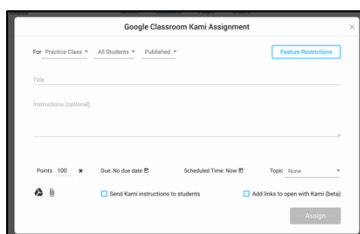
Teachers throughout the district have been using Kami since the beginning of the year. Mrs. Butcher and Ms. O'Day have provided numerous training sessions to teachers on how to use and integrate this application into their lesson plans. Many teachers use it to have the students complete their Ready Reading and Ready Math activities among others. Kami is PDF editor and annotation tool that is fully integrated with Google Classroom. It enables teachers to assign PDF's in Google Classroom that students can then complete right in their web browser. Kami also has a Google Chrome extension that adds a Kami Assignment option on the Classwork page in Google Classroom. This Kami Assignment option is very important for the K-2 teachers because it enables them to attach a link so that their students can complete their Kami assignments on the iPads. Teachers have been using a 90-day premium trial that is

running out for many of them. Given the number of teachers actively using the program, the district decided to take a look at purchasing a premium subscription for teachers and students so that they can continue to use all of the tools the program provides. Mrs. Butcher and Ms. O'Day participated in a meeting with Mr. Huffaker and a Kami representative to discuss the application and if a premium subscription was a good option for the district. The full Google Classroom integration is a premium feature, so while teachers can still use Kami, the ability to turn in assignments directly from Kami and the ability to attach links and directions using the extension go away. Other important features that are included in the premium subscription are accessibility features like text-to-speech and speech-to-text, the ability to insert images and media, the dictionary tool, the ability to add/delete pages or split/merge documents, and the equation editor tool. During the meeting the Kami representative mentioned that he could extend teachers' premium trials while the district was debating purchasing the program, so the coaches contacted all of the teachers to get a list of emails and how many days, if any, they had left in their premium trials. Mr. Huffaker was able to pass on this information to the representative and teachers had their trials extended until mid-January.

Safeshare.tv
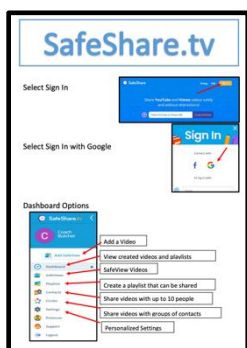
During a recent Technology Committee meeting participates discussed the need for teachers to be able to post links to YouTube videos in Google Classroom. The coaches looked at several possible options for teachers to be able to post video links without advertisements and other unwanted distractions that often appear on the YouTube site. After looking at several options the coaches determined that the best option is for teachers to use Safeshare.tv. To assist teachers with using Safeshare.tv a short step-by-step guide was created and provided to teachers throughout the district. The guide explained how to create a free teacher account. To create a Safeshare link teachers copy & paste the URL of a YouTube video onto the Safeshare.tv site. The site then offers the option for the teacher to select a start & end time to show only part of the video. To share the video in Google Classroom the teacher then posts the new link generated by Safeshare.tv. Several teachers reached out to the coaches with additional questions regarding using the Safeshare.tv links within their Google Classrooms. The coaches followed up with these teachers either in person or during a virtual help session.

Tech Tuesday Mini-PD's

Tech Tuesday are bi-weekly mini-pd sessions offered to teachers at the junior high. At these mini-pd's, teachers receive instruction on how to use specific programs or how to create specific types of activities for their students. This month the Tech Tuesday sessions focused on how to create digital escape room activities. Digital escape room activities involve students completing various types of tasks to get clues that will enable them to "escape" the activity. Digital escape room activities are comprised of a scenario, a picture/map, a set of tasks, a form to collect the clues, and a website to house the escape room materials. They typically use three programs: Google Drawing, Google Forms, and Google Sites. During the training, teachers discussed what types of activities could be used as tasks for their escape rooms as well as what tools/applications they could use to create those tasks.   The teachers were also shown how to create the Google Drawing using pictures, transparent shapes, and links to their tasks/activities. Then they were shown how to create the Google Form, add questions, format the

settings, and use response validation to ensure students only submitted after all of their answers were correct. Lastly, the teachers were shown how to set up the Google Site that would include their scenario/story, drawing, and Form. They were shown how to create the site, use the tools to add components to it, and publish and share the breakout site with their students in Google Classroom. Coach O'Day shared a Google Drive folder that she created that includes resources/ciphers to create tasks as well as some sample escape room activities that teachers can use to create their own digital escape rooms in the future. Teachers who needed more help building their own escape room activities scheduled additional appointments with Ms. O'Day.

Technology Coaching & Teacher Check-ins

During the month of December Coach Butcher and Coach O'Day continued to meet with teachers and students. These meetings took place face-to-face, via phone conversations, and during Google Meetings. During these meetings, the coaches assisted teachers with any troubleshooting issues pertaining to devices, district programs, Google applications, or any other websites that teachers have integrated into their curriculum. At times, the coaches also assisted students by remotely joining in on various teachers' Google Meets. This allows the coaches to quickly assist students at home that may need assistance logging into various programs or troubleshooting issues with devices. During the month, several teachers required assistance from Mrs. Butcher with ongoing classroom projects at the elementary buildings. A fifth-grade teacher required that each of her students create a Bitmoji slide for their Invention Convention project. As part of the Google Slide the student had to create a Bitmoji which is a cartoon version of themselves. Once the student created the Bitmoji the next step was to complete the digital invention display board. The board gives an overview of the problem being solved, procedure used to solve the problem, patent search, student journal, and pictures of the invention. As the teacher was assisting her students with the creation of the Bitmoji classroom she had a few questions about creating the background and adding in the hyperlinks to the student journal. Another fifth-grade teacher was interested in having her students create a video presentation as part of a Social Studies assignment. Since many of her students are remote, she needed assistance with selecting the best program possible to meet the needs of her students. Mrs. Butcher suggested that she use Movie Maker for Windows 10 because all students have access to this program on their laptop. Move Maker allows students to quickly create a video using short video clips, photographs, music., captions, and voice overs. Once the student has completed creating a video, the video can then be shared with their teacher and classmates. Another teacher requested information on a practical way to introduce all her students to coding. She was unsure of how to introduce the skill and select a coding website that would be appropriate for her students. I suggested that, out of the many available coding websites, she select Code.org. This coding website allows for single sign-on using student Google credentials. Once the student is logged into the website a tutorial gives an overview of coding. Students then begin completing basic coding using Blockly. As the students work through each task, the coding becomes more complex. A final request for the month of December came from Ms. Smith. The staff and students at Nob Hill School created a PowerPoint presentation for their Virtual Holiday Program. The PowerPoint was a large file that included many background graphics, photographs, videos, and timed transitions. Ms. Smith's goal was to share the video on the Nob Hill School webpage along with sharing the file within teacher's Google Classrooms. Since the file was so large, Mrs. Butcher had to determine the best way to share the file. After some trial and error, the file was added to YouTube. Mrs. Butcher shared the YouTube link with Ms.

Smith. Ms. Smith was then able to add the link to the Nob Hill webpage and Google Classrooms. Staff, students, and parents were then able to view the Virtual Holiday Program.

This month at the junior high several teachers requested appointments for training/help with breakout rooms in Google Meet, digital escape room activities, and multimedia projects. Coach O'Day provided a workshop session on using breakout rooms in Google Meet for the entire 6th grade team. During the training she showed the teachers how to use the Google Meet Breakout extension to create and manage their breakout rooms. She also discussed with the teachers when they would use breakout rooms as well as how to manage classroom expectations in all rooms simultaneously. Ms. O'Day also met with numerous teachers, regular education and resource, to show them how they can use the embedded breakout room tool in Google Meet for IEP/resource students who may need to be pulled out for individual resource instruction. Several teachers requested individual appointments after attending one of this month's Tech Tuesday sessions so that they could receive help building their first digital escape room activity. One teacher built an "Escape the Gym" activity where the students had to complete tasks centered around sports in order to "escape." Another teacher created a winter break themed escape room for her ELA students that involved using reading skills to complete the tasks. During these sessions, Ms. O'Day assisted them with creating their tasks, drawing, form, and website for their digital escape rooms.   Several teachers also requested appointments for help with creating interactive and multimedia activities for their students. One teacher wanted her in-person and remote resource students to work together to create a newscast based on what they were studying in class. Coach O'Day recommended that she use FlipGrid to record and compile the individual segments because of its ease of use. She showed the teacher how to set up the grids for students to record their segments and then pushed into the classroom to show the students how to use all the features of the program. Ms. O'Day also assisted teachers with a planning a video creation project, creating interactive choice boards for students, and creating drag-and-drop activities in Google Slides. In addition to working with teachers, Ms. O'Day also assisted building administrators with issues such are scheduling appointments in Google Calendar and managing and troubleshooting issues with Google Classroom.