

Instructional Technology Coaches' Update – September 2020

Long Term Sub/Contract Teacher Training



During the month of September, the coaches facilitated several training sessions for various groups of District 144 staff. The first training session took place on September 1st during which the coaches met with all the long-term subs and contract teachers. During the meeting, Ms. O'Day and Mrs. Butcher reviewed the district expectations for providing instruction using Google Classroom and Google Meets. After reviewing the expectations for the classroom, the coaches gave a detailed presentation that covered creating a class within Google Classroom as well as inviting students and co-teachers and enabling guardian summaries to keep parents informed. The technology coaches also explained how the various types of assignments are created within the classroom and what each type is used for. The teachers were given an opportunity to create a practice assignment during the training. Once the practice assignment was created the coaches explained how the assignments are graded and the gradebook feature of Google Classroom. The teachers also had the opportunity to practice participating in a Google Meet. Ms. O'Day and Mrs. Butcher invited the teachers to a Google Meet. Once the teachers joined the Meet, they were able to utilize the various on-screen features.

Pre-K iPad Training

On September 3rd, Ms. O'Day and Mrs. Butcher lead a training session for the pre-k teachers in the Annex. The purpose of the training was to prepare the teachers for using the iPads with their students. As the school year gets under way, the teachers have the responsibility of posting assignments to Google Classroom and interacting with students via Google Meet. During the training, the coaches showed the teachers how to create a Google Classroom and invite the students to join the class. The teachers were also given an overview of the available settings in Google Classroom. These settings will allow the teachers to create an organized and secure digital classroom. The coaches also introduced the teachers to the process of creating assignments within Google Classroom. Ms. O'Day and Mrs. Butcher made it apparent that there are several differences when using Google Classroom on an iPad compared to the desktop version. The teachers needed to be aware of these differences as they will most likely be creating assignments on a desktop. However, the students at home will be completing the assignments on an iPad. When students are on an iPad, they will not have access to all the features the desktop version has to offer. Which is why the coaches recommended that prior to assigning something in Google Classroom, the teachers open that assignment on an iPad and see if it functions the way the way they want it to. The pre-K teachers were also introduced to the iPad version of Google Meet and provided with instruction on how to create a meeting and how to use all the different features available in the app.



Media Specialist Training



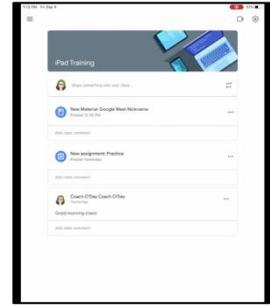
On September 10th, the coaches did a training session with the media specialist on Google Classroom and Google Meet. Ms. O'Day and Mrs. Butcher explained the features of Google Classroom and Google Meet so that the media specialists would be able to facilitate their own classes. In addition to their own classes, the media specialists have been tasked with helping teachers, students, and parents troubleshoot any Google Classroom and Google Meet issues that may pop up. To aid them in this task, the coaches explained the various issues they've seen so far this year as well as provided the media specialists with instruction on how to troubleshoot those issues. During the training the technicians also shared troubleshooting tips and tricks regarding the ClearTouch Flat Panels, speakers, microphones, document cameras, classroom printers, copiers, and temperature scanners. As a result of the training, the media specialist will hopefully be able to troubleshoot many building technology issues immediately.

Literacy Coach Training

Coach Butcher and Coach O'Day also provided training on Google Classroom and Google Meet to the Literacy Coaches from the elementary buildings. As with the other training sessions, the coaches reviewed the basic features of the applications. During the presentation several of the Literacy Coaches had specific questions as to how Google Classroom and Google Meet would be applied in their specific roles. The main concern of the Literacy Coaches was the need to complete small group meetings and individual AIMS Web testing of students remotely. Mrs. Butcher and Ms. O'Day were able to listen to the needs of the coaches and assist them with developing a plan on how to utilize Google Classroom and Google Meets in this capacity. As the Literacy Coaches and Instructional Technology Coaches discussed the details it was decided that the Literacy Coaches would create meeting nicknames for each group of students that needed to be met with. Then students would use the meeting nicknames to join a Google Meet at the necessary time. A similar process would also take place for AIMS Web testing. However, the students would join a meeting on an individual basis. Once the student was signed into the meeting the Literacy Coach would then go through the process of administering the AIMS Web assessment by sharing their screen so that the student could see the reading passage. After the training Ms. Butcher followed up with a few of the Literacy Coaches by reviewing the procedures for creating the meeting nicknames and answering any questions that they had.

Tutorial Videos & Guides

Last month Mrs. Butcher and Ms. O'Day created various tutorial videos for Google Classroom and Google Meet for teachers using the desktop version of the programs. After providing Google Classroom and Google Meet iPad training to the pre-K teachers, the coaches created tutorial videos for the Classroom and Meet iPad apps as well. Given that preK-2 use iPads with their students, the coaches felt that these tutorial videos would be helpful for the K-2 teachers that were not a part of the training sessions this month. The videos provided teachers with a basic overview of both apps, how to use them with their students, as well as the key differences between the desktop and app versions of the programs.



Google Extensions & Add-Ons

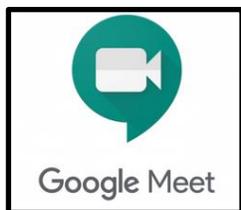


Coach Butcher and Coach O'Day did a lot of research and testing out of various Google Add-ons and extensions that teachers can use to aid in their remote teaching. Many of the extensions and add-ons centered around Google Meets. Teachers were looking for extensions that would allow them to see all of their students on the screen versus the limited tiled view available in the program as well as a way to track attendance during a virtual meeting to ensure that students were present the entire time. Teachers were also looking for extensions that enabled students to edit PDF's or ones that enabled teachers to make their presentations more interactive. After investigating, the coaches submitted their recommendations to be approved and, once they were, began rolling them out and providing training to the staff.

Technology Committee Meeting

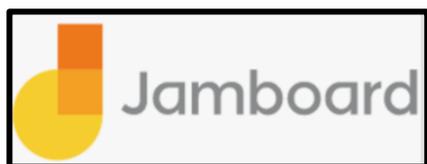
The committee had the first meeting of the school year on September 24th. During the meeting Ms. McWilliams asked each building representative to report on any issues or concerns related to technology. The committee was then informed that teachers in each building would be receiving a new laptop. The external camera that teachers were provided with earlier in the school year will now be connected to this new laptop. During class the teacher will also use the laptop to facilitate Google Meets and present remote lessons to students. The committee was also informed that teachers will be able to bring the laptops home. This was a previous concern for some teachers because they didn't have a device to use off-site. Ms. McWilliams also reviewed the new requirements for creating a Google Meet. Going forward the teachers must create a Google Meeting using a nickname. Teachers are no longer allowed to use the Google Meet link which was resulting in security issues. During the meeting committee members were also made aware that students can bring their school devices back to school for needed repairs. These repairs can include fixing a cracked screen or updating a device.

Teacher Check-ins



Coach Butcher and Coach O'Day spent much of this month rotating among the buildings/classrooms to check in on teachers as they were running their virtual and in-person classes. During these daily check-ins the coaches continued to assist all the teachers with troubleshooting any problems with Google Meet, Google Classroom, Class Link, and devices. Both coaches also continued to make sure to provide extra support to new teachers, late hires, long term subs, and contract teachers to ensure that they were doing okay with their virtual and in-person classes.

Many teachers began booking appointments this month with Mrs. Butcher and Ms. O'Day for assistance with selecting programs, setting up accounts, and managing their remote and in-person instruction. The most common booking this month dealt with Google Meet. At the beginning of the month many teachers were using the Google Meet link provided by Google Classroom, but after some issues with meeting security it was decided that all teachers would switch to using Nicknames for their meetings instead. The coaches provided assistance to teachers who need help with removing old meeting links, creating new nicknamed meetings, sharing instructions for how to access nicknamed meeting with students, and managing meetings to ensure meeting security. Teachers were reminded to make sure that they were the last to leave a meeting and to ensure that they ended the meeting by clicking on the red phone versus just closing the tab. Other common Google Meet requests dealt with showing teachers how to present their screen so that students could watch a video shared by the teacher as well as how to record meetings if there were any behavior issues with the class.



Another common booking this month involved syncing Google Classroom with district provided programs. Syncing these programs with Google Classroom makes it easier for teachers to assign work to their students using these programs and makes it easier for students to access their assignments by housing them all in one place. Given that the majority of students are remote, this ease of access is key. The coaches also assisted teachers by created accounts/classes in programs like Accelerated Reader, BlueStreak, and Acellus for them to use with their students. Many teachers also requested bookings for help with PDF editing and whiteboard programming. Teachers are actively using Ready Math and other workbook-based programs provided by the district, so their students will need to be able to edit PDF assignments in Google Classroom. After researching the various PDF programs/extensions, the coaches settled on Kami as it is very easy to use and integrates directly with Google Classroom. The coaches showed teachers how to assign PDF assignments in Google Classroom as well as provided them with instructions that they can share with their students on how to use the extension to complete those assignments. In addition to Kami, the coaches also provided training on how to use the Google app Jamboard with their students. The teachers can use this program in Google Meet to provide a general whiteboard space for their students or assign it in Google Classroom so they can have students write out their work for math problems for example.