



MNIT News

INSTRUCTIONAL AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

JUNE 2009

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Data Driven Instruction**
- **District Web Portal**
- **Classrooms For the Future**
- **Professional Development**
- **Summer Technology Improvement**

HOME INTERNET FILTERING

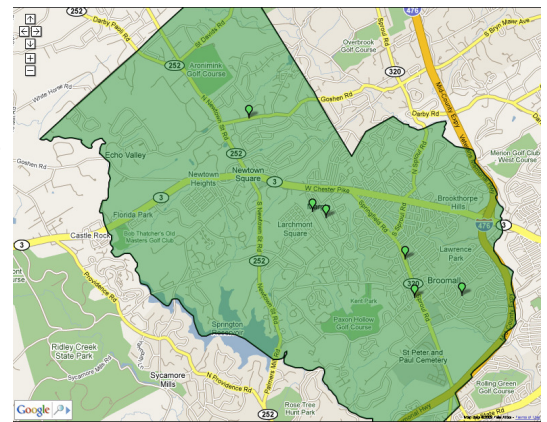
Blue Coat Systems offers its internet filtering software for free to parents in our community. They've created a consumer-friendly parental-control solution called **K9 Web Protection** that's based on their commercial technology. Any parent can get it free by going to www.getk9.com/.

Data Driven Instruction

Marple Newtown has always paid close attention to using research, best practices and data to drive instructional choices. By understanding and analyzing data from standardized tests that measure student progress, teachers are better able to address the individualized needs of their students. In addition to several different assessments that we use at various grade levels and subject areas, there are some new tools available this year that will improve our efforts.

One new tool has been developed by the PA Department of Education and is designed to help parents and educators better understand the **PSSA** results, Acceptable Yearly Progress (AYP) and school report cards. We will be sharing more information about this with you in our fall newsletter.

This past year, Paxon Hollow has piloted a program called **4sight**. The purpose of the pilot is to see how closely the 4sight test results match with the students scores on the PSSAs. When PSSA data is released, we will be able to see how closely the two align. If they align well, we will broaden the use of this tool to help address strengths and weaknesses.



Another new data tool we have used this year is a **technology assessment** across the district for students in 5th through 10th grade. This assessment measures our students' abilities based on the technology standards put forth by the International Society for Technology Education. For most of the questions presented in the assessment, students have knowledge and exposure in the computer application curriculum, as well as other subject areas. Part of our mission is to provide state of the art educational opportunities and this tool will help us to assess how well we are doing with that directive.

District Web Portal

Marple Newtown is expanding its development of our online learning community. Our district is striving to address several Strategic Plan activities including providing more seamless access to district information, providing and expanding internet based technologies to inform parents and students of progress and to create connected learning opportunities for staff and students. We currently use the services of **Edline** at Paxon Hollow Middle School and Marple Newtown High School. In the future, we plan to use Edline at each of our elementary schools. Through the use of Edline, we are working towards a centralized content management system that consolidates all MNSD related websites into a single portal, allowing individ-

ual users to manage their own content. Summer workshops are being offered to staff and teachers to get trained on the ability to manage information and communications effectively and timely.

This coming school year, teachers at **Paxon Hollow** and **Marple Newtown High** will be using Edline to post all assignments, grades and announcements. Students and parents will have access to individualized student progress reports for each class. Parents and students will have access to a combined calendar in one location. Parents needing assistance with getting logged on to their student's Edline information are encouraged to contact

edlinehelp@mnsd.org

Classrooms For the Future

Classrooms For the Future (CFF) is a Pennsylvania Department of Education initiative to help schools support 21st century learning. Marple Newtown has been participating in this program for two years. While there will not be funding available from the state for this program this coming school year, Marple Newtown will be keeping the equipment we have received through the grant. Some of the professional development activities offered through CFF will continue to be available to our teachers and we will be looking to collaborate with area districts to develop new ways to share resources and teaching methods that have so richly enhanced our classrooms. The

program has helped us purchase laptops carts, interactive white boards, and LCD projectors for high school classrooms.

One example of a CFF lesson is in a ninth grade World Cultures class currently studying Latin America. The students have picked a specific country in Latin America to study and present to the rest of the class their findings. Students are asked to research such things as their country's different ethnic groups, religious groups, and type of government. All findings will be put into a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation that will then be presented to the class.

The CFF classroom has proven to be the ideal setting for this project. The laptop cart is used

regularly to allow students time to research their country via the Internet as well as organizing their PowerPoint presentations. Also, the overhead projector and accompanying interactive whiteboard are vital in the presentations students make to their class. Overall, the CFF initiative has brought new possibilities for both teachers and students.



Professional Development

Marple Newtown School District has adopted and begun implementation of MyLearningPlan across the district for all professional staff. This online site is able to interface directly with the Pennsylvania Department of Education's online Act 48 Professional Education Record Management System. What this means for our district and our teachers is that we now eliminated many inefficient paper forms and procedures. The district will be better able to track the courses and seminars our educators are participating in and be able to credit the professional record of our educators in a more timely fashion. Educators have increased ability to collaborate and pool professional development resources within and across the district, county and region.



Proposals are submitted for approval through the website. Our Directors of Education, Pupil Services, Human Resources, and our Professional Development team now have tools at their fingertips to track enrollment, attendance, credit and evaluations. Educators are required to submit an evaluation on all professional development activities in order to receive

credit from the district or state. Educators in all of our schools and the administration building have received introductory training and are using the program for courses beginning with the summer technology workshops the district offers. The new system will help the district by improving the flow of paperwork and improving the data available to our professional development team for planning.



Our Mission: To provide state of the art educational opportunities for all students in a safe, healthy and effective learning environment through a collaborative commitment involving students, families, staff and community.



Technology Upgrades

The technology team is very busy over the summer. Summer is the time of the year when we are best able to service computers and make upgrades that impact many computers at once. Some of the projects include re-imaging all of the district computer labs, getting new laptops for both Culbertson and Loomis Elementary Schools, and changing our internet service provider.

All of the district lab computers will be re-imaged. This means that all software is reinstalled and updated as if they were brand new. This helps us to make certain that the computers are all equipped with the latest versions and software patches. This also helps ensure that our computers are optimized to run as fast as possible. Some new software additions included in this project are Google Earth and Picasa 3.

With the success of last year's computer refresh at Russell and Worrall Elementary Schools, the district has signed another computer lease to provide new laptops to Culbertson and Loomis Elementary Schools. The children have been very excited about using the new laptops. This lease agreement replaces all desktops in each building, as well as increasing the number of laptops (105 laptops in each building) and creating five "mobile labs." The laptops are stored in carts designed to move from classroom to classroom. The carts come equipped with a wireless router and laser printer.

Another change that will impact all of the computers in the district is that we will be changing the district's internet service provider from Widener University to RCN. By doing this, we will reduce by 20% the amount we spend on internet services. This new internet connection will provide us with a higher level of service and faster connection speed. Many valuable educational resources are available to our educators over the Internet and we want to support the education of our students as best as possible.