



Monroe Educator Insider

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Vision Statement

The Monroe Township Board of Education commits itself to all children by preparing them to reach their full potential and to function in a global society through a preeminent education.

Mission Statement

The Monroe Public Schools in collaboration with the members of the community shall ensure that all children receive an



Welcome to the June edition of our professional development/best practices newsletter!

Now that you are preparing for summer and thinking about next year, how are you going to rejuvenate yourself? I searched Google and came up with a list of five books that are recommended for teachers. Some I have read and some are on my reading list. Try one or share one that has helped you.

1. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* by Carol Dweck — World-renowned Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck, in decades of research on achievement and success, has discovered a truly groundbreaking idea—the power of our mindset. Dweck explains why it's not just our abilities and talent that bring us success—but whether we approach them with a fixed or growth mindset.
2. *The First Days of School: How to Be an Effective Teacher, 4th Edition* by Harry K. Wong —The book walks a teacher, either novice or veteran, through structuring and organizing a classroom for success that can be applied at any time of the year at any grade level, pre-K through college.
3. *The Promise of a Pencil: How an Ordinary Person Can Create Extraordinary Change* by Adam Braun – The New York Times bestseller about a young man who built more than 250 schools around the world—and the steps anyone can take to lead a successful and significant life.
4. *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us* by Daniel H. Pink – Most people believe that the best way to motivate is with rewards like money—the carrot-and-stick approach. That's a mistake, says Daniel H. Pink. In this provocative and persuasive new book, he asserts that the secret to high performance and satisfaction—at work, at school, and at home—is the deeply human need to direct our own lives, to learn and create new things, and to do better by ourselves and our world.

exemplary education by well-trained committed staff in a safe and orderly environment.

We would like to acknowledge all of the hard work that went into this publication and all that contributed to our publication:

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Debbie Ciaccia,
Stacy Blum, Marissa Pilgrim, Katherine Russo, Lisa McHugh

Brookside School PD Committee:
Rhonna Griffin,
Kristen Brown,
Donna Colossi

Mill Lake PD Committee:

5. *From Good to Great – Why Some Companies Make the Leap...And Others Don't* by Jim Collins – Start with 1,435 good companies. Examine their performance over 40 years. Find the 11 companies that became great. Now here's how you can do it too.

And don't forget to take some time for you this summer! When you are rejuvenated, it will show in your classroom and, ultimately, we all benefit. Have a wonderful summer vacation!

Written by: Dr. Dori Alvich, Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Changing the World One Student at a Time

“One Connection” Mentoring Program at Oak Tree Elementary

Written by: Stephanie Chin, Lauren Madden, Amanda McGarry and Kim Synarski



“When you look for the best in others, you bring out the best in yourself.” That is exactly what Oak Tree Elementary School has been trying to do this year through a **voluntary** mentoring program entitled “One Connection.” Because of this program, the teachers at Oak Tree have truly been making a difference in the lives of students. Each week, teachers meet with their mentee to spend quality time together. This could be something such as eating lunch together, playing a game together or simply having a conversation about their day. Students who are currently being mentored are kids who merely need a little extra love from a strong, positive role model. The goal of the program is to steer healthy decisions, minimize high-risk behaviors and raise self-esteem. Research shows that having a mentor can lead to improved academic performance, higher report card grades and standardized test scores. **Research also shows that not only are academics important in the life of a child; however, social and emotional aspects complete the learning process. The goal of “One Connection” is to “educate the whole child,” which is what has been shown based off of student actions.** Since starting this program, we have noticed fewer disciplinary referrals and improved behavior. Students have been demonstrating an “I can!” behavior and are happier overall.

Presently, there are 18 mentor partners involved in the program and it is continuing to grow on a daily basis. **Teachers who have been participating in the program have voluntarily attended a mini training session where ideas have been shared and mentoring protocol was discussed.** The teachers/mentors have had nothing but

Bethanne Augsbach, Lisa Papandrea, Ashley Silvers

Oak Tree PD Committee: Kimberly Synarski, Stephanie Chin, Lauren Madden, Amanda McGarry

Woodland PD Committee: Nick Reinhold, Natalie Michael, Samantha Ganz, Samantha Core, Allison North

MTMS PD Committee: Dawn Graziano, Rochelle Kapel, Billy Jacoutot, Patricia Smith

MTHS PD Committee: Dale Harris, Christine Duane, Sharon DeMarco, Jackie Puleio, Dr. Kevin Higgins

positive comments to say about the program! Take a look at some of the feedback Mrs. Dinsmore has received:

"I just wanted to tell you how excited I am to participate in this program. My mentee and I are the perfect match. Many thanks!"

"I just wanted to let you know that I had my first mentoring session today during lunch and it was so great. Love this new program!"

"The program has been making me so happy! The girl I am mentoring has made it a point to stop by at the end of the day on her way to buses just to say hello, have a good day, or goodbye. Too cute! Glad she is already feeling comfortable with me and excited to make a difference. Thanks for creating "One Connection." Loving it!"

As you can see, "One Connection" is making quite a difference in both the lives of students and teachers. Oak Tree is extremely proud of this worthwhile mentoring program and is looking forward to continuing to change the lives of students "one connection" at a time!

#BBRocks STEM

Written by: Stacy Blum, Debbie Ciaccia, Marisa Pilgrim, Katie Rosso and Danielle Sano

STEM is the FUTURE.



What is STEM?

Barclay Brook is in full force as we gear up for the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). STEM education has grabbed the attention of many young learners of all ability levels and our educators. STEM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math education. You may not know it, but STEM is in our everyday lives. "Young children are avid STEM investigators, eager to explore and invent. Spend five minutes with a 3 to 8 year-old and you will field an astounding array of questions, as their own natural curiosity leads them towards STEM inquiry." We focus on these areas together not only because the skills and knowledge in each discipline are essential for student success, but also because these fields are deeply interconnected in the real world and in how students learn most effectively. STEM-related jobs are becoming more in demand and it's easy to see that STEM education is essential for our students' future success.

Hour of Code

Hour of Code is a one-hour introduction to computer science, designed to demystify code and show that anybody can learn the basics. Computer Science helps nurture problem solving skills, logic and creativity. By starting early, students will have a foundation for success in any 21st century career path. At Barclay Brook, all students from Pre-School through second grade participated in this nation-wide initiative during the week of December 7-13th. Students used laptops or iPads to navigate Lightbot Jr, Daisy the Dinosaur, and Angry Birds. Sessions were facilitated by our building principal, Erinn Mahoney. All students received a participation certificate upon completion. While kids think that they are just having fun, this app challenges them to think logically,

come up with sequences, and learn by trial and error as they experiment with this new coding language.



Give These Coding Apps A Try...

<p>The Foos</p>	<p>Kodable Class</p>	<p>Tynker</p>	<p>Scratch Jr.</p>
<p>Move the Turtle</p>	<p>Kiddovate</p>	<p>Daisy the Dinosaur</p>	<p>Robot Factory</p>

STEM Challenge

Our school participated in a schoolwide Stuffed Animal STEM challenge to launch our STEM initiative. The students were put into five groups per class. They were given the task to construct the tallest tower with 100 index cards and 3 feet of tape in only 15 minutes. The students had to work together to problem solve, design a tower, engineer the tower and then reflect on the results. It was amazing to see our little learners create and design different ways to build the tallest tower. After recording the results, the tallest tower was 25 ½ inches! The winning class received an additional Hour of Code with Mrs. Mahoney in the Media Center.



In addition, our school has continued to participate in STEM Challenges throughout the year. Kindergarten sent home STEM related projects for the students to build at home. When the students came back to school they taught their STEM experiment to the class. First grade participated in a STEM Challenge Day for their In-House Field Trip. They started their day with an assembly about the Magic of Science. The students then had an opportunity to participate in two STEM Challenges. One was a boat challenge and the other was a bridge challenge. First grade also used their science skills on Family Science Night in May. The students participated in a STEM activity making Recyclable Rollercoasters and using The Foos coding app. Second grade incorporated STEM challenges into their In-House Field Trip as well. While on the Second Grade Safari the students' engineered their own rainforest trees and explored animal

adaptations. STEM has also moved into the special areas at Barclay Brook from library to physical education.

Additional Resources:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TK3SdhAcsU8&feature=youtu.be>

Inspiring STEM Minds by Aaron D. Isabelle

Teaching STEM and Common Core with Mentor Texts, Collaborative Lesson Plans K-5 by Anastasia Suen

Source:

<http://successfulstemeducation.org/resources/nurturing-stem-skills-young-learners-prek%E2%80%933>

WICOR in the Middle School

Written by: Dawn Graziano, Billy Jacoutot, Rochelle Kapel



MTMS teachers working hard on a one-pager in a PD mini- course led by Stephanie Patterson and Autumn Dawson

Monroe Township Middle School is diffusing WICOR strategies throughout the building through the use of Professional Development workshops. WICOR strategies provide a structure for learning support in the areas of Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading to Learn. Using the strategies as a learning model helps students to comprehend material and concepts at a higher level, and will support them in explaining ideas both in writing and through the use of their interpersonal and communication skills. Further, WICOR strategies help to prepare students for creative problem solving and collaboration. These essential skills represent those which are desired in the workplace.

Writing draws upon tools that support and enhance higher level thinking skills, allowing students to explore and clarify ideas. Inquiry skills encourage students to ask questions at a variety of levels, which become progressively more complex. Collaboration refers to the intentional design of activities which allow students to work together in problem solving or completion of high complexity tasks. The intent is to promote maximum engagement as students help one another to explore the content and work toward meaningful outcomes. As part of the learning of organizational skills, students must learn time management, effective planning, and management of materials, handouts, and notes given in class. Lastly, students are encouraged to read with purpose, learning to analyze text structure and think critically while they read. Strategies for reading with purpose can be used as a basis for a more challenging activity used to evaluate the level of student comprehension.

At the middle school, four faculty meetings during the 2015-2016 school year have been utilized for training in the WICOR strategies. Teachers who have been AVID trained or who have been utilizing the strategies effectively are tapped to teach these professional development mini courses. Teachers were given a "menu" of WICOR strategies and were able to choose which strategy they most wanted to learn. Below are some of the courses teachers were able to sign up for:

Apps in Education – this exposes teachers to free tools for classroom collaboration.

Silent Conversation – this is a discussion strategy in which students use writing to explore a topic in-depth.

GIST – a summarizing strategy that can be used in any content area. Gist is a comprehension strategy that is used both during reading and after reading. It is one approach to summarizing a text. When using GIST, students create summaries that are 20 words or less.

Glogster – this app allows students to explore their thoughts and ideas about a reading through the use of creativity. Many teachers use Glogster to create one pagers, representations of student comprehension through, for example, analyzing a quote, creating visual representations, demonstrating connections with other texts or with prior knowledge.

Socratic Seminar – this incorporates many of the WICOR strategies. Students use inquiry to explore an aspect of a guiding question. They can analyze text structure and use strategies such as Marking the Text or writing margin notes to make sense of the reading. Then, students write notes about the topic. Finally, students use their interpersonal skills to collaborate and hold an in-depth, student-driven discussion about the topic at hand.

One Pager - this is a single-page response that shows your understanding of a piece of text you have read, such as a poem, novel, chapter from a novel, article, etc. It is a way of making representation of your individual, unique understanding. It is a way to be creative and experimental while responding to a reading piece creatively and personally.

Edmodo – this is an educational technology company that enables teachers to share content, distribute quizzes and assignments, and to manage communication with students, co-workers, and parents.

Cornell Notes – this is a note-taking strategy with repetition of key ideas fundamental to its purpose. Students can be taught note-taking skills, higher level questioning strategies, writing effective summaries, editing skills, and using the notes as a learning tool.

Marking the Text – this is an active reading strategy that asks students to identify information in the text that is relevant to the reading purpose. This strategy has three distinct marks: numbering paragraphs, underlining, and circling.

Using Academic Vocabulary – these strategies include making symbolic representations and playing games with academic words that are essential to student success in a content area.

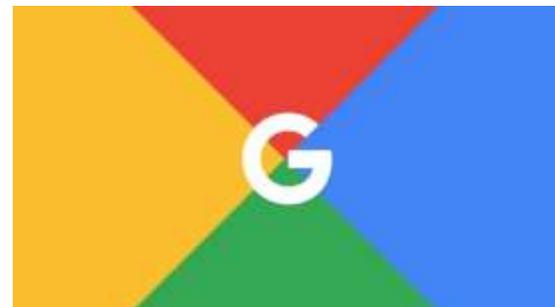
Costa's Questioning – students are taught to scaffold their questions to include questions that support higher level thinking skills.

Philosophical Chairs - this strategy allows students to use their communication skills to explore their own opinions about a reading or a controversial topic. Students must also use metacognitive strategies to determine how their thinking shifts as the topic is analyzed.

Through the use of in-house professional development, teachers are putting WICOR strategies to work effectively at the middle school!

Google is Strong in Woodland

Written by: Nicholas Reinhold,
Natalie Michael, Samantha Cote and
Samantha Gancz

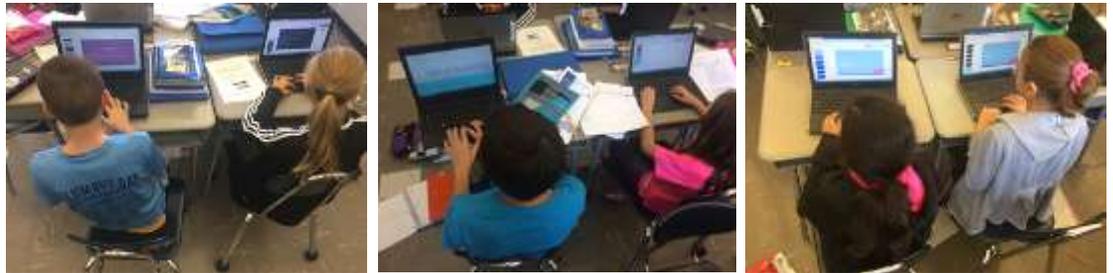


Since the district's adoption of Google Tools in Education, the Woodland School dove in head first embracing all of the free benefits that come along with it. The school's administration and technology support has done a wonderful job offering help to teachers allowing them to utilize these amazing resources.

The Woodland School principal Adam Layman along with Nicholas Reinhold, a fifth grade teacher and the school's technology resource, offered designated times in the morning where many teachers voluntarily attended mini-workshops on how to use these tools. The workshops began with having staff members login using their assigned usernames and getting them familiar with the Google interface. Each week, a new tool was demonstrated and explained to the staff on how they could use it collaboratively amongst their peers as well as in the classroom with their students.

The installment of Google Tools has tremendously increased staff collaboration. With its ease of sharing and editing living documents, staff members have been able to openly collaborate on unit plans, lesson plans, assessments and learning resources. Using the Google Forms tool, the school professional development team was able to get immediate and useful feedback to help meet the needs of all the staff members in the school.

The implementation of Google Tools in the classroom has provided a positive and engaging learning experience for all diverse learners in the Woodland School. In the classrooms, teachers are utilizing the school's laptops and iPads to get the students signed in and comfortable with their school issued Google usernames. Homework and classwork assignments, including responses for Reader's and Writer's Workshop (Balanced Literacy Model), can be easily be edited and conferenced by self, teachers, and peers. One example in Natalie Michael's fourth grade class, was creating a Google doc through Classroom in comparing and contrasting paired texts. Students responded to homework questions, Mrs. Michael viewed and commented directly on the document, students edited their work, and finally peer editing took place before students submitted their responses.



In Nicholas Reinhold's fifth grade science class, students completed an assignment where they had to create presentations on the layers of the atmosphere using Google Slides. Students worked collaboratively, in the same presentation, at the same time. The emphasis of the assignment was not only to learn about the layers of the atmosphere but for the students to understand how to contribute independent work to a cooperative assignment. Being that Google Slides allows users to work on a living document at the same time, the assignment took less time to complete than the previously used software.

Something else that Google promoted in the Woodland School is the flipped classroom model. A flipped classroom allows the students to access lectures and notes at home before the class session. This allows more time in the classroom to be devoted to application, projects and discussion. To do this flipped model, teachers are utilizing Google Classroom, so the students can access their classroom information, watch educational videos, and/or participate in a monitored discussion with their classmates. For example, a teacher can post a short math lecture on multiplying multi-digit whole numbers. Once the students watch the video at home (as often as necessary), they will be asked to answer 3 to 5 questions on the topic, or participate in a discussion about the video in Google Classroom.

