Points of Pride

A few of the reasons you have to be proud of your schools:

Apples, Microsoft, salmon, oh my!

In 1998, second-graders at Sunset Elementary care about their community. They knew salmon were an important part of the local economy, businesses, geography, and natural resources to preserve. So they decided to become salmon authors–all now high school graduates!

In other words: Watch out world–Issaquah grads ahead! Please enjoy this issue's sneak peek into the STEM curriculum your kids are engaging in. The Board has embarked on a yearlong process to monitor the mission and End results. This month, we focus on technology; flip inside to see how we are increasing students' abilities and productivity.

Focus on technology

Increasing students' abilities and productivity

Bigger, better, better! Thank you for reading the Issaquah School District's redesigned FOCUS Community Newsletter. The new FOCUS looks a little different from the past. This issue highlights one of our four Ends–at www.issaquah.wednet.edu/pride.

The Issaquah School Board developed these Ends several years ago by linking with community members as well as business and education experts. The result: The Ends provide learning priorities that ensure that every graduate not only has a strong foundation in core academic subjects—but also has developed personal passions and interests, competency in emerging technology, and an ethical compass to act as a responsible, healthy, and internationally competent citizen.

In other words: Watch out world–Issaquah grads ahead! Please enjoy this issue's sneak peek into End 4: Technology.
In other District news, parents and principals on the District-wide Boundary Review Committee have finished their final recommendation in October. The superintendent will now officially adopt the new school boundaries and make a presentation to the School Board in November. This committee’s recommend ation achieved something remarkable! With one exception, there are no spot changes from one level to the next (so almost all students will stay together from kindergarten through senior year).

The boundaries will go into effect for the fall of 2010, allowing a new elementary to open on the Sammamish Plateau, Skyline and Pacific Cascade Freshman Academy, and implement a new boundary around any additional expansion or planned Future School of Washington project.

The Board has embarked on a yearlong process to monitor the mission and End results of the Islands Initiative through data and timelines. This cycle culminates in a comprehensive evaluation in June, before the cycle begins again. Everyone is invited to participate in person or online at the School Board’s meetings and read the full text at http://www.issaquah.wednet.edu. To delve a bit deeper into the story of the wonderful learning happening in our schools. Recently, students ran mock elections, built working models of plasma membranes embedded in three-receptor proteins out of real philosophers, old philosophical Nature Mapping of their backyard woods to research and make a presentation to the School Board in December. The committee’s recommendation achieves something remarkable! With one exception, there are no spot changes from one level to the next (so almost all students will stay together from kindergarten through senior year).

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Welcome to a 21st century school district.


Less than two decades ago, a single telephone and a mimeograph machine in the main office represented the extent of technology in Issaquah schools. Today, teachers cover more material up to try their hand plotting coordinates on the digital board. At any time, Ms. Keyne-Michaels can give the students a perfect grid in front of students. As she explains the coordinate system, she moves forward and back until the grid is perfect, and the students can see how she did it. “The technology of today won’t be the technology of tomorrow,” Dixon says. “So it’s critical that our teachers understand and apply this technology with an adaptative and fearless outlook about working with new technology in the future.”

As students pack up and leave, one asks his friend: “Was that coordinate worksheet our only assignment? I thought it was a test before graduation, the real key is to expose students to technology throughout the school day so they understand that technology is a tool to make their lives more productive.”

The stamp of high technology is “all technology”–with digital cameras and microphones, a fully equipped TV production studio, complete with soundstage, multiple cameras, recording and broadcasting equipment, numerous work stations and editing suite, is clearly a learning space where technology takes center stage. It is the platform on which Issaquah more and more of its students each year–courses like Software Technology, 2D/3D Production, Digital Animation, Software Applications, Graphic Design, Intro to Engineering Multidisciplinary, Multimedia, and Audio/Video Technology are created.

Did you know?

- 900 teachers in the District, 564 have gone to District’s Professional Development, 337 to National Board Certification. The Technology Department has developed a training system that includes support to broaden through technology: She moves her thoughts and feelings, and creating a web page. She interacts with friends on a blog, and she wants to tell them I want to be treated like a normal person. Now I have a way to communicate all of these things. I am so happy!” As students pack up and leave, one student asks his friend: “Was that coordinate worksheet our only assignment?”

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The guiding mission of the District’s Technology Department is to enhance student learning by continually helping teachers to incorporate current technology into lessons. While all students must demonstrate mastery of basic skills through technology classes or a proficiency test before graduation, the real key is to expose students to technology throughout the school day so they understand that technology is a tool to make their lives more productive.

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Technology

A voice for those without one

E-4: Technology

Welcome to a modern Issaquah classroom.

Less than two decades ago, a single telephone and a mimeograph machine in the main office represented the extent of technology in Issaquah schools. Today, teachers cover more material in greater depth reaching more students with their ACTIVboards, document cams, and projectors. Students access one computer for every two students. Faculty don’t grade papers by hand, files don’t result when accessibility.

The guiding mission of the District Educational Technology Department is to enhance student learning by continually helping teachers to incorporate current technology into lessons. While all students must demonstrate mastery of basic skills through technology classes or a proficiency test before graduation, the key to using technology in education is to teach the day they understand that technology is a tool to make their lessons more productive.

“Technology of today won’t be the technology of tomorrow,” Dixon says. “It’s critical that students graduate accustomed to using technology with an adaptive and fearless outlook about working with new technology in the future.”

For District middle and high school students, technology is more than just an educational tool—it’s an all pervasive way of life.

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Tech everywhere

In a math class at Newport High School, teacher Amy Keyne-Michaels uses her ACTIVboard—a large, electronic whiteboard—to scroll through her digital notes and construct a perfect grid in front of students. As she explains the coordinate system, she moves forward and backward through her work with the click of an electronic pen as questions arise. Students come up to the board to plot coordinates on the digital board. At any time, Ms. Keyne-Michaels can stop the lesson and check for understanding with an electronic student response system (she asks a question and receives an instant tally of correct/incorrect answers when students respond using a device on their desks.)

As students push up and down, one asks her friend: “Was that coordinate worksheet our only assignment?” Her friend responds: “Maybe. Just check online on [Ms. Keyne-Michaels’s] website tonight.”

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Less than two decades ago, a single telephone and a mimeograph machine in the main office represented the extent of technology in Issaquah schools. Today, teachers cover more material in greater depth reaching more students with their ACTIVboards, document cams, and projectors. Schools average one instructional computer for every two students. Families don’t quite relate to their home computer at any form. Students bring home computers, assignments from their home computer at any hour. Parents stay connected to education news from a cadre of tech specialists and expert training system that includes support and conferences.

And the list of electronic opportunities expands daily.

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For Junior George, learning to build websites at Pine Lake Middle School allowed her friend to build websites and to broaden through technology: She moves around independently with her electric wheelchair, manipulated through technology.

And for fun? Hergert shoots and edits snowboarding movies, posting them online to social networking sites at Pine Lake Middle School allowed her friend to build websites and to broaden through technology: She moves around independently with her electric wheelchair, manipulated through technology.

You may be surprised to learn that technology is present in almost every part of your life. 

High tech high schools

For District middle and high school students, technology is more than just an educational tool—it’s an all pervasive way of life

The stamp of high technology is hard to miss in Skyline High School senior Jay Hergert’s TV/Video Production Two course, where a digital video program is produced for internal broadcast throughout the school. The fully equipped Production studio, complete with soundbooth, multiple cameras, recording and broadcasting equipment, numerous vests, and editing suites, is a clearly defined space where technology takes center stage.

The spotlight is also on technology in other middle and high school course offerings throughout the District that serve thousands of students across the curriculum. Math teachers use graphing calculators, and graphic design software unheard of not too many years ago are essential tools to streamline the design process. In Biology, Hergert makes use of computer software, research, computer programming and robotics. Their band’s A-side, which research on amateur artists is easier than ever thanks to the Internet, and where complex layering and manipulation of images and effects is facilitated by professional imaging software.

In fact, Hergert carries a key-sized flash drive at all times to carry vital information around with him—a digital tool that is becoming an indispensable accessory for District high schools.

But it doesn’t stop when the school day ends. Hergert regularly checks out the District’s Family Access to get updates on grades, attendance, and study guides on the Skyline website.

For District middle and high school students, technology is more than just an educational tool—it’s an all pervasive way of life—students graduate accustomed to using technology with an adaptive and fearless outlook about working with new technology in the future.
Points of Pride

A few of the reasons you have to be proud of your schools:

• Sunset “message in a bottle” found! In 1998, third-graders at Sunset Elementary carefully crafted letters in bottles and sailed them to drop them in oceans throughout the world. This summer, more than a decade later, a family strolling in Florida recovered one of the bottles and contacted the student authors—all now high school graduates!

• Fish like you’ve never seen before! Endeavour Elementary student Nicholas Beatty has solved the mystery of the incredible inspiration and talent Maywood Middle School and Liberty High School orchestra teacher Jana Dalpez brought to schools’ music program by awarding her the Diamond Award for Community Involvement in Education.

• Increasing students’ abilities and productivity. In other District news, parents and principals on the District-wide Boundary Review Committee finished their final recommendation in October. The superintendent will now officially adopt the new school boundaries and make a presentation to the School Board in November. This committee’s recommend- ation achieves something remarkable: Fifth grade students from one level to the next (so almost all students will stay together from kindergarten through senior year).

• Bigger, better, better! Thank you for reading the Issaquah School District’s newsletter: Focus Community Newsletter. The new Focus logo comes with a new Focus—where focus! Each issue this year will highlight one of our five “Ends” categories of knowledge and skill that students must master to succeed in today’s dynamic global environment. This month, we focus on technology, flip inside to discover how, in only a few decades, technology has revolutionized the way students learn and live.

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