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*You can download a printable version of this newsletter at:

www.sbschools.org/tech_support



Technology Issues

The reasons to choose between Macintosh and Windows based operating systems have been addressed by the implementation of dual-platform environments at South Brunswick High School. Students, teachers, and staff will access files independent of the computer system. Upon the success of this project, the district will consider using the dual-platform model in other schools.

Web Sites of Interest

By Laura Kuehner

<http://www.nea.org/helpfrom/growing/works4me/library.html>

Are you running out of creative ideas for the classroom? Well, look no further than the National Education Association's web site. This site has many teaching tips posted by educators from across the country.

Some helpful hints combat late assignments, prepare students for standardized tests, or even use pizza boxes as student portfolios. Some teachers encourage utilizing school e-mail and voice mail capabilities for students and parents to access homework assignments from home.

<http://www.thegateway.org>

Need new ideas for lesson plans? The Gateway to Education Materials' web site has a database of education web sites on the Internet. It allows the user to search for web sites related to specific topics appropriate for each grade level. The site even has a list of topics to browse, in case you want to include a new topic in your curriculum. Best of all, most of these web sites are free!



• • • **STAFF NEWS**

Who is the technical support contact person?

In every school building, the Technology Coordinator(s) will handle all school-related technology purchase requests and computer support issues.

The school's Head Custodian(s) will handle electrical and wiring support requests.

The district has made every effort to provide each school an assigned technician, plus a designated day to support each individual school facility.

The Technical Support Department can be reached at the HS ext. 5249 or e-mail questions to Support@sbschools.org.

TECHNOLOGY SURVEY
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The purpose of the Information Technology (IT) Survey is to analyze your responses to the district's use of technology.

We appreciate the opportunity to assist the schools and hope we are responsive to your needs. By completing this IT Survey, the Technology Department can identify areas requiring additional support.

The following address will access the brief survey. It will take no more than five minutes to complete each section.

<http://www.sbtechs.org/Survey/>

Comments and suggestions can be e-mailed to the following address:

Survey@sbschools.org

Feedback enhances our ability to meet your support expectations.

Thank you

STUDENT INFORMATION UPDATE
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By Dr. John Haymond

This fall, we retired to pasture an old friend, MacSchool, and replaced it with a more powerful young colt, “PowerSchool”. MacSchool, our venerable Student Information System (SIS), served us well for over a decade, but no longer had the power and capacity to meet the sophisticated data needs of our schools and central office.

A SIS stores essential demographic information on students. It provides for efficient entry and retrieval of emergency contacts, daily attendance, course grades, health, and discipline data. In addition such a system contains complex technologies that generate basic reports, report cards, college transcripts, and master course schedules for middle schools and high schools.

Last fall a conscientious advisory committee examined the leading student information systems on the market and PowerSchool emerged as the one most compatible with the needs of our district:

- PowerSchool (PS) offers the power to access records for large student populations efficiently, and allows for expansion as enrollment increases.
- PS is a web-based SIS accessible by both PC’s and MACs. This is crucial for any dual-platform initiatives our district may put in place.
- PS provides real time data across the district. Once a new student is registered and entered into the system, the information is immediately available to the school staff as well as the central office staff.
- PS stores the data in one central database from which demographic data can be electronically exported to other essential district systems such as *WinSNAP* (Cafeteria), *Alexandria* (Library), *EduLog* (Transportation), *Contour* (Special Education IEP’s), and *Security Central* (a district system being developed in-house for emergency situations related to the Safe Schools initiatives).

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- PS is an efficient system that requires just one central server to house the software and store the data. This reduces our support costs for back-ups, recovery, and other services.
- PS has a flexible scheduling component that meets the needs of our high school, and enables the middle schools to build common master schedules to support the unique aspects of their course schedules.

The security of a web-based program like PowerSchool must be vigilantly guarded at all times. To ensure the confidentiality of student records, secure user access to the system must be carefully monitored and maintained. With those mandates in mind, the Board of Education approved the selection of David Million as the “Manager of Information Systems.” David will provide the crucial technological expertise and daily management this sophisticated web-based system requires.

PowerSchool is here! Over the next months, you can rely on our *TechTalk* web site to keep you informed about the status of the new “state-of-the-art” student information system!

Director's Corner ...

Over the past year, our district has tackled a plethora of issues that have truly tested our ability to perform at an expected level of expertise. We humbly acknowledge that the district's Technology Department was occasionally confronted with situations beyond our control. I paraphrase an old adage--what has not destroyed us, only makes us stronger. As we move forward with additional personnel and resources, the Technology Department is becoming proficient in handling the technological initiatives of a growing district.