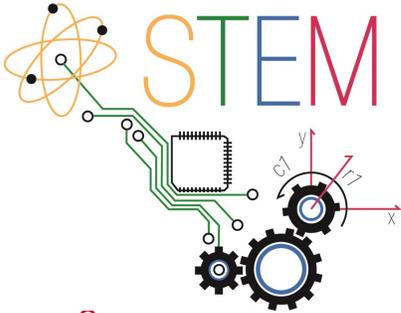


April Newsletter



FERNDALE SCHOOLS
SECONDARY
HONORS



CAMBRIDGE
International Examinations

Excellence in education



FERNDALE SCHOOLS
**EARLY
COLLEGE**



FERNDALE SCHOOLS
ADVANCED PLACEMENT
INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA

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April Quick Calendar

April 2015						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

April 3-10 - No School/Spring Break

April 13 - Board Study Session @Harding, 5:30 PM

April 15 - BLT meeting @Harding, 8:00-3:00

April 16 - Standards-Based Grading PD # 2, 4:00-6:00 PM @ Harding

April 20 - Board Meeting @Harding, 7:00 PM

April 21 - ILT Meeting @ Harding, 4:00-5:30 PM; Cambridge Parent Meeting @Harding, 6:00 PM

April 22 - Co-Teaching PD #3, 4:00-6:00 PM @ Harding

Looking ahead to May

May 12: ILT Meeting

May 14: Standards-Based Grading PD #3

May 19: Elementary Probationary Teachers Mtg

May 11: Board Study Session

May 11-15: AP Exams

May 18: Board Meeting

May 22: No school - Comp Day

May 25: No school - Memorial Day

No PLCs in May

Click our logo on every page to return to page 1!



MACUL Review

Every year, MACUL holds its annual conference in either Grand Rapids or downtown Detroit. This year, it was at Cobo Hall and attended by 2 Ferndale employees: Charlotte Oliver (Business and Computers teachers at FHS and UHS) and Beth Grillo (ELA Curriculum Coordinator). Below, you'll see the top 3 (or so) tips they learned that will be particularly helpful for teachers!

Charlotte	Beth
<p>Blog with students! It doesn't matter where you begin, www.blogger.com, www.kidblog.org, or www.edublogs.org what matters is that you begin. This can be done with all ages. www.commonsemmedia.org is very helpful place to start in teaching digital citizenship and since our students are the digital natives and many of us the "digital immigrants", kids need to learn this stuff. Allowing students to publish their work for others to enjoy and comment on is such a wonderful experience we should allow our students to be a part of. More on blogging with students can be found at http://goo.gl/f6vDxN</p> <p>We should have Maker Stations in all of our buildings. We should also create flexible learning spaces carved out in all of our buildings.</p> <p>And last but not least we should have a "You Matter" Wall in all of our buildings.</p> <p>My personal thought on all three of these is that we should never allow compliance to drive our programs. We have to continue to find ways to allow students to learn in all the different ways that our kids learn and create as many opportunities as we can to make sure they know we care. We should all just asked this one question as we begin our day: "Is what I'm doing today what is best for kids?" Let's let that drive our decision making, our collaborative efforts, or journey to empower our students.</p>	<p>Remind (what used to be Remind 101) now has "office hours," that allows you to safely chat with your students at a prescribed time out of school hours. So, for example, you could set up office hours every Wednesday from 7:00-8:00 PM, and your students would know that they can get extra help during that time every week.</p> <p>Screenleap allows you to share your screen for free with up to 10 users by sending them a URL. So, if you're using Chromebooks and want to show kids how to do something, you can share your screen by having them enter a short URL. You can turn the sharing off when you're done. You can pay to share with more students, if you want.</p> <p>Scratch is a program that you can use to teach programming to kids. It is a great way to teach students logical thinking and coding language in an "if-then" format. There's a lot you can do with Scratch by pairing it with something called Makey-Makey to teach basic circuitry. Click here and here for some really cool explanations and examples of the Makey Makey. Here's another video that's kinda silly.</p>



Why Google Apps for Education and Chromebooks?

by Rich Kiker, the top-rated Google Certified Trainer and founder of Kiker Learning

Here are some of the reasons why Chromebooks make sense in education:

Educational Goals:

- Increase student engagement
- Expose our students to the latest technology - software and hardware
- Create student centered learning environments
- Allow students and teachers to do new things, work collaboratively and create projects
- Prepare our students for the transition to online testing as we move toward Common Core State Standards implementation
- Provide equitable access to computers to all students (1:1)

Here are some videos and resources explaining Google Apps and Chromebooks in Education:

- Why Google Apps for Education? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWDI_249CFY&feature=youtu.be
- Why Chromebooks for Education <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MeSBorbRZOA&feature=youtu.be>
- Chromebooks for Education <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWGPzoKGxhU>
- Google Apps - who else is using it? Lots of schools! <http://blog.backupify.com/2013/05/14/getting-schooled-by-google-the-growth-of-google-apps-for-education-infographic/>
- Six Reasons Educators Say They Are Choosing Chromebooks Over iPads, Netbooks And PCs
- <http://www.forbes.com/sites/eliseackerman/2013/07/22/six-reasons-educators-say-they-are-choosing-chromebooks-over-ipads-netbooks-and-pcs/>

Educational Benefits of Chromebooks and Google Apps for Education (GAPE):

- Fast boot time – 5-6 seconds - They boot up in less than 8 seconds and resume instantly -- eliminating the typical down time wasted while traditional computers start up and connect to a network.
- Applications, school work, and settings are stored in the cloud, so multiple students can use the same Chromebook and still have their own personalized experience when they sign in.
- The Google Applications are free for student use; such as Google Docs (word processing, spreadsheets, and presentation).
- Allows for easy student and teacher collaboration and feedback.
- Safe
- allows students to create projects, instead of just consuming information

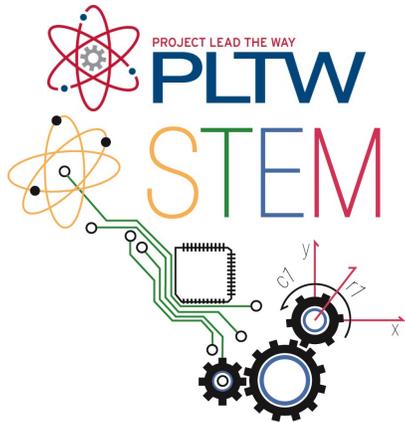
Chromebooks

- Cost - 1/3 cost of a laptop
- 1/10th the setup time
- less IT support needed, automatic updates
- easy to use, fast, light
- start up in 7 seconds
- battery lasts 6.5 hours or more (8+ hours for some)
- thousands of free web-apps available
- internet based - student data is stored online and accessible from any device
- works with digital resources we already use
- Research shows that technology-transformed interventions improve learning
- Allow for collaborative, project based lessons and learning
- Technology based, online collaboration and personalized instruction helps with student engagement and learning

Huge User Base

- Over 30 Million Google Apps for Education Users
- 180 Countries
- Over 2400 school districts in the US use Google Apps.
- 74 out of the top 100 Colleges in the US, including 7/8 Ivy League schools, use Google Apps

Ferdale Schools' New Program Guide



Project Lead the Way - FMS

- Seventh and eighth grade elective
- PLTW Taught in more than 6,500 schools nationwide.
- Research-based curriculum
- FMS will be the only middle school in the area to have Project Lead the Way
- 2“foundational units” are being offered in fall— designing and modeling, and automation and robotics.
 - Designing and modeling classes include instruction on the engineering and design process, measurements, sketching and dimensioning techniques, and designing for production.
 - Automation and robotics instruction will teach students about mechanical and automated systems.



Cambridge Honors - FMS

- Honors-level program in ELA, Math, and Science for 7th and 8th graders
- Test-in program for Ferdale residents and Oakland County Schools of Choice students
- Test-in metrics include NWEA scores and Cambridge entrance exams
- Cambridge-provided teacher training to occur this summer



Ferdale Schools Early College - FHS and UHS

- Partnership with Baker College offers FREE program which leads to an Associate’s degree after the 13th year
- 4 pathways offered: Criminal Justice, Medical Assisting, Marketing and Business, and Computer Programming
- Students express interest and begin classes as early as sophomore year
- All students have opportunity to get direct credit from Baker College for some classes



Lower Elementary Montessori - Roosevelt Primary

- Housed at Roosevelt Primary beginning next year
- For 6-9 year olds who seek to continue Montessori educational practices
- Free of tuition
- Students will take part in all school family activities



Secondary Honors/APID - FHS and UHS

- Secondary Honors program provides enriched experience for students who want a challenge and exposure
- Must take at least 2 honors/AP classes each year
- Must participate in one summer extended learning activity (college course, academic or arts camp, etc)
- Advanced Placement International Diploma is awarded to students who pass 5 AP exams and send their scores to an international university
- Secondary Honors students must pursue the APID (at FHS)

[Finland schools: Subjects scrapped and replaced with 'topics' as country reforms its education system](#) ([Read the article on Mind/Shift](#))

With Finland radically reforming the way its children are taught, Richard Garner visits Helsinki to find out if the teachers approve
by Richard Garner

Friday, 20 March 2015

For years, Finland has been the by-word for a successful education system, perched at the top of international league tables for literacy and numeracy... Finland is about to embark on one of the most radical education reform programmes ever undertaken by a nation state – scrapping traditional “teaching by subject” in favour of “teaching by topic”.

“This is going to be a big change in education in Finland that we’re just beginning,” said Liisa Pohjolainen, who is in charge of youth and adult education in Helsinki – the capital city at the forefront of the reform programme.

Pasi Silander, the city’s development manager, explained: “What we need now is a different kind of education to prepare people for working life. Young people use quite advanced computers. In the past the banks had lots of bank clerks totting up figures but now that has totally changed. We therefore have to make the changes in education that are necessary for industry and modern society.”

Subject-specific lessons – an hour of history in the morning, an hour of geography in the afternoon – are already being phased out for 16-year-olds in the city’s upper schools. They are being replaced by what the Finns call “phenomenon” teaching – or teaching by topic. For instance, a teenager studying a vocational course might take “cafeteria services” lessons, which would include elements of maths, languages (to help serve foreign customers), writing skills and communication skills.

More academic pupils would be taught cross-subject topics such as the European Union - which would merge elements of economics, history (of the countries involved), languages and geography.

There are other changes too, not least to the traditional format that sees rows of pupils sitting passively in front of their teacher, listening to lessons or waiting to be questioned. Instead there will be a more collaborative approach, with pupils working in smaller groups to solve problems while improving their communication skills.

Marjo Kyllonen, Helsinki’s education manager – who will be presenting her blueprint for change to the council at the end of this month, said: “It is not only Helsinki but the whole of Finland who will be embracing change. We really need a rethinking of education and a redesigning of our system, so it prepares our children for the future with the skills that are needed for today and tomorrow. There are schools that are teaching in the old fashioned way which was of benefit in the beginnings of the 1900s – but the needs are not the same and we need something fit for the 21st century.”

The reforms reflect growing calls in the UK – not least from the Confederation of British Industry and Labour’s Shadow Education Secretary Tristram Hunt – for education to promote character, resilience and communication skills, rather than just pushing children through “exam factories”.

But there would currently be little appetite in the UK for going as far as ditching traditional subjects.

Even in Finland, the reforms have met objections from teachers and heads – many of whom have spent their lives focusing on a particular subject only to be told to change their approach.

Ms Kyllonen has been advocating a “co-teaching” approach to lesson planning, with input from more than one subject specialist. Teachers who embrace this new system can receive a small top-up in salary.

About 70 per cent of the city’s high school teachers have now been trained in adopting the new approach, according to Mr Silander.

(Finland, continued from page 5)

“We have really changed the mindset,” he said. “It is quite difficult to get teachers to start and take the first step... but teachers who have taken to the new approach say they can’t go back.”

Early data shows that students are benefiting too. In the two years since the new teaching methods first began being introduced, pupil “outcomes” – they prefer that word to standards – have improved.

Finnish schools are obliged to introduce a period of “phenomenon-based teaching” at least once a year. These projects can last several weeks. In Helsinki, they are pushing the reforms at a faster pace with schools encouraged to set aside two periods during the year for adopting the new approach. Ms Kyllonen’s blueprint, to be published later this month, envisages the reforms will be in place across all Finnish schools by 2020.

Meanwhile, the pre-school sector is also embracing change through an innovative project, the Playful Learning Centre, which is engaged in discussions with the computer games industry about how it could help introduce a more “playful” learning approach to younger children.

“We would like to make Finland the leading country in terms of playful solutions to children’s learning,” said Olavi Mentanen, director of the PLC project,

The eyes of the education world will be upon Finland as it opts for change: will it be able to retain or improve its showing in the PISA league tables published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

If it does, how will the rest of the education world react?

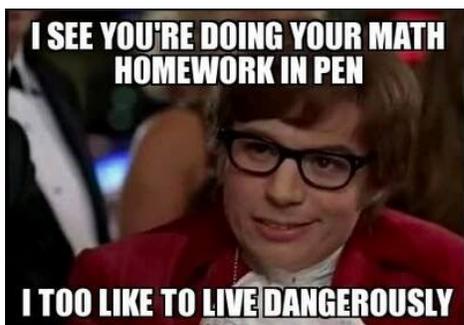
Case study: Finnish approach

It is an English lesson, but there is a map of continental Europe on the whiteboard. The children must combine weather conditions with the different countries displayed on the board. For instance, today it is sunny in Finland and foggy in Denmark. This means the pupils combine the learning of English with geography.

Welcome to Siltamaki primary school in Helsinki – a school with 240 seven- to 12-year-olds – which has embraced Finland’s new learning style. Its principal, Anne-Mari Jaatinen, explains the school’s philosophy: “We want the pupils to learn in a safe, happy, relaxed and inspired atmosphere.”

We come across children playing chess in a corridor and a game being played whereby children rush around the corridors collecting information about different parts of Africa. Ms Jaatinen describes what is going on as “joyful learning”. She wants more collaboration and communication between pupils to allow them to develop their creative thinking skills.

[Read the entire article on Mind/Shift.](#)



Inspiration... (We know March was hard...)



Ramsey Musallam: 3 Rules to Spark Learning

“**Rule number one:** Curiosity comes first. Questions can be windows to great instruction, but not the other way around. **Rule number two:** Embrace the mess. We're all teachers. We know learning is ugly. And just because the scientific method is allocated to page five of section 1.2 of chapter one of the one that we all skip, okay, trial and error can still be an informal part of what we do every single day at Sacred Heart Cathedral in room 206. **And rule number three:** Practice reflection. What we do is important. It deserves our care, but it also deserves our revision. Can we be the surgeons of our classrooms? As if what we are doing one day will save lives. Our students our worth it. And each case is different.”

[Watch the Ted Talk here](#) (6 1/2 minutes long!)



Adora Svitek: What Adults Can Learn From Kids

“The traits the word ‘childish’ addresses are seen so often in adults that we should abolish this age-discriminatory word when it comes to criticizing behavior associated

with irresponsibility and irrational thinking... Then again, who's to say that certain types of irrational thinking aren't exactly what the world needs? Maybe you've had grand plans before but stopped yourself, thinking, ‘That's impossible,’ or, ‘That costs too much,’ or, ‘That won't benefit me.’ For better or worse, we kids aren't hampered as much when it comes to thinking about reasons why not to do things. Kids can be full of inspiring aspirations and hopeful thinking. Like my wish that no one went hungry or that everything were a free kind of utopia. How many of you still dream like that and believe in the possibilities? Sometimes a knowledge of history and the past failures of utopian ideals can be a burden because you know that if everything were free, then the food stocks would become depleted and scarce and lead to chaos. On the other hand, we kids still dream about perfection. And that's a good thing because in order to make anything a reality, you have to dream about it first....In many ways, our audacity to imagine helps push the boundaries of possibility. For instance, the Museum of Glass in Tacoma, Washington... has a program called Kids Design Glass, and kids draw their own ideas for glass art. Now, the resident artist said they got some of their best ideas through the program because kids don't think about the limitations of how hard it can be to blow glass into certain shapes; they just think of good ideas.”

[Watch the Ted Talk here](#) (about 8 minutes long)

Rita Pierson: Every Kid Needs a Champion

“Can we stand to have more relationships? Absolutely. Will you like all your children? Of course not. And you know your toughest kids are never absent. Never. You won't like them all, and the tough ones show up for a reason. It's the connection. It's the relationships. And while you won't like them all, the key is, they can never, ever know it. So teachers become great actors and great actresses, and we come to work when we don't feel like it, and we're listening to policy that doesn't make sense, and we teach anyway. We teach anyway, because that's what we do. Teaching and learning should bring joy. How powerful would our world be if we had kids who were not afraid to take risks, who were not afraid to think, and who had a champion? Every child deserves a champion, an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection, and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be.”

[Watch the Ted Talk here](#) (about 8 minutes long)

