



In the Know...Tech Talks...April 2018

Please find all of the recent [Avon Grove In the Know - Tech Talks](#) on the AGSD website.

Kat's Kilobytes: As the school year begins to wind down, the Tech Office is planning a busy summer full of projects, maintenance, upgrades and improvements. One of these improvements is a new password policy in order to increase data protection and integrity. Passwords are extremely valuable to hackers. Stolen passwords are the root cause of most hacking-related breaches. The National Institute of Standards and Technology ([NIST](#)) is finalizing new password guidelines. AGSD will implement many of the recommended guidelines while balancing the ease of access to District technology. Changes implemented will include not only password complexity rules but simple security measures such as avoiding writing your passwords down in an unsecured location. Look for more information and guidelines on this policy change before the end of this school year.

Mike's Minute: Have you ever looked up a YouTube video when not on the AGSD network and tried to use it in the classroom only to find it unavailable? Avon Grove's network operates in 'YouTube Restricted-Mode.' Restricted-Mode doesn't show mature content, graphic imagery, weapons/violence or anything deemed inappropriate by the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Restricted content will not show in video searches, playlists, or related videos. Since YouTube has these videos categorized in their backend infrastructure, the District cannot 'un-restrict' specific videos. If you find that your chosen video is blocked please check for other similar resources or use an AGSD Chromebook which replicates the web access students have. Teachers in 1:1 grades have been provided a Chromebook for exactly this purpose.

Chris' Cookies: Thinking of ways to increase creative writing in your classroom? [Storybird](#) is a great resource for increasing the amount of words written in your classroom. Storybird starts with artwork. Students can browse from the gallery of illustrations or search for something they are interested in. Once they find a collection of illustrations that inspires them, they will choose what to write: Poem, short story picture book, or chapter book. Students will then select illustrations from their chosen collection to accompany each page of their original story. When students are finished, they can publish their story to the web, share it with the class, or order an actual copy of their book for home. Consider trying [Storybird](#) today!



Karen's Korner: [CheckMark](#) is a new Chrome extension that was developed to make it easier for teachers to provide feedback to students in Google Docs. Once the extension is installed, all you need to do is [highlight where you see an issue](#) and select one of the many predefined comments (capitalization, tense, rephrase, and subject/verb agreement) and a comment will automatically be created. You also have the ability to create your own custom comments. Check it out today by [installing the extension](#)!



New SIF Agent: The School Interoperability Framework or SIF, is an open specification data sharing protocol for educational institutions. SIF is not a single product, but an initiative that enables diverse applications to interact and share data. To connect the SIF data across the multitude of Avon Grove's systems and software platforms we use a ZIS, or Zone Integration Server. In May the Tech Office will upgrade the SIF/ZIS agent to a next generation product. The new product by [CPSI](#), will automate several steps that currently require manual intervention by staff. Not only does this save time, but it eliminates the data entry errors we all make when typing in credentials. Special thanks to Wendy Filla, Information Specialist, Kat Lawyer, Systems Specialist, Sue Herbert, FSE Tech Specialist, and Mike Tustin, Network Specialist, on this important project.

Clint's Clues: Would you like to have something 3D printed? This is a great way to see your ideas come to life. There are several ways to make this happen using the 3D printer in Center Court of AGHS. You can create your own object using free online 3D design software such as [TinkerCad](#) or download a pre-designed object from a 3D maker site such as [Thingiverse](#). Just submit your request using the [AGHS 3D Printer Form](#) and the 3D printing team will help you bring your vision to life. Give 3D printing a try!

Infrastructure Updates: Spring Break was a busy time for the Tech Office! The installation of Avon Grove's new virtual environment, along with the successful migration of all data, was completed without interruption to normal network operations. Also installed was the cabling to add 26 wireless access points at AGHS. All the cabling is above the ceiling with termination points in the center of classrooms on one side and network closets on the other side. Installation of the Chromebook charging towers was completed at AGIS and is 50% complete at AGHS. The tower installations occur during second shift to not interrupt normal school operations. All charging towers will be installed and operational by Memorial Day.

Wendy's Wire: PowerSchool version 12 is coming this summer! The most important feature in this new release is the 'Student Contacts' upgrades. Contacts become their own entity in PowerSchool with the ability to add any number of phone numbers, addresses, and email addresses. Parent data access accounts can also be maintained for each individual. Additionally, contacts can be related to any number of students. Each relationship can hold current and historical details, such as custody, lives with, school pick up, and whether or not the contact receives mailings from the school. Another key enhancement to PowerSchool V12 includes the support of alternative gender pronouns beyond 'Male' and 'Female.' Look for a preview of training materials from Karen and Chris by the end of this school year.

Gary's Goal - Chromebooks for Teachers? It's taken four years to get teachers caught up with device replacements, primarily in the form of entry level enterprise [Dell Latitude Laptops](#). With an established end-of-life cycle now on track for all staff and with teachers' regular use of Chromebooks in the 1:1 grades, it's time to seriously explore the fulltime use of Chromebooks for teachers. Avon Grove email is in the Cloud, storage in the form of MS OneDrive and Google Drive is in the Cloud, Office Suite applications are in the Cloud in both MS and Google, PowerSchool's PowerTeacher-Pro is in the Cloud, and staff printing is accessible from the Cloud, meaning the obstacles to a web-based operating system have been eliminated. And, the price point is about 50% less per device for a souped-up, enterprise grade, adult-sized Chromebook with local storage. Administrators, power users and some high school departments will always be dependent on an operating system that can facilitate local applications and direct network access. Simply stated, if your curriculum or job functions require a Windows device (laptop/desktop) you're always going to have one provided to you. Movement on this exciting endeavor will begin in earnest in the fall of next school year.