



In the Know...Tech Talks...Nov-Dec 2017

Happy Holidays from the Tech Office

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

NEW Parent Tech FAQ: Over the course of a school year, especially at the start of the year, the Tech Office tracks the support questions we receive from parents and the frequency of those topical questions. Based on this feedback, we have created a new page on the AGSD website, [Parent Tech FAQ!](#) This page assembles the resources and support parents most frequently request. A 'page-pop' on the Parents tab draws special attention to this new parent support on the web. Thanks to Chris Montagna and Karen Norris for the Parent Tech FAQ content and Kat Lawyer for the web design.

Mike's Minute: You may have noticed that some websites that you accessed in the past have now been blocked. Why the change? It is because we have upgraded from an older URL filtering database to a newer, more robust filtering database. URL filtering is necessary in large enterprise environments like school districts as they help reduce infection from dangerous or suspicious websites, and protect against malware and phishing sites and viruses. The filtering database itself is dynamic and constantly updates the list of blocked websites. It achieves this by continually 'crawling' the web looking at websites and categorizing them. The filtering also looks inside (decrypts) SSL websites (https:// sites), and determines their vulnerabilities and their effect on the end-user. Remember, if you need a site whitelisted or blocked, please enter an [online help ticket](#).

Karen's Korner: Do you spend lots of time searching for resources to meet the variety of learners in your classroom? To help, the District will soon launch access for teachers and students in grades K-8 to the full version of Brain Pop. Brain Pop provides cross-curricular digital content including animated movies, [learning games](#) (coding), [quizzes](#), and other activities such as [printable](#) to go with the digital content. The full version will include [Brain Pop](#), [Brain Pop Jr.](#), [Brain Pop Español](#), and [Brain Pop ESL](#). Because of its integration with Schoology, resources can be assigned to individuals, groups or a whole class. Brain Pop also has [integration with NEWSELA](#), [provides lesson plans](#) and shares [ideas on how](#) to use it in the classroom. Teacher and student account will be auto-created within Schoology, so no new passwords to remember.

Chris' Cookies: Calling all ELA teachers! Have you balked at the idea of using the elementary Makerspaces because you don't see a connection to your curriculum? Consider using [Novel Engineering](#) as a way to break in to the Makerspace with your ELA classes. Using novel studies to dive into the 4 C's (Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Communication, Creativity) is incredibly easy when using the Novel Engineering model. Using this method, and realizing that there is no single right or wrong answer, students will identify problems faced by the main character in a novel and then come together in the Makerspace to explore, build, test, and revise a prototype of a solution. Interested in giving this a shot? Email [Chris Montagna](#) to set up a planning session!



Kat's Kilobytes: The AGSD Tech Office has spam and phishing controls in place which greatly reduce the amount of those types of emails sent to avongrove.org. However, there is no fool-proof way to avoid [phishing attacks](#). What we can do is keep informed about phishing techniques and know some [ways to avoid phishing scams](#). Here are several techniques to combat phishing:

- Listen for new phishing scam alerts in the news and keep an eye out for them.
- Before you click, hover over links in the email to see where it might be taking you; the link may look unfamiliar or be a long string of characters that is intended to open a spoofed website or page where it can ask you for personal information.
- Some emails, attachments and websites look pretty convincing. Look for 'https' in the URL and instead of following an email link open a browser and type the web address manually and then login.
- Never give out personal information over the internet. If you were deceived by a phishing email change your password immediately!
- If it's too good to be true, conveys a sense of urgency, or came from an unusual sender, or just feels suspicious, don't click on it!

Clint's Clues: Avon Grove High School is 3D printing everywhere! The championship winning 'FIRST Robotics' team has purchased a [3D printer](#) that can print competition-ready parts by mixing materials such as carbon fiber/plastic or metal/plastics. We know that this technology combined with our amazing robotics students can take them to another winning season! Chris Herrmann, in only his second year at AGHS, won a grant from General Electric that included two new 3D printers, adding to the two already in his lab. The Art department has purchased a [3D printer](#) that solidifies a liquid with a laser to create amazing and intricate 3D objects. Additionally, there is a new 3D printer in Center Court of AGHS that is available for any high school student to print their creative designs to. This puts AGHS's count of 3D printers to seven, and the total district count to twelve 3D printers.

Wendy's Wire: Student data contained in PowerSchool is used in various ways including state level reporting to PDE, federal reporting to DOE, transportation for public, charter and private school students, state and local assessments, student health services, food services, library services and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) to name only a few. As an ever increasing amount of data is aggregated, the need to evolve data collection methods and data fidelity continues. We've been busy behind the scenes updating PowerSchool pages to remove deprecated code and update specific fields to ensure data uniformity and accuracy. The newly remodeled Pupil Services, MTSS, and Transportation pages reflect some of these recent updates.

Gary's Goal: *Regular Tech Audits.* A best practice is to regularly perform IT security and performance audits. The Tech Office is in the midst of two such audits. One audit has been conducted by the CCIU with a focus on resources, staffing and training. The second audit is being conducted by a vendor (free of charge) with a focus on security, redundancy and accountability. The recommendations from these two audits will help form the fiduciary and project plans for next school year and beyond. Thanks to Mike Tustin for facilitating the network auditing and monitoring hardware.

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A special Avon Grove School District welcome to the newest member of the tech team, [Erin Scriber](#), Tech Specialist at Avon Grove Intermediate School. We are excited to have Erin at AGIS and know she will provide excellent customer service for many years to come.

Welcome Erin!

