

Educational Technology Hearing for Senator Kay Hagan by Dale Miller, 12th Grade Student at Mooresville High School, Mooresville Graded School District

Personal Perspective of MGSD's Digital Conversion

Incredibly significant changes have been brought about by MGSD's decision to go digital. I was in the 8th grade when every student in the district, from 3rd to 12th grade received the privilege to take a laptop computer home for educational use every day. Little did I, or my peers know that the machines we would be using would shape our educational lives forever.

Each of MGSD's teachers had been trained and familiarized with the technology prior to the students getting devices of their own. This enabled us as students to enter the conversion with a sense of direction and guidance. As you can imagine, each and every student was thrilled to be given this opportunity, and quickly learned how to correctly and efficiently use the machines. We were fully aware that our district had opened a new door in the field of education, and we were all prepared to create our own unique path.

Monumental Advantages attributed to the Conversion

Of course, MGSD's Superintendent, Dr. Mark Edwards, set the educational advancement of the students as his first priority in the Conversion. As previously imagined, students and teachers alike would now be capable of going online from their individual laptops and browsing the world wide web for resources. Credible and interactive educational web sites such as Education Portal and Khan Academy can easily be accessed since the Conversion, and many teachers and students do use organizations such as these to further their learning.

If a student is struggling with a particular topic, he or she can now easily email their teacher and ask for assistance. Whether the students are on vacation, holiday breaks, or simply at home for the evening, they can reach their teacher via email with the technology given to them. This has been an incredible help in my personal education, as I have never been one to shy away from asking questions. The emailing route allows a student to receive one on one instruction with his or her teacher with the flexibility of time and location.

Apart from getting additional help on a given subject, the Digital Conversion within MGSD has even broadened the already vast array of courses offered. Many of my colleagues take courses online, and are linked with virtual schools around the nation. If a particular class is not offered at my particular high school, the Digital Conversion allows a student to explore their interests and take that class online. Not only does the student get the personalized education they deserve, but they are also being connected with instructors and students nationwide.

Lasting Effect of the Digital Conversion

When asked about the largest effect that the Digital Conversion has on students, the first thing that comes to mind is independence. It is truly astonishing how many possibilities are opened up through technology such as that throughout Mooresville Graded School District. When asked to complete a project on any given topic, students in MGSD are, in a sense, set free. There are countless options and combinations of applications, websites and learning tools at that student's service, that a project is almost a liberating assignment. I feel that it is this attitude towards learning matched with the tools given in MGSD that makes for successful students, and successful lives.

What exactly do I mean by that? Well, quite frankly, I am confident in saying that the technology given to Mooresville High School students, in particular, makes them more apt to succeed past MGSD, and into colleges nationwide. All high schoolers must face the reality that college isn't quite the same as what they have been accustomed to for their K-12 educations. No longer does the teacher's job rely on how well the students do. No longer does he or she hold students' hands and give them an easy way out. College students are, and must be, independent learners who are willing to accept just that. They realize that their learning style, and similarly their education, is different than that of their peers.

Technology simply opens the doors to this sense of realization. The sooner a student can understand his or herself and learn on their own terms, the sooner that student will taste success. Instead of being deprived of individuality and expression, students in MGSD are encouraged to take their educations to the next level and create their own path.

Although Mooresville Graded School District is one that is pioneering the mass addition of technology to education, it is certainly not the only one that recognizes the benefits. Without even realizing it, I myself am surrounded by students who love to push themselves to achieve more, and have become more independent in doing so. I attribute this solely to the Digital Conversion. MGSD did more than hand students laptop computers, the district allowed kids to experience the most beneficial and exciting side of education. Therefore, I am not alone when I say that with the tools given to me by my school district, I am well on my way to success. Not just success in the world of education and learning, but the world that comes soon after and lasts a lifetime.