

# Tech Talk

Brunswick School  
Department

September, 2014

## News from the Main Office

### Back By Request

Tech Talk is a newsletter that is put out every other month by the Technology Department. The newsletter is filled with information about technology use in the district and tips on using technology.

Summer is our busiest time of the year, and this past summer was no exception, even though the technology budget was cut by nearly a quarter million dollars. We are always trying to find ways to provide the equipment requested, as well as replacing equipment that needs to be replaced. Unfortunately, due to the budget cut we needed to reallocate numerous computers and remove some old equipment but not replace it. Additionally, we were not able to meet many teacher's requests for ceiling mounted projectors or document cameras.

Other items of note:

We have a long term sub at Harriet Beecher Stowe as Jill Bernier is out due to health issues so take a moment to say hi to Bill.

Please bare with us we get back into the groove.

Have a great start to this new school year and as always feel free to contact me if you have questions or concerns.

Sue

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### Technology Department Staff

#### District

Sue Woodhams –Director of Technology Integration  
Matt Engstrom System Administrator

Jeff Hathaway Network Administrator

Mike Hedger Technology Support Specialist (the floater)

Sharon Kennett Data Person

#### Brunswick High School

Mike Nelson

Mike Hedger

#### Brunswick Junior High School

Jeff Hathaway - Windows

Jerry Cross - Macs

Dan Dearing – Integration

#### Elementary School

Coffin

Jeff Hathaway

HBS

Bill Congdon

Gwen Christman – Elementary Integrator

## Summer Fun

This summer we were able to install replacement servers for a few of our older servers. These upgrades will give us increased performance for many services, and allow for future expandability. One example of this increase is a much faster virtual server host. The previous server was five years old, and the replacement has twice as much memory and much faster and more efficient processors and hard drives. We did have a casualty as a result of a power outage that occurred a few weeks ago at the junior high school. After two hours without power, the battery backup exhausted its reserve battery supply. At this point, all of the servers and switches in the junior high data closet shut down instantly. This is never a good thing, and in this case, the web content and spam filter appliance did not start up after power was restored. A replacement was installed, and a lot of work went into restoring the configuration. It is back up and running, and the work continues on finishing up the unique configuration changes that were implemented for our district. All of the “behind-the-scenes” work in the technology department will improve stability and performance throughout the district. We hope that everyone enjoyed their summer vacation.

Matt

## DATA DATA DATA DATA DATA DATA DATA

This past year has been great fun as I learn a new job. This summer I even became a techie and worked at the high school for a few days. Whenever you think about Data that is my job..like password for ids...or NWEA's or Smarter Balance testing or uploading information to the State. I am also the person who prints ID's....Greg Bartlett is always find things for me to help support as well.

Sharon



“What I did this summer: by Mike Nelson”

Welcome back! It's been a busy Summer, starting with over 50 staff laptops that were prepared and issued in the summer loan program the end of June. After getting the teacher loaner laptops out the door I started installing updates in the various labs and laptop carts. Knowing that the staff Macbook Air laptops would arrive with OS X Mavericks (10.9), I began upgrading all of our existing Mac platforms to the same operating system, including the iMacs in the Foreign Language Lab, the Art Cart, and the Macbook Air laptops purchased last year. After receiving the upgrade for Adobe Creative Suite I created an image for the Macbooks in the Art Photography class and then deployed it to the 25 machines in that lab. I also upgraded the Adobe Creative Suite on the Windows laptops in the Art department and the computers in the Business Lab in room 139. New machines began arriving and Staff machines became the priority. With help from Sharron and my wife I continued to make progress on the laptop carts as I provided support to imaging efforts for HBS desktops and Coffin, BJH, and BHS laptops. Like a Tsunami – starting slow and gaining momentum – the swell of staff and faculty returning to BHS from vacation began and once again staff laptops were the priority. Loaners were taken and data transfers to the new laptops were verified with each person. The older Macbook Air laptops were upgraded to Mavericks, printers and connections to servers were tested and verified. Updates were installed and missing software added. The new Music Lab of iMac computers were imaged and set up, tested and installed. Efforts continued for upgrading the older Bytespeed labs after a breakthrough in our imaging process received from Bytespeed support. The Learning Lab was finally running a stable image. There is still work to be done – the CAD lab needs to be re-imaged, the Bytespeed lab in room 141 will benefit from re-imaging, the Macbooks for Jeanne Shields still need to be completed, and the laptops for Janice Smith still need to find their home. The five new desktops for staff need to be deployed and the old computers around BHS need to be gathered up for disposal. My office needs to be cleaned and sanitized . . . ☺

## BHS and BJH Integrator

This summer I was able to help out with many needed technology updates. Some of my tasks included the rewiring of Coffin School computer lab. All of the cables in the lab needed updating in order to carry the data at a much faster speed. The HBS lab also needed some wiring updates and I was able to lend a hand in that lab too. Along with wiring there was plenty of cleaning and transporting of laptops and computers as they were prepared for students and teachers for the upcoming school year.

In early August Gwen Christman and I teamed up to teach Wordpress Web Design classes. We now have several new teacher websites which will help with communication and organization for students and parents.

I was also able to offer courses which covered Interactive White Boards, Google Drive and Gradebook setup. Dan

Summers are always busy in laptop land and, as always, this past summer was no exception.

### Collection and Inspection

Festivities began in June with collection and inventory check of over 500 MLTI and non-MLTI student and staff Apple laptops.

Most staff laptops were updated by the end of June. Each 7th grade laptop was physically cleaned, software wiped, installed and updated to the latest and greatest OS and third-party software, including testing software. 8th grade MLTI laptops were updated and checked for repairs.

No more “re-imaging” of MLTI laptops means software updates and installations are installed individually using a different process. Current MacBook Airs are much faster than in the past so once changes were determined, they went pretty quickly. Even so, when updating a large number of computer, the smallest difficulty is magnified.

8th Graders should plan on receiving their laptops during the first week of school and 7th graders the week after.

### MLTI iPads, Airs, and HPs

People sometimes ask which schools chose what computer platform in this last cycle of the MLTI program, since Gov. LePage determined schools have the option to choose.

About fifty-five percent of Maine school districts chose to go with iPads, including our neighbors RSU1 and RSU5. About thirty-five percent of Maine schools chose MacBook Airs (like us) including our neighbors at MSAD75. About ten percent chose to go with HP laptops. I expect those numbers will change somewhat in the next cycle.

Jerry

### Fall 2014 Newsletter

#### Network upgrade:

The wiring/server closet at the junior high has been doubled in size and new racks installed along with new lighting and floor. Equipment has been moved to new racks making it easier to work on the equipment. There have been some switch upgrades and we have increased our internet bandwidth from 100Mbps up to 1000mbps. A faster switch has been installed between the firewall and the web server also allowing for gigabit connections.

Coffin school has new faster wiring in the computer lab. Teachers are getting new laptops and there will be some new computers in classrooms as well as making these classroom computers wireless, bypassing the need for them to be located near the network drops. The wireless has been upgraded and so far we are seeing increased speeds. There are approximately twice as many access points as before.

~Jeff



## HBS News

Hello Again Everyone!

Welcome back to HBS where the more things stay the same – well the more they stay the same. But in this case the times they area a changing! While many of you were away working *towards* your masters – I was here working *for* your . . . no wait . . . I better not go there. Let's just say I worked a lot! It's been an exciting summer so I'll try to summarize it succinctly for you.

#### Stuff Happened!

Okay you're probably looking for a little more detail so here we go:

Each and every older style teacher laptop has been taken back to the original factory state and reimaged with our software. It was then updated with the latest IWB software and the like to get everyone on the same version – yeeaaaaahhh! Then on Tuesday . . . No wait.

Due to regular complaints on the cart laptops I also took one of those back to Windows 7 professional and installed all updates, new office, and even Type to Learn 4. Then I pushed that image to every cart laptop I could find. They may have more windows updates since then so when thyme is not a four letter word I will try to get them updated once again before they get used too heavily. One consequence is that your classrooms appear to have never logged onto them before so the first login will take a little while but you should see improved speed after that first time. Therefore if any of them give you can't log on errors you have my full permission to take them to the roof and th . . . what – Sue, Really – Okay you do not have permission to do anything to them but put in a school dude and Bill or I will get to it as soon as possible.

But wait there's more! Many of you upstairs have waxed poetic about the glory of the thin client computers in your classroom – okay maybe not waxed poetic but instead had to wash your mouth out with soap after describing them. We pulled all the thin clients from the upstairs and replaced them with one desktop computer in each classroom. We even broke down and installed the tutorial room printer on the desktop so your students can stop begging to go to the computer lab to get the seventeen pages they just printed. With luck this will not prove a distraction and your students can get even more done. (This would be a good time to say three cheers for Matt and his content filter).

We have a few desktop computers we placed in downstairs classrooms where we could and we would have liked to get everyone updated but the budget came calling and I was not smart enough to pretend I wasn't home.

But wait despite the great deal above if you read more now you get even more. The computer lab has all new computers – their black shiny and much faster – in fact I think one has already outrun me! I have rebuilt the lab image with Gwen's guidance and when she was 110% satisfied I captured the image and then since it failed I rebuilt the image again – Gwen hasn't seen it so when you all log on and it's her smiling face on your desktop please send her a complimentary e-mail! Just kidding . . . maybe. The image I pushed to all the computers should have all the software as the old systems with a few notable exceptions. Liberty Kids and Zip Zap Math were not compatible with Windows Seven therefore they did not make the new image. Should anyone want those programs or something similar and you can find a free version or the funds to purchase licenses of a paid one please contact Sue or myself and we will try to get something going for you.

Then on Wednesday – well no that's probably enough excitement for one update. But if you are terribly interest in more summer news feel free to stop Bill or I with questions and I'm sure we can put you to sleep with Geek Speak in short order.

Still welcome back to this fine school

Where happy children are the rule

Where all the teachers are too cool

And just the tech is an old fool

Mike Hedger

## Information on Bill Congdon



Hello All,

I want to introduce myself since I have not yet been to any staff meetings and I was not introduced when most all of you went to the Brunswick School Department meeting yesterday at BHS.....

For those of you who have not met me running up and down the halls the last several days, I am a new Brunswick School Department employee filling in for Jill Bernier as a long term substitute for the duration of the 2014-2015 school year or until she returns, whichever is sooner. I started working here at HBS on 15 August and have been working diligently with Mike Hedger, who has been filling in for Jill, to get a handle on the technology support requirements for HBS students and staff. As of today, Mike is moving back to his district level technology support position at the Superintendent's office.

You will see Mike again here at HBS, as all the district technology support staff positions will assist with technology support requirements district wide as needed. I just wanted you to know that Mike is no longer here daily at HBS, and if you need technology support I am the new person to get it from. There may be times when I am not at HBS as I will sometimes be required to support a technology crisis elsewhere in the district. These time should be rare and most of my time will be spent here at HBS.

I have personally been around to every classroom to see where we are with technology and also to setup every student computer to verify it will logon etc. Several student computers have been replaced with new or newer devices and all computers that were not replaced had software upgrades and configuration changes to speed up network connection etc. With all the furniture moves for cleaning during the break, some student computers may not have been put back exactly as you had them before. If you were not there when I came through, I tried to set them up where they would logically go based on where the network ports and power outlets are located. That being said, If anything is not how you desire, please let me know soonest to get it adjusted.

Mike and I over the past few weeks, have assisted several staff members with getting their refurbished laptops ready for reuse. As always when computers are upgraded with new software and you get a new user profile, there will be several things to reconfigure and setup to get you back up to full productivity. Printers, shortcuts, favorites etc. need to be put back in place. Mike and I have tried to get you on the path with the basics for these items, but I am sure that some items may still not be to what you like or are used to. Again,

if you need assistance with any initial setup items for staff or student computers, please do not hesitate to contact me for support.

Please follow the proper procedure to initiate a technical support incident and put in a SchoolDude and I or Gwen Christman will respond as soon as possible as appropriate. All SchoolDudes submitted by HBS staff will generate an incident ticket directly into my email inbox. Once the incident is created, we can use additional means of communication (phone, email, stop us in the hall etc.) to work together to close the incident. If you cannot get to the SchoolDude link which is located on the left content bar of the HBS webpage, please use any method available to contact me to get your incident initiated and I will create a SchoolDude for you if need be. That being said, I want to be approachable for any and all technology support issues. If you stop me in the hall and ask for technical support and you have not put in a SchoolDude first, I am going to give it to you the support you ask for. I may ask some questions to help me determine whether it has a higher or lower priority than what I am currently doing or planning to do in the near future. Regardless of which way I decide, I am to ask you to still put in a SchoolDude even if I fix the issue on the spot and the incident is resolved so the incident can be documented after the fact. So, when possible, put the SchoolDude in first :)

As of 5:00pm today there were no open technology SchoolDude incidents for HBS. If you happen to have a technology support issue that you were working on informally with either Jill or Mike, you should probably stop by soon to see me in room 1 to discuss it. It is very difficult to support what I do not know about, and your issue will make zero progress. Alternatively, you can put in a SchoolDude to start a support incident and I will take it from there.

I am excited to be here at HBS and I look forward to working with you to get technology to be a better tool to support your goals.

Bill Congdon



## Elementary Integrator

This summer Dan and I held summer workshops on Wordpress web pages and Interactive White Boards. Feedback on both sessions was extremely positive and we thank all of those who sacrificed a few beautiful summer days to attend! The Wordpress session was 3 days long and attendees created websites for their classrooms. Each participant completed a site worthy of publication. Dan conducted a session on the Teamboard IWB which was very informative while I ran a session on the Eno Board. I look forward to sharing all the tips and tools with our elementary staff during our monthly IWB meetings. We'll be holding additional workshops on Wordpress during the school year for those who couldn't attend or desire more training. I hope everyone had a relaxing and rejuvenating summer!

Math In Focus has an entire bundle of technology resources for both teachers and students. All elementary staff were introduced to this component during recent professional development days. Trainers will cover these activities during our first IWB (Interactive White Board) meeting. I will keep you updated on any new information that arrives. Please feel free to contact me if you need help with this beforehand.

IXL accounts have been updated which promoted all existing students to their new grade level. New student accounts will be created as soon as I am notified of their arrival. All 1st grade students will be added by September 14<sup>th</sup>. Any new classroom teachers that need an introduction to the program and help creating a class roster should email me.

Happy Computing!

~ Gwen