Focus on Learning

My Upcoming Schedule:

Please contact me to set up a meeting time. I can be in either Park Rapids or Nevis Schools any day of the week between now and the end of the school year. I would love to meet with you or your team before, during, or after school. ☺

Google April Fools

Each year Google encourages their employees to have a little fun – and to share that creativity with the world. This year's April Fool's jokes provide a lot of fun, even if April Fool's Day is over, and several other tech companies have joined in on the silliness. Here are a few that are appropriate for children – but check them out first to make sure you feel comfortable sharing them with your students:

1. *Google Gnome*: If you've tried out any of the indoor tech tools for controlling your home, you'll especially enjoy these outdoor possibilities – like turning on the hose, getting weather updates, and much more. View it here: https://youtu.be/vNOllWX-2aE

2. Always a great tool, Google Maps has an added silly feature this month: any map in the Google Maps app can be turned into a *PacMan* game! Imagine PacMan running around your neighborhood!

3. Chromebook accessories: Think you can't take your Chromebook everywhere? Think again! This site highlights some great accessories to make your Chromebook the most adaptable tool yet: https://blog.google/products/chromebooks/all-best-mobile-accessories-now-your-chromebook/

4. Too much rain? Google experts in the Netherlands have solved that problem with *Google Wind*. All those windmills are worth something after all! See it here: https://youtu.be/QAwL0O5nXe0

5. Bored pets at home? Try *Google Play for Pets*. It certainly looks real! https://youtu.be/UmJ2NBHXTqo

You can view a wide range of Google April Fools videos and images by Googling "Google April Fools" or by searching them directly on Youtube. Have fun!

Google Chromebooks

Enjoying those Google Chromebooks? John Sowash shares some great ways to ramp up your Chromebook use in your classroom in this quick webinar from Cool Cat Teacher, Vicki Davis. You can view this webinar (and many others) here: http://www.coolcatteacher.com/5-ideas-amp-chromebooks/.

Twitter: Have More to Say???

When using Twitter you are limited to 140 characters. This can be problematic when you are replying to someone (and really a problem if replying to several people), because the user's Twitter handle takes up many of those characters. Twitter has improved this – and you will no longer see the Twitter handle within the Tweet, so you actually will have all 140 characters to write your reply. Check it out today!

Hangouts Meet

If you are a Google Hangouts user you will appreciate the newest update, Hangouts Meet. It makes joining meetings effortless – so you can be as productive online as you are face-to-face. Can't get together in person? This is a great alternative!

Poetry in our Schools

April is National Poetry Month, and there are some wonderful ways to celebrate poetry in any curricular area here: www.poets.org/national-poetry-month/home. It's been celebrated since 1996, and is an especially fun celebration to join. You can find free resource materials, daily poetry activities, or connect with other classrooms around the country to share poetry…and so much more!

My favorite poetry website for K-8 is www.gigglepoetry.com. "Read & Rate 'em" is a great activity for partner reading of poems. They will be laughing out loud! Poetry lessons are some of my favorites. Want to try having your class write poetry for two readers? Let me know and we can try it together!

Can't find that To-Do List?

Update your To-Dos with Keep! Google Keep is a great tool to help keep you organized. Watch this short video and see how it can assist you today: https://youtu.be/SJ2T24t3F5o Keep is one of the Google tools you have access to with your Google school account.

EdPuzzle

EdPuzzle's new Android app for students has been updated with student progress, just like the iPad app. Students will now get instant feedback wherever they are! See it in action here: https://youtu.be/kx3iudzhbw4

I know there are a lot of EdPuzzle users in the Middle and High Schools, but, Elementary Teachers, have you looked at how EdPuzzle can help you? It's a fantastic tool for all grades! Let me know if I can help you with it this spring.

Are you monitoring MCA tests? If so…

…You're probably looking for something to do that won't distract your students, use technology, or keep you from your responsibilities. In that case, take a few minutes to consider the last two months of the school year. Have you utilized technology the way you'd like to? Was there something you wanted to learn, but you just haven't had time to tackle it? Are you hoping to squeeze in some technology but just don't know where to start. Give it some thought in these next few weeks. Then, email or call me and let's get together and plan it out. There's still time to use that new tool, create an amazing project, or integrate some technology into any subject.

Campfire

Campfire, http://gng.org/campfire, is a **virtual exchange program** that leverages technology to enable meaningful cross-cultural dialogue and collaboration. Using a **project-based curriculum**, students work together with a partner classroom from another country to explore **global citizenship** through investigation of the driving question, "How do we, as youth, engage our communities to create positive social change?" As a result, students engage in **intercultural dialogue** and build essential skills to take positive action in their communities.

This Summer in Technology

Technology classes will run this summer Monday – Thursday, June 5-8, and Monday – Thursday, August 21-24. Once again this year classes will be in two hour sections on a variety of topics, mostly on integrating technology into your classroom. If you are interested in teaching a class, or know someone who might be, please let me know.