

I was afforded the opportunity to personalize my career development grant this year. Over the course of the past few years, I have gotten to know a wide variety of principals throughout the state and nation. One principal in particular, Brian McCann, who lives just south of Boston, was selected as a National Association of Secondary Schools (NASSP) Digital Principal of the Year. I was able to attend an Ed Tech conference in Boston and, in lieu of attending the pre-conference, I spent time at Joseph Case High School with Brian. He is someone who is using technology in a way to boost the positive climate and culture at Joseph Case High School. The activities he leads at his school with technology truly are culture builders and I found that his leadership enables the school to dive deeper to provide opportunities for students, staff and community:

- **Positive Sign Thursday:** This is something so simple, but has a huge effect on students. It is simply where you make a sign that says something to the effect of “You are Marvelous”, take a picture with some students, and post to your social media account. When I first heard the idea, it did not sound like a comfort zone thing for me. Then I stepped out of that zone and gave it a shot. I have gotten so many positive comments and “likes” on our accounts that I cannot imagine not doing it. Additionally, I have some students now coming up to me and asking what the next sign is going to say.
- **Community Engagement:** Brian uses technology to make sure he connects with his parents and community members. He has scheduled a multitude of informational meetings and meetings just for feedback at alternate times throughout the day and evenings. Additionally, he records the videos and makes sure parents have access to them. Video usage for other components of school life is very evident. Mr. McCann has received all sorts of positive press for his creation of a “snow day” video where he performs with some of his students to the song “All That Snow” (instead of “All That Jazz”); it was a great video with thousands of views through YouTube.
- **Passion Days:** This is something that is similar to the Ed Camps that we run at NMHS. The difference being that it comes from the staff and students choose what activity they would like to attend based on the staff offerings. We have actually been thinking about modifying one of our Ed Camps to model this scenario, but never actually do it because we like the thought of having our students lead them. They also had these days instead of final exams; which makes it intriguing since we may be able to offer another Ed Camp at the end of the year, definitely something to think about.

What I found from my visit with Mr. McCann is one simple thing: Get out of your comfort zone! We all have them and when we stay in them, we limit what we can do and be for our kids. If we worry about what others think when we are being silly or acting out of our norm, students will not have the full, positive effect of all our efforts.

After the visit to Joseph Case High School, I continued on to the EdTech Teacher event in Boston. I have to admit that I felt a little out of my comfort zone here as well, but received some valuable professional development in the use of technology for me and my staff.

- **Digital Citizenship/Fake News:** I began the conference with a very intriguing session on fake news and how to discern what is fact with what is fiction. The presenter took us through

different sites/presentations on how fake news becomes viral. Many resources were presented to help staff lead students through different activities to show an increased awareness of this national issue. This will definitely be an opener to an upcoming staff meeting/in-service day.

- **Google Doc Tools:** Since I am not a Google certified educator, I wanted to learn a little more about what the Google Suite can do for educators. There was one tool in particular that I feel teachers can use immediately to have an impact in the classroom. The Chrome extension playback tool allows a user to “play back” the entire editing process a student goes through to write a document in a movie like setting. There are all sorts of different tools and extensions through Google/Chrome that can assist us in the realm of feedback.
- **Virtual/Augmented Reality:** This session was a literal eye opener with how easy it is to utilize virtual and augmented reality in education. Using different 360 images you can either find on the internet or take yourself coupled with the platforms that are already available for free can turn a traditional poster or power point into an interactive presentation by a student. It is simply amazing what is available to us; it just takes a little time, effort and knowledge of where to look for the resources.

As in previous years, it is difficult to know exactly where I can use some of the material I learned from my CDG. However, I will be examining the work we do with personalized learning and incorporating the different resources as we go through meetings, inservices and trainings.



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