

Tech Corner
Barbara Tiger – Holland Middle School’s Librarian

To describe Barbara Tiger as the “Librarian” at Holland Middle School (HMS) does neither her nor the library justice. Because of her efforts, the HMS library has evolved into so much more than a quiet place where students go to check out books and use reference materials.

She is the cheerleader for students and HMS library activities. She is excited about technology and is able to persuade staff, parents, and community members to become involved. This extends from getting “likes” on Holland’s Library Facebook page to raising funds by convincing vendors to donate to the school.

For those who have never been there, the library at HMS is located in the center of the second floor classrooms and serves as the school’s media center – it is both the schematic and technological hub for the teachers and students. The smiling, vivacious librarian, Ms. Tiger greets students passing through the library throughout the day. Ms. Tiger misses no opportunity to help students grow scholastically through rich educational and technological guidance.

The HMS library is much larger than other Council Rock middle school libraries and has an abundance of natural light from the skylights. More valuable than any of the standard physical features is the enlightenment students receive from thoughtful, interesting, and sometimes humorous rotating displays that adorn the walls and tops of bookcases. During Citizens’ interview visit, there were pictures of Holland’s teachers, when they themselves were in Middle School, accompanied by narratives of their favorite middle school book.

As a library teacher, Ms. Tiger uses a long a list of library curriculum goals for both seventh and eighth grade students. She collaborates with the classroom teachers to integrate their subject’s curricular goals with technology. She and other teachers help students to access technology to organize and gather information for presentations. Students use a program called “Noodletools” as a vehicle for note taking, outlining, citation, document annotation, and collaborative research and writing.

In seventh grade, among other duties, the middle school librarian teaches students:

- Literature appreciation
- Online search strategies
- How to use databases
- The rules of copyrights and plagiarism
- The 20 checks to make sure a website has legitimate information (see the Web Page Evaluation Form used by Ms. Tiger at www.citizensforeducation.com)
- How to use the district’s catalogue platform - “Destiny”

Seventh graders work on a “Point of View” project where they research and report on two opposing points of view, such as the pros and cons of Stem Cell Research. The seventh grade Humanities project uses technology to research and find challenging solutions to real world problems, like homelessness. Seventh grade library curricular goals include evaluating and organizing information, online graphic organizers, and learning the works cited format.

Eighth graders research a decade in 20th Century America. After choosing a decade, they investigate any one of the following categories: Art, Music, Fashion, War, Movies/TV, Political Events, Inventions, Technology, Sports, Disasters, Science, Medicine and Health. Eighth grade library curricular goals include defining and accessing a variety of information from multiple sources, and evaluating and organizing information. In addition, students work on skills to improve collaborative research and group projects.

At Holland's library there is a multitude of software tools available to students including:

- Destiny - software platform for managing library resources where students can access articles for research or eBooks.
- Lexile.com – uses a Lexile measure to match students with books that are appropriate for their reading level.
- GALE – provides primary source materials for students to do online reliable research.

Ms. Tiger works to fill gaps in the budget. She and the staff at HMS hold fundraisers at Applebee's to purchase "wish list" items and to provide the extras that enhance learning. The library also receives a little revenue from Barnes and Noble book fairs. That money is used to ensure the latest book series that is capturing the student's interest is on the HMS shelves.

She asked for and received book donations at the ALA (American Library Association) Convention from the National Library Convention in Philadelphia last year. Some of those donated books are available for student use and the balance is kept in her office for "teacher lending". This year she arranged for Barnes and Noble to sponsor an author's visit. Jasper Fforde spent two days with HMS staff and students.

Ms. Tiger collaborates with HMS teachers on a daily basis (either in person or via email) about new methods for using technology. She also schedules twice a month meetings with other teachers to share how technology can be used to enhance learning in the classroom and in the library. She engages teachers by asking them to participate in a survey or join her for a cup of coffee. The hour Citizens intended to spend interviewing her turned into an enjoyable and informative three hours and a record for the longest interview ever. She is both welcoming and a wealth of information on innovative uses of technology in education.

Barbara Tiger's resume and depth of experience is impressive - and only the book jacket of what she has to offer as a mentor to other teachers. She taught math in the Upper Darby School District for 13 years and then took time off to raise her children before returning to education as a part-time teacher of the Council Rock (CR) internet safety program. At CR, she has taught a range of subjects from Algebra 1 to business courses. Ms. Tiger holds a BS in Secondary Education with a math option. She passed the Praxis (American teacher certification exams) to obtain her Business degree to teach computers, and earned her Librarian certification in 2009-2010. Ms. Tiger is a well renowned and dedicated cheerleading coach who has the persona to encourage students to be interested in literature and to coax the most reluctant students into trying new approaches.

Citizens For Education thanks Ms. Tiger for agreeing to be the focus of "Tech Corner" and for all that she does for Council Rock and its students. She would rather give the credit to others, including her capable and praise worthy Library Assistant, Mrs. Kathleen Cusick, and the capable staff of Holland Middle. She publically thanks her Principal Dan Greenland, winner of the 2013 PA School Librarians Association (PSLA) Administrator Award, along with Holland's PTO for supporting student access to technology by purchasing what is now a total of 40 iPads.