

TECH CORNER
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CURRICULUM

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

The stated goal of the Council Rock (CR) Middle School technology courses is “to review and reinforce the technology skills acquired at the elementary level.” The middle school Information Technology curriculum has been developed by the 3 teachers who teach Introduction to Computers 7 and 8 at the middle schools. They meet monthly, determining which computer and software skills are essential to all students at this age.

In Introduction to Computers 7, 7th grade students expand their knowledge of the computer operating system, the internet and contemporary computer applications. Studies include word processing (Microsoft Word); data spreadsheets (Introduction to Microsoft Excel); slideshow presentation design (Introduction to Microsoft Power Point); internet and research skills, and curriculum-based programs needed for integrated curricular projects.

In Introduction to Computers 8, studies include: computer usage, vocabulary, and programming, databases (Microsoft Access), web page design (HTML, CSS & JavaScript), desktop publishing (Microsoft Publishing) and internet safety.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Although CR elementary students go with their classroom teachers to a computer lab once a week, there is no CR mandated technology curriculum to be delivered by classroom teachers. The technology curriculum was removed from the elementary schools when the district eliminated a Computer Specialist position at every elementary school. It is reported by Joe McClay, Director of Elementary Education, that teacher’s often use the weekly period in their school’s Computer lab for student remediation, i.e. if a student needs help in Math, his teacher might direct him to a Math Program.

Students are being taught technology skills by their classroom teachers and school librarians. What is being taught in which grades by classroom teachers is not standardized, nor monitored by the district, with the exception of a technology component in the Library curriculum.

Elementary students go to the library once a week. The library curriculum includes, for example, in 2nd grade: “Introduction to Multi-media presentation tools, Acceptable Use Policy, Social Media Guidelines, and Introduction to Internet Safety.”² In 5th grade, students learn: Multi-media presentation tools, Internet Safety – Cybersmarts from POWER Library, Wikis, Blogs, Social Media,”² and more.

One indication of what students might have learned in elementary school is reflected in a 2015 survey of Mr. McNulty’s Introduction to Computers 7 and 8 classes at Newtown Middle School, which shows that by 7th grade 98% of students have used Word and Power point, 80% have used Publisher, and 75% have used Excel.¹

Council Rock is currently developing a 5 year Technology Plan to determine what, when and how the district will deliver technology in the future.

As part of its mission “to better inform the Council Rock community of educational issues” Citizens For Education will continue to follow the technology decision making process. If you would like to be informed on this and other CR educational issues, send us your email at: citizensforeducationcr@gmail.com.

1. <http://www.crsd.org/cms/lib5/PA01000188/Centricity/Domain/1172/2015NMSStudentTechUse.mht>
2. <http://www.crsd.org/page/552>