

http://www

# Instructional Technology News

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## Dynamic Website Deemed Dynamite!

What are good ways to have people visit your web site regularly? You can have resources that are helpful and necessary. You can include up-to-date, relevant information. You can also include discussions which people visiting your site can be actively involved in. The updated Fayetteville Public Schools website endeavors to do all this and more.

The new site was launched in the summer of 2008, providing tools for parents, students, and community members to stay current on topics of interest within the district. By updating regularly, even daily, there's almost always something new. Some of the dynamic content includes monthly feature stories, current news releases and information, and a community blog. Streaming video feed is available as well.



One of this month's exciting news stories involves a recent technology award presented to the district in recognition for the

new site. Within the category of school districts with a student population between 2,501 and 15,000, Fayetteville Public Schools web site ranked 4th of all schools in the United States by a survey by the Center for Digital Education. According to the Center, "The purpose of the survey is to showcase exemplary school boards and districts' use of technology to govern the district, communicate with students, parents and the community and to improve district operations."

While we encourage our parents and community to stay up-to-date and involved with what's happening in our district and schools, faculty and staff can continue to access the Web Applications or School Center areas for access to necessary staff resources.

## Root's Technology-Rich Gym

by D.J. Rush, Technology Integration Specialist

Root Elementary School has incorporated technology into their new gym! This gym has the normal full-size basketball court, bathrooms and office and storage space for the physical education instructor. What is different about the Broyles Gymnasium at Root school is that it also has a classroom inside the gym building with tables, chairs and technology equipment. The classroom has a projector, Elmo and internet access. The PE instructor will be able to share information from sports websites with students, do demonstrations, show "Kids for Health" videos and eventually hopes to add using sports Wii video games



(bowling, golf, tennis, etc.) as well as the Dance Dance Revolution video game (which has become very popular in elementary school PE programs across the country.) The PE teacher, Tony Bishop, also uses a digital camcorder to video their jump rope sessions and the students use it to critique their technique. He plans to expand the use of the camcorder into other class and group sport events.

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## Technology Spotlight: Time to Blog!

by Marci Tate, Librarian/Media Specialist

I admit I was a little nervous about the thought of adding a blog to the Vandergriff Library website. I have read blogs. I knew other teachers and librarians that were posting blogs, but I never thought I would participate. I decided to give it a shot and the results were more wonderful than I could have anticipated.

I added the blog to my website and did my first entry asking 5th grade students to write about what they are reading, what they are going to read next, what kind of suggestions for reading they need, etc. I presented the blog to the teachers at a faculty meeting first and asked them to add a post. After some of their posts were received, I presented it to the 5th grade classes. I expected some of the avid readers to really get involved. I was totally caught off guard with the popularity of the blog. I had over 80 posts in four days. These were mostly done from home! The students were engaged and interacting with other students they wouldn't normally even talk to during a school day.

I require the students to only use their first name and last initial. I check the posts before allowing them to be viewed (amazingly, I have only deleted a few due to content or lack of it). When parents or teachers ask me for reading recommendations for that age level, I show them the blog. What better place to find out what kids want to read than to go straight to the source. Remembering to check for new posts has become a bit of a challenge for me. So, I better close this article now because it is time to blog!

**BLOG**  
**(Web Log)**

## Grant Opportunities

### \* Digital Wish Grants \*



Digital Wish helps teachers find funding for classroom technology. All teachers who submit a lesson plan will be automatically entered to win a Mobile Digital Camera Lab plus as many as 43 technology grants. Through Digital Wish, teachers can tell their stories and let the world know how they will use technology in the classroom.

[http://www.digitalwish.com/dw/digitalwish/grant\\_awards](http://www.digitalwish.com/dw/digitalwish/grant_awards)

*Application deadline:* Grants will be awarded on the 28th of every calendar month.

### \* Vernier Technology Awards \*

The Vernier Technology Awards will recognize and reward the innovative use of data collection technology using a computer, graphing calculator, or other handheld in the science classroom. A total of seven awards are presented: one award at the elementary level (grades K–5); two awards at the middle level (grades 6–8); three awards at the high school level (grades 9–12); one award at the college level. Each award will consist of \$1,000 towards expenses to attend the NSTA National Conference, \$1,000 in cash for the teacher, and \$1,000 in Vernier products.

<http://www.nsta.org/about/awards.aspx#vernier>

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## Web Resource

**Bill'z Treasure Chest** - ([www.billztreasurechest.com/blog/](http://www.billztreasurechest.com/blog/))

This writing site offers interesting prompts for intermediate and secondary students. The site is set-up as a blog, and you are able to make comments on the writing prompts. New prompts are added at least once per week, sometimes twice or more. There are archived writing prompts dating back to 2005 - so there are PLENTY of choices to use in your classroom. These would be terrific prompts for student blogs! Provide two or three choices for students to use writing prompts. Have younger students work with a partner to brainstorm and list possible stories based on the prompt.



*Instructional Technology News* is edited by Laura Wainscott, Technology Integration Specialist at Holt Middle School and Owl Creek Middle School. For column suggestions, please email [lwainscott@fayar.net](mailto:lwainscott@fayar.net).