Middlesex Students Use Chromebooks to Show Parents What They've Learned

Author : David Gurliacci

Categories : Education

Tagged as : Chromebooks in Darien Public Schools 2017-2018, Darien Public Schools 2017-2018, Darien Public Schools News of the Week 2017-2018, Darien Public Schools Newsletter 2017-2018, Middlesex Middle School 2017-2018

Date : June 12, 2018

Spread out among the shelves and tables in the Middlesex Middle School library, sixth grade students waited for their end-of-year conference to start.

There was, however, no teacher standing or sitting next to them.

Instead, students — with their Chromebooks — were leading parents through their digital portfolio which had work representing their growth as learners across all subjects.

The portfolios featured spreadsheets of workout logs; Prezi (a computer program for presentations) for book reviews; and a mix of written work, images, video and audio clips from all subject areas.

Avery Fahrman, a student whose interest in football and lacrosse could be seen in his portfolio, said compiling a digital portfolio was a good experience.

“You can fill in your family on what you have been doing,” Fahrman said. “In middle school we don’t share that much because we don’t bring that much home.”

Mitch Davis, who was proud of his poetry and Art work, added, “You can reflect on what you did this year and what you can work on for next year.”

Middlesex Principal Shelley Somers set the creation of a digital portfolio system as a school-wide goal. One of the benefits of a portfolio is improved parent communication and understanding of the instructional program.

Through a process of goal-setting and reflection, students curated examples of their improvement, which they discussed with their parents. Some pieces included in the final digital portfolio — built by students using Google Sites — were required; others were chosen by students.

Yellow Team leader Amy Lareau, who heads the MMS Technology Committee, and I collaborated on professional development for staff last summer and over the course of the year.

Departments and teams assisted students in setting up the portfolio, curating representative pieces, and writing reflections for inclusion in the final portfolio.

An added element for Grade 6 was training in leading a conference. In all, Red, Yellow, Silver and Orange team students presented over 350 portfolios over two days last week.

Somers anticipates the digital portfolio initiative to continue next year and ultimately get factored in to a capstone experience for middle school.

_____

— Marc Marin is district director of instructional technology. This article is republished from the Darien Public Schools News of the Week newsletter.