



Columbus Public Schools Alumni News



Winter 2015

CHS students get own computers

Years of dreaming became a reality this fall when students at Columbus High School received their own MacBook Air Computers.

"We felt the time was right, funding was in the budget, teachers were ready and kids were ready," CPS Superintendent Dr. Troy Loeffelholz said.

The district started looking at technology options for students in 2011. A group of CHS teachers took a trip to California to learn about challenge-based learning. Next another group of CMS and elementary teachers went to Apple headquarters in Chicago.

These 36 teachers formed the Apple Core team and were given the task of developing a technology plan and timeline for increasing the number of mobile devices in CPS. Dr. Loeffelholz said this group recommended computers for all students at CHS and CMS and iPad carts for every classrooms at the elementary level.

"The world is connected far greater than it ever has been," Dr. Loeffelholz said. "We can take our kids around the world with these devices. It levels the playing field for all our students."

The completion of the plan may take awhile, he said.

"Our goal with this process is to always provide advantages to our kids, and we can't wait for the next step," Dr. Loeffelholz said.

Before anything could move forward, the infrastructure and server had to be upgraded, he said.

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Computers help teachers go paperless

Students at Columbus High School received their own MacBook Air computers.

The days of saying I forgot my book and the dog ate my homework are disappearing as more teachers move to a paperless classroom.

"I left my book in the locker room is no longer an excuse," CHS health and fitness teacher Stacy Smith said. "It allows me to hold them more accountable and put the responsibility where it belongs, with the student. "It also allows them to have some ownership in their work as well."

Smith said she has almost completely gone paperless in her area. All the assignments are placed in Google Classroom, a tool to distribute work and improve communication. She also puts up reading assignments and vocabulary words as well.

CHS history and geography teacher Patrick Clark agreed. In the past, he said he would print off the assignment, and the student would do the homework and turn it in.

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Foundation selects new director

The new Columbus Public Schools Foundation Executive Director seeks to strengthen the ties between the alumni and foundation.

"I want people to know what the foundation is all about," said Landon Wietfeld. "The foundation's main goal is to give back to the school district."

Wietfeld took over as the executive director this summer. He grew up in Leigh,

NE and graduated from Leigh High School. Wietfeld holds a business administration degree with a concentration in marketing and management from Wayne State College.

Prior to the foundation job, Wietfeld worked at US Bank.

Wietfeld said this job was appealing because a student's education is vital, and the foundation can give them more opportunities.

"I like the fact that the



foundation can have an impact on the staff and students and provide them with additional opportunities," he said.

The foundation has done many things, but Wietfeld would like to do more. He said the alumni could play a key role because they already have a connection with the school system and he feels both organizations have similar goals.

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Change! The only consistent thing in our life

Dr. Troy Loeffelholz
Superintendent

What an exciting time for Columbus Public Schools. The community has given us permission to build a 268,000 square foot comprehensive high school. For the past eighteen months, Columbus Public Schools administration & board has been listening and conducting a comprehensive study of future growth in the community, facility needs, program needs, and facility options for the district.

As of today, the pre-grading package and one-third of the footings have been completed on the new high school project. On or about February 15th, bid packages will go out for masonry work on the school. The design will be 100% complete on or about March 15th. By summer the community should see things rising out of the ground. We are excited about the floor plan and design of this building. Please come and see the progress.

What is the trickle down effect of a new high school? Hopefully, I can capture it in summary. The new high school changes our configurations and buildings in this manner:

1. New High School completed in the December of 2016.
2. Middle School program moves to current High School in the fall of 2017.
 - a. Grades 5-8 will be placed in the new Middle School.
3. Elementary Schools will be in a K-4 program configuration in the fall of 2017.
4. The three-year plan is Pre-School/Early Childhood will be moved to existing 1965-1989 additions at the current Middle School site.
 - a. Will create 8-10 Pre-School classrooms.
5. Central Office space will also be created in the current Middle School 1965-1989 additions.

In November, the high school rolled out a comprehensive technology program. Each high school student received an 11" MacBook Air Computer to use for instructional purposes. It was time for CPS to move forward in engaging our students to be ready for the Global World in which



STILL WORKING - Work continues on the new high school.

we live. We have expanded our availability for laptops across the district. Our Mission statement has not changed **“Engaging All Learners to Achieve Success.”** These words involve high expectations, strong instructional leadership, clarity, fidelity,

student progress, and positive home and school relations. Our number one objective is to maintain a clear and shared focus on student learning. We need to follow our passion and show our students the passion we have for them.

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Teachers incorporate computers in class

From Front Page

"A lot of what we do on a daily basis is paperless," Clark said. "I've also noticed students taking notes and keeping track of things on the computer. I don't see as many kids taking notes the old fashion way (with paper and pencil)."

Communication between the students and teachers has also improved. With the laptops, students can easily email teachers to ask questions.

"I now receive more emails especially when kids are gone," Clark said. "They are getting used to communicating with teachers (via email) and asking questions on weekends or when they are doing homework."

Another advantage of students having laptops is current information is readily available. Smith said health and fitness information is changing constantly.

"It is now so much easier to change if you find something new," Smith said.

Clark has had similar experiences in his classes. He said there is always the student who asks a question that a teacher doesn't know the answer.

"We used to say, we will have to look it up and get back to you, and now when we are asked that question, we just Google it right in class," he said.

Clark said since he does numerous projects, the laptops made this much easier. With the limited number of computers in the labs, this used to be challenging and classes would need to be split up.

"We are not competing with other classes for the lab space," he said. "Now it is different because I have a mobile lab sitting in front of me."

Smith said her students also do a project, but this year there are more opportunities. She said they must design their own workout plan, create charts and

graphs and give a presentation to the class. With the laptops, pictures and video can be uploaded from the students' phones. This is possible because the students all have iMovie on their laptops.

Both Smith and Clark said the laptops make it easier for students who are absent to get work.

"I don't have to take a stack of papers to the offices and have the parents come to pick it up because everything is now online," Smith said.

The computers do have limitations. Smith said the new machines have not replaced the fitness portion of the class, and the laptops are only used a couple times during the week.

Both teachers said the key is incorporating the machines into the class so they are just a regular part of the day and not something special. They also said the use must be meaningful.

Foundation

From front page

Some of the Foundation's yearly projects include: sponsoring the CPS Trunk or Treat event, which provides a safe environment for students to go trick or treating; sponsoring University Week, which introduces fourth and fifth graders to different college opportunities; purchasing books for the elementary media centers; awarding \$15,000 in scholarships to graduating CHS students; offering mechatronic scholarships to high school students who are taking the class for college credit; and awarding teacher grants, so they can do innovative lessons in their classrooms.

"None of these projects would be possible without the generous support of our donors," Wietfeld said.

He said the foundation will be playing a key role in helping fund some of the items for the new high school that are not covered in the bond issue. One of the main things will be getting donations to enhance the new Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) academy.

"We have to make sure our kids are up to date on technology and curriculum, so when they go to apply for jobs they will be a step ahead," Wietfeld said. "We have to invest in our students now for the future."

Wietfeld said the foundation is always looking for ways to support and enhance opportunities for students and teachers. He said if anyone would like to discuss funding a project, scholarship or donating to a specific education field to contact him at wiefeldl@discoverers.org or call 402-563-7000 ext. 1103.

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Other classes close

Class of 1970 still leads

The Class of 1970 still holds a narrow lead in the CHS/Kramer Class Challenge.

The competition is to see what class can get the most lifetime annual and couple members.

The Class of 1970 has 20 lifetime couples or annual members, but they are followed closely by the Class of 1960 with 18 and Class of 1968 with 16. There is also a three-way tie for fourth place with the Classes of 1972, 1953 and 1959 all having 15 lifetime annual or couple members.

The winner will be announced this fall. We want to thank all of you for your continued support of the Alumni Association.



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Return to: Columbus Alumni Association * 2508 27 St. * PO Box 947 * Columbus, NE 68602-0947



Students get computers

From front

“We wanted to make sure once the devices went into action the system wouldn’t fail,” Dr. Loeffelholz said

Making the decision to purchase the laptops was easy compared to coming up with a rollout plan. To help in this process, CHS Assistant Principal Jon Frey and CHS Dean of Students Nic Simonson went to Westside High School in Omaha to assist with the computer check in at the end of the last school year.

Frey said the biggest challenge was figuring out how to get all students through the training and how best to distribute the computers to that large of a group. The first step was all students had to complete a digital drivers license, which addresses a variety of different topics dealing with electronic devices such as cyber bullying, texting and being smart when online.

“The digital driver’s license works similar to a real driver’s license,” Simonson said. “If you have an infraction, you lose points and after so many, your license will be revoked. These students then have to go back and take the course again.”

Both parent and students also had to attend a meeting conducted by a school attorney on the consequences of not being smart when using these devices. After all the students



and parents completed these steps, they could attend the roll out night, Frey said.

Another safety feature is the school filter stays on even when the machines are at home with the students. If something is blocked at school, it will be blocked at home.

Before getting the machines, parents and students attended a session on consequences for not using the machines in an appropriate manner and also a session explaining the \$40 damage/loss protection option.

Students were not required to take the damage/loss protection, but by doing so, if something happened to the machine, the cost of repair would be less, Frey said.

There were 1,110 computers distributed to students in a two-day time frame. Seniors and juniors came one day and freshmen and sophomores another day.

Some students opted to not take home the computers and to just check the machines in and out at school. Some also opted to not take a computer at all.

“No one was forced to take a machine,” Frey said.

Teachers provide students without machines other options for completing assignments, he said.

With the increase in the number of machines, Travis Groteluschen was hired full-time to help all CHS students and staff with technology issues and repairs. At the end of the year, students will check in their computers, and the machines will be assessed for damage. At the start of next year, the student will receive the same machines.

Both Frey and Simonson said in the beginning, there were concerns about the staffs’ readiness for the new technology.

“We learned quickly this wasn’t an issue because teachers were really embracing this,” Frey said.

CPS Technology Integrationist Brandi Fleming said the teachers should not treat the computers as anything special.

Columbus Alumni Association

2508 27 St. ~ PO Box 947~ Columbus, NE 68602-0947

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Marty Sipple

Year graduated: 1984

Favorite class/teacher:

Biology. Mr. Callan is my favorite teacher because he challenged and pushed me to do my best work.

CPS teacher that influenced you the most: Coach Schnabel.

I continued to play basketball regularly well into my 40s and have coached both of my sons. I believe the lessons learned in team sports carry over into all aspects of life.

Most memorable high school experience: Our tennis team winning the state championship our junior and senior year and my winning an individual state championship my senior year.

What would you change if you had to do high school all over

Meet the Sipples

again? Can't think of anything.

Where do you live now?

Tallahassee, FL

What are you doing? I am a lawyer practicing in the area of business litigation.

Steve Sipple

Year graduated: 1985

Favorite class/teacher:

English with Mr. Anderson.

CPS teacher that influenced you the most: Gary Duranski

Most memorable high school experience: Dad letting me ride a motorcycle to school for much of my senior year.

What would you change if you had to do high school all over again? Play football.

Where do you live now?

Lincoln, NE

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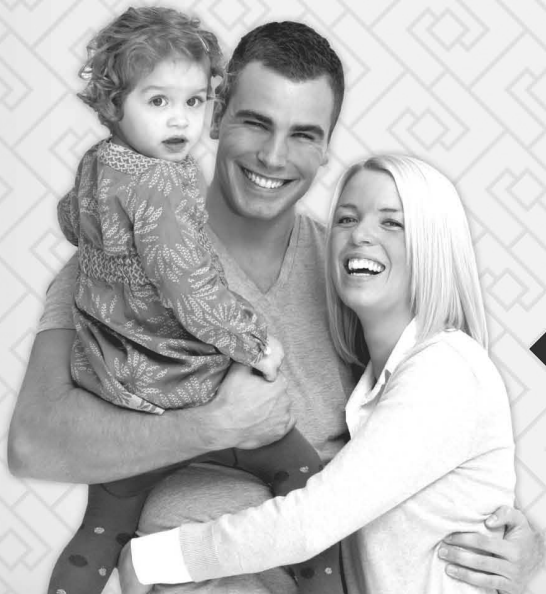
If you would like someone to contact you about including the CPS Foundation in your estate plans, please call Landon Wietfeld at 402-563-7000 Ext. 1103 to set up an appointment. The role of the Foundation is to provide the students of CPS with as many educational opportunities as possible by filling gaps created in the regular school district budget from funding shortfalls or regulatory constraints. The Foundation helps optimize the future of all Discoverers by creating funding for grants, after school programs, alternative educational opportunities, scholarships for current and graduating students, and recognition awards.

Please make checks payable to the CPS Foundation.

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Alumni Basketball Tourney set for March

The Columbus High School Alumni Basketball tournament has been scheduled for the weekend of **March 28th, 2015**. The tournament which traditionally has taken place during every other Thanksgiving holiday is looking for a fresh start away from family travel obligations and Husker football which should in turn offer improved turnout during the early spring weekend that also coincides with the 4th & 5th rounds of the NCAA tournament. We also intend for this event to take place every year instead of the previous format. At this time, the committee would also like to invite you to track the upcoming event on Facebook at CHS Alumni Basketball Tourney. If you have any questions or would like to get involved, please call **Luke Larsen at 720-985-4224**.

Meet the Sipples

From Page 6

What are you doing? Sports writer for Lincoln Journal Star for 25 years and married to Laurie.

Adam Sipple

Year graduated: 1986

Favorite class/teacher: My favorite class was Spanish because Ms. Sypherd was so enthusiastic.

CPS teacher that influenced you the most: Ron Callan because he challenged me and taught me I could learn and retain a lot of information.

Most memorable (reportable) high school experience: Making a long jumper, late in a close game, right in front of my friends cheering in the student section on Hawaiian night.

What would you change if you had to do high school all over again? I would not leave basketball practice early to hit

golf balls – I don't think Coach Schnabel liked that.

What are you doing? Lives in Omaha with his wife, chases two kids from one game or dance competition to another and earns a living as a trial attorney.

Kathleen Sipple Carroll

Year graduated: 1992

Favorite class/teacher: Senorita Sypherd.

CPS teacher that influenced you the most: Al Schnabel.

Most memorable (reportable) high school experience: Appearing as a dancer in Westside story.

What would you change if you had to do high school all over again? No regrets.

Where do you live now? Lincoln, NE

What are you doing? She is married to Ron with a four-year-old daughter named Meadow and Lhasa Apso named Barry. She is the Director of Operations at Quickserve Solutions, a technology company located in Omaha, NE.

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Columbus Alumni Reunion Plans for 2015 & Beyond

1935 - Local class members meet every 4 months for lunch (Oct., Feb., Jun.). All '35 grads welcome.

1937 - Meets 1st Wed., every 4 months (March, July, Nov.).

1946 - '46 locals meet the first Friday of each month for lunch. All classmates welcome. Contact: Ruth Olson Babka, 402-564-5991 or Laura Eller Stuefer, 402-564-2057.

1949 - Locals meet the first Monday of the month for breakfast at Picket Fence Cafe. All classmates welcome. Contact: Rosella (Blaser) Norris for info. 402-564-7498.

1956 - Meets at 10 a.m. the first Wed. of every month at Stack & Steak for morning coffee. All classmates welcome.

1958 - Class lunch the first Wednesday of every month at noon at Maximus. All classmates and spouses welcome.

1959 - Meets the second Thursday quarterly (January, April, July and October) at Stack n' Steak at 11:30 a.m. for lunch and conversation. Classmates and spouses are welcome.

1962 - Meets the first Friday of every month at 8:30 a.m. at Picket Fence. All classmates and spouses are welcome.

1965 -50th Class Reunion - Save the date. June 5-7, 2015. For more information or to make a suggestion, please look us up on Facebook at Columbus Nebraska High School Class of 1965. More information at a later date.

1970 - 45th Reunion - August 14-16, 2015. August 14 - in the evening at Applegate's home; August 15 - in the evening at Dusters; August

16 - Possible brunch at Dusters. For more information, please contact Leta Oppliger Greene at 402-563-1640.

1985 - 30th Reunion - June 26-27, 2015. More details to follow later.

1990 - 25th Reunion - June 18, 2015. Matt Moore Memorial Golf Tournament at noon at Quail Run. Maximus Bar at 6:30 p.m. For more information, contact Mitch Slusarski at 605-484-6409. In the future, more details will be made available on Facebook.

Let us help you plan your reunion!

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 - Tips for planning reunions

Contact Michelle Cruise: PO Box 947, Columbus
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