

Learning & Information Technology Services

EVERETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER



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VOLUME 3 ISSUE 2

Technology News

Monthly Newsletter

In this year's 2nd edition of Technology News for the 2020-21 school year the Learning and Information Technology Services (LITS) department wants to express our gratitude for the support and partnership with district leadership, building administration and each and every staff member as we face this unprecedented need for technology in our work together. We are truly thankful to work in Everett Public Schools.

Help us be more efficient with support requests

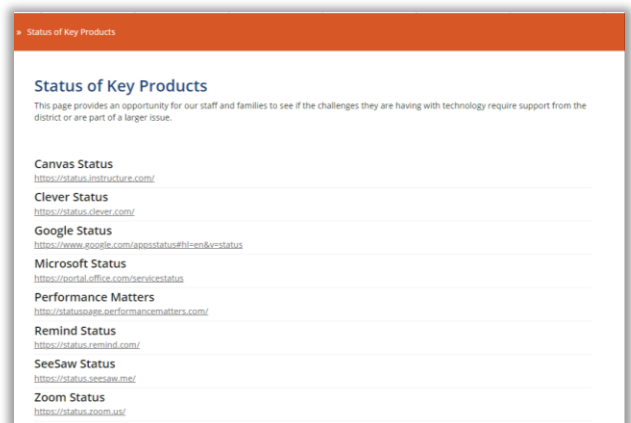
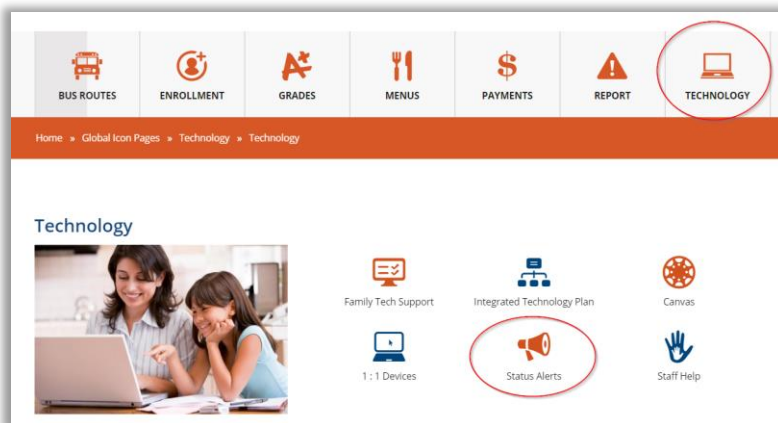
Staff are encouraged to open a HelpDesk Web ticket for reoccurring issues. When opening a ticket, emailing, or leaving voice messages be as detailed as you can be. Everything from your computer tag number, class and assignment title, student example, browser being used, messages that pop up on the screen and time of day help the support get started much faster in working through challenges.

Having internet issues – link to Status Alerts page

Working remotely can mean there are times where services are interrupted at the internet service provider level. If you experience a drop-in service, please first check with your provider to see if it is an ongoing issue. Sometimes our digital tool providers are having issues. For the district's key digital tools there is now a Status Alerts icon on the Technology link. Selecting this will bring staff, students and families to the status page of key products. This is available 24/7 and should let you know if the issue is widespread or unique to you.

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Staff Action Requested: Improving Student Safety – November 30

Being completely remote has not been without its challenges. One clear need is to have our students change their passwords and add layers of security within our synchronous instruction. Starting November 30, Communications will assist schools and staff sharing the message and instructions for updating student passwords and a new authentication option for Zoom class meetings.

- **Student password changes**

Elementary families will be asked to assist their students in changing their child's passwords. Ease of access was once the priority, now the priority has shifted to more student password security. Lesson plans are housed in Canvas Commons and "How tos" will be prominent on the website. Staff should assure they have the password reset toolbox on their desktop. Office staff have the tool as well and if there are further challenges, Help Desk can provide additional support. [How to Change Passwords for Elementary Students](#)

Middle and high school students change password directions and prompts will be coming out soon. These include setting strong passwords and adding challenge responses. [Resetting Passwords webpage](#)

- **Zoom external authentication**

Authentication is a useful security tool that allows teachers/hosts to ensure only students are in their class meetings. After weeks of trying to get middle and high school students to establish accounts, Zoom is now offering a more straight-forward option using our students Microsoft log in: [ID#@apps.everettsd.org](#).

Starting Wednesday, December 2, staff who authenticate their Zoom meetings will start using External Authentication. Students attempting to join a meeting will need to enter their [ID#@apps.everettsd.org](#) and their password. They will be in the waiting room with the name that is in the Student Information System and would only be able to rename if the host of the meeting elects to allow renaming.

What this means to Zoom Class Meetings

Any teachers using authentication currently will need to schedule new meetings or adjust setting for new meetings and set to External Authentication if authentication is still desired.

- The changeover will take place on December 1 – so the option will not be available until then.
- Monday, November 30 and Tuesday, December 1 class sessions should include instructions for how the change will appear for students if teachers plan to use External Authentication

External Authentication information has been added to our [district Zoom webpage](#)

Annual Updates Online – November 30 family communication

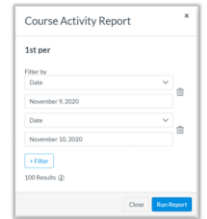
In addition to safety updates on November 30, families will learn more about completing their annual updates online instead of what used to be going home as opening of school questionnaire packets. Each child will have one guardian in their household who will receive a personalized email that will direct them to log into the Home Access Center. If they do not receive the email any qualified guardian will be able to log in to Home Access Center and complete the update – but only once per child. If after December 2 families have questions they can email [LMS@everettsd.org](#) for further support. [Annual Update Online in Home Access Center](#)



Virtual Classroom: Canvas

As remote learning enters its third month, the district is learning how to connect new needs to the feature set within the platform. Practices that worked best in a blended learning environment are being adapted for needs of remote learning.

- **Inactive students:** Shifts in staff and student enrollment has increased student schedule changes and the practice of removing students from courses created a new challenge in that it also made student work unavailable to the past instructor and student to access or download. Rosters have now been adjusted so students who withdrew as of November 1 are set to inactive. These students are labeled inactive and remain on the People list. The gradebook by default hides inactive enrollments but teachers can make them visible to see students' work.
- **Canvas New Analytics:** Staff now have a more detailed day by day view of student activity in their course with the enhanced Course Activity report. Filters allow staff to select three distinct dates and see student behavior. New Analytics is available in admin and attendance roles as well.



How to run Course Activity Report

- Newer features include a Recent History option on the Global Navigation menu displaying a user's recently visited pages in Canvas helping users remember what page they last viewed in one or multiple courses up to the last three weeks with page content displayed by title.

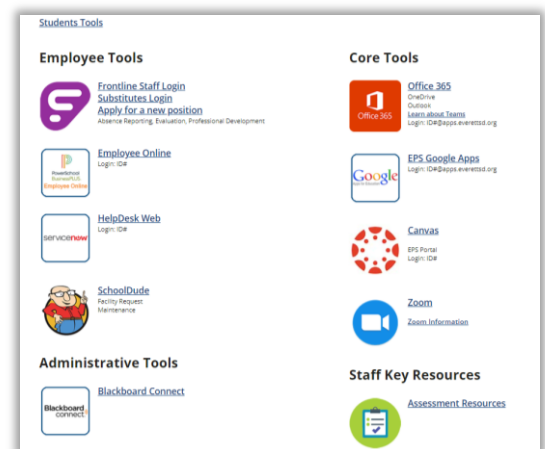
Digital tools issues and updates

- **Canvas log in:** This past week some staff have had to log off and log back on the computer to access Canvas after its timeout. This issue is under investigation. Staff are encouraged to enter a HelpDesk Web ticket if this is occurring for you.
- **Discovery Education** now fully integrated into Canvas K-8.
- **Focus Fitness:** Changes made by the vendor caused log in challenges for students this fall. LMS was able to find a solution and a more reliable log in process is now in place. [How to log in to Focused Fitness](#)
- **GoGuardian** is rolling out starting with middle schools starting with Eisenhower at the beginning of December. As schools come online staff will receive more specific information and training.
- **SpringBoard and Stemscopes** EduApps all working within Canvas after some initial connection issues.
- **Remind** is up and running and Remind Calls are now active.
- **WeVideo** and Canvas now fully functional with integration K-12.
- Keep current on district-supported tools available to you in the Canvas Digital Tools Portal.

Website updates

The new look for the website was the first phase of the website update. Navigation and page refinement are underway. Staff will be asked to examine their sites to make certain their content is up to date and coaching sessions will be scheduled starting in January to assist all staff with edit rights to webpages, on how to update to meet standards and take advantage of built in layouts and applications.

- [Website standards for school home pages and teacher pages](#)
- [Website standards for department home pages](#)





Watch for the gift card scam

There are a million excuses why someone might send you a text, email or social media message that says, "Can you do me a favor?" It might be something simple like your boss asking you to go get some gift cards for school-wide promotion, staff recognition, etc. No matter what excuse they offer, there is a good chance it is a scammer posing as someone you know in order to steal from you.

In this email scam, you are given a very plausible story as to why they need a gift card, and it's usually an emergency of some sort. You are to quickly buy the card, send over the numbers from the back and then they will pay you back right away. But as too many victims already know, the last step is the one that does not happen.

The best way to avoid becoming the victim of a gift card scam is to pick up the phone and call the person who is asking. If you verify the purchase before doing it, you will know for sure if this is genuine or not. This might mean giving your boss a quick phone call to ask if the email is real. Trust your instincts and protect yourself.

Be careful of any email that has an attachment or link.

If you miss the cues and download an attachment or open a link to a phishing email, take action by immediately changing your password anywhere it is used. Do not forward the email for others to investigate. If you have questions open a ticket and include a screenshot.

RIP Adobe Flash

Adobe Flash is reaching end of life (EOL) at the end of this year, and Adobe will stop distributing and supporting it after December 31, 2020 as Adobe explains on a [support page](#) entitled "Adobe Flash Player EOL General Information Page". Flash Player has been criticized for a long time thanks to numerous security problems. The software has managed to stick around for years because of the number of web sites that embraced the technology years ago, especially instructional software for schools. If you currently rely on applications or websites that require Adobe Flash be prepared to look for alternatives.

District VPN connection now operational

For the new school year, employees working remotely using a school district supplied computer (Windows 10 only) can now securely connect to the district network from home as if they are working on-site in their office or classroom by using the EPS Virtual Private Network connection or VPN. See this fun [video](#) for an introduction on how a VPN works. The EPS VPN will connect to the district network automatically when you login to your computer with an Internet connection from any location worldwide. Please contact the Help Desk if you any questions.

Computer webcams and microphones

Given the extensive use of Zoom, Teams, and other online communication tools you may need a good webcam or microphone for your computer. If you do, please see the [EPS Technology equipment standards list](#) for approved devices. For security and privacy concerns, no other devices are permitted.

Certificated device refresh

As part of the 2016 Capital Levy project plan the LITS team is current planning for a replacement of the certificated laptops. Our plan is to be ready for deployment in June.

Have questions about items in this issue of Technology News? Email technology@everettsd.org for clarifying information.

Need technology support? Please open a [HelpDesk Web ticket](#).