

## **Technology gets families talking?**

*Students and parents talk about technology and the role it plays at school and at home*



*A family brainstorms character traits of the word "citizenship"*

a chance to teach and show their parents how they use technology in school. The consensus among parents at the beginning of the session was that their children spend too much time engaged with their devices. After students showed them how these devices are used as an educational tool, the attitude toward them shifted. Parents also learned about the devices and instructional technology used in the district.

A group of student volunteers from Everett High School helped host this year's event for students and their families. These students, experts on the devices and related programs, are Digital Learning Ambassadors (DLAs). They helped lead the Tech Talk. Savannah Bishop, a freshman who is part of the DLA, said the most useful information she has learned are the Learning Links that are accessible from the devices, such as Canvas, Google Apps, Office 365, and other programs designed to enhance learning. She explained how OneNote, an app used for note taking, is "useful at school, but also at home for taking notes on everyday tasks, things you need from the store and dates you need to remember."

Jeff Utecht, CEO of Eduro Learning, lead the presentation, which included activities and open-ended questions to kick start the conversation of healthy technology use for students and family members. Utecht explained his favorite part of leading these sessions is "getting them to sit down and talk, putting down their phones – not the kids, the parents."

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Each household in the United States has an average of seven electronic devices and is expected to have at least 10 by 2020. On top of this, there are expected to be more technological advances in the next 10 years than there have been in the last 500 years. So what does this mean for kids and the widespread use of technology today? This was the topic of the recent Everett Public Schools Tech Talk with students and parents.

The Tech Talk gave students



*Guest speaker Jeff Utecht surveys the*



*A family works together to discuss the difference between "citizenship" and "digital citizenship"*



*Students model using district-provided devices during the Tech Talk event*

Throughout the presentation, DLA student volunteers roamed through the audience, modelling ways to use their district-provided devices. As part of the voter-approved 2016 Capital Levy, these devices are being purchased and distributed to schools over the next few years. This year, students at Everett and Sequoia high schools received devices as well as students at Garfield, Lowell and Monroe elementary schools. Next year, Cascade and Jackson high schools will receive the devices along with Cedar Wood, Jackson and Whittier elementary schools.

“Providing students with digital resources to access authentic learning experiences is a priority for Everett Public Schools. Over the next six years, the district is deploying resources provided by the 2016 Capital Levy that provide digital devices and training to teachers and students. The goal is for students to learn how to leverage the devices so they can learn both at school and at home,” said Joyce Stewart, deputy superintendent for Everett Public Schools.

DLA students asked district teachers their opinions on how the technology roll out has affected them so far. Sequoia High School teacher and 2017 District Teacher of the Year, Becky Kitzman, said the 1:1 devices eliminate the “bottom of the backpack” issue with lost homework assignments. Student’s assignments can be completed and digitally turned in on the due date, even if they are absent from class that day, which is something that LaRee Mc, a parent of two students at Evergreen Middle School, said she appreciates most about the devices.

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