

# INSTRUCTIONAL TECH NEWSLETTER

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## WELCOME BACK!!!

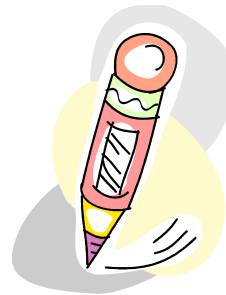
We are back again! We will have support group like usual. However, a change this year: we will meet on Tuesday instead of Wednesday.

We are meeting at Harriet Gibbons as usual. HOWEVER..there are other meeting at times in the library. If we aren't in the library please come to Room 102. You can work on anything you would like. We have

folks working on their Blackboard courses, developing classroom newsletters, and working on projects. Any of those are great. All we ask is that you let us know so we can have enough food. Also, if you are going to be late just let us know. We usually stay until 5 if no one shows up.

Here are the dates for October: October 2,9,16,23,30.

If you would like to attend, please just email Sandy at [Saratoga35@aol.com](mailto:Saratoga35@aol.com) or call 441-5605



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## ONLINE DIAGRAMS

There are times you would like your students to be able to collaborate and keep everything in one place. The issue teachers were having

was with diagrams. This site lets you have them online so students can work on them. You get five diagrams for free. Even though

schools were not the reason this came along I can see applications from brainstorming to prewriting activities.

[www.gliffy.com](http://www.gliffy.com)

## TEACHERSDOMAIN.ORG

When we lost united streaming last year many of us were lost because it had become a valuable resource for us. However, after doing some searching we found this site.

It's not quite as extensive as united streaming but it has amazing resources. You can organize your resources and create courses.

However, they have included multimedia resources from NOVA, ZOOM and other public television resources.

One of the resources that teachers will like are the vast science resources.

Often we hear from teachers that being able to provide solid examples of abstract concepts can be difficult.

[www.teachersdomain.org](http://www.teachersdomain.org)

The screenshot shows the Teachers' Domain website. At the top, it says "teachers' domain Multimedia Resources for the Classroom and Professional Development". There is a search bar and a user profile for "Sandy Paben of Albany High School". Below that, there are tabs for "My Folders", "My Groups", "My Courses", and "My Profile". The main content area is divided into "Resources by Subject" and "Special Collections". Under "Science K-12", there are links to "Earth and Space Science (257 resources)", "Engineering (194)", "Life Science (327)", and "Physical Science (315)". A "Resource Highlight" section features "Projectile Motion" as a "Flash Interactive". A "Professional Development" section mentions "Courses Offered" and "PBS programming".

## STARFALL

We are always looking for good sites that the kids will like. This one has been a long time favorite. There are vast resources on here. It begins with teaching the alphabet and letter sounds. It then moves through pre-reading and reading activities. One of the favorites are the little videos on each topic.

What is especially nice is that there are little books online that focus on a particular letter sound, provide words to work with and the resources to teach that sound.

You can also make a calendar, and have great activities for special events and holidays.

[www.starfall.com](http://www.starfall.com)

The screenshot shows the Starfall website. It has a colorful, child-friendly design. At the top, there are navigation links for "Home", "About", "Contact", "Help", and "Privacy". The main content area features a large "ABC's" section with "Learn to Read", "It's Fun to Read", and "I'm Reading" buttons. There are also various educational icons and a navigation menu.

## TRANSITIONING TO HIGH SCHOOL

<http://www.betterhighschools.org/topics/#transition>

### Keeping students moving forward on the journey from the middle grades into high school

The ninth grade has the highest failure rate of any grade, and this dramatically increases the likelihood that students will not finish high school. One in three students in the Southern Regional Education Board states does not graduate on time. The picture is especially bleak for minority and male students: Fewer than half of African-American and Hispanic male students receive a high school diploma in four years.

As a result of these findings, states and schools are placing increased emphasis on helping students make the transition from the middle grades to high school and beyond. By the same token, special efforts are being made to assist students in completing grade nine successfully.

The *HSTW* research brief titled *Middle Grades to High School: Mending a Weak Link* contains these facts:

- Enrollment in demanding courses does not result in more failures. In fact, the evidence suggests that tougher content results in lower failure rates. Many students can handle intellectual work that is more challenging than schools are willing to assign. Enrolling ninth-graders into low-level academic courses that have low expectations and boring assignments is a recipe for failure.
- Taking algebra or pre-algebra in the middle grades leads to enrollment in higher-level mathematics courses in high school and does not increase failure rates.
- Middle grades schools that are successful in preparing students for college-preparatory courses in the ninth grade provide extra help and assign students an adult mentor. Successful schools come in many sizes, and students vary by ethnicity and socioeconomic status.
- Teachers matter enormously. When they serve as teacher-advisers, their students are more apt to set educational goals and make plans for high school.
- Middle grades schools and high schools can take action to ensure that almost all students will succeed in college-preparatory courses.

Three major strategies will assist students in making the transition from the middle grades to high school.

## CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ALBANY



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Other fun sites:

[www.visualthesaurus.com](http://www.visualthesaurus.com)

This site creates a visual of words that is great. Only downside is, it costs \$20 a year and we aren't big supporters of sites that cost money.

<http://www.thefutureschannel.com/index.php>

Another site with great videos. The videos connect what we teach to the real world. For instance, what math teacher wouldn't want to show their students "Algebra in the Real World?" This site is just a great answer to the age old question: "Why do I need to learn this?"

### Strategies for an effective transition system

The HSTW publication *Opening Doors to the Future: Preparing Low-achieving Middle Grades Students to Succeed in High School*<sup>1</sup> outlines several strategies for an effective transition system:

- Use an interdisciplinary approach to accelerate low-performing middle grades students.
- Conduct summer schools for middle grades students to prevent loss of learning and to provide a head start on the coming school year.
- Enroll incoming ninth-graders who are below grade-level standards in a summer program.
- Establish jump-start programs for ninth-graders.
- Create teacher support teams.
- Develop academies and small learning communities.
- Offer double-doses of English/language arts and mathematics.
- Create special programs to prepare students for high school and beyond.