

The Swanson Anchor



January 2015

From the Principal's Desk

What do cell phones, laptops, iPads and your child have in common at Swanson? Each of these tools is helping to support your child's learning. In 2012, Swanson was the first secondary school in Arlington Public Schools to formally encourage students to bring and use their own devices to support instruction and learning. With teacher approval, students can use these devices to access the Internet and collaborate with their peers within the classroom. By allowing students to use their own devices, we have increased the access all students have to technology for instructional use. (See "Bring Your Own Device" policy under the "Technology" tab on Swanson's website: www.apsva.us/swanson.)

In December, we successfully deployed iPads to our sixth graders as part of APS' Digital Learning Initiative. Each of these initiatives allows us to move from a one-size-fits-all classroom environment to one of personalization, as each child's learning needs are quickly and frequently assessed and teaching practices are adjusted to meet them.

Dr. Ruben Puentedura developed the Substitution-Augmentation-Modification-Redefinition model (SAMR) as a way for teachers to evaluate how they are incorporating technology into their instructional practice. The SAMR model is best depicted in the following visual:

(Continued on page 2)

From the PTA

A great thank you to the parents who volunteered to create the Directory this year. We had fewer orders than in the past, so we printed fewer. If you did not receive or order one but still want a Directory, please email me at tishjenkins@gmail.com. If there are enough additional orders, we may be able to run another small printing.

While we're at it, I'd also like to thank ALL the parents who help out in many ways, large and small. These invaluable PTA volunteers have provided breakfast for our teachers on days when they are here while our kids are off, evaluated and approved \$9,000 in grants for teachers and staff to run projects and programs that are not funded by APS, sold Swanson Spirit Gear, run the Reflections arts competition and so many other things. Whether you have a long history of volunteering or have never been able to before, we would always love to have your help. Look for the PTA emails to see when we need help, and reply to what you can do!

As we wrap up the first semester and look forward to spring, I am glad to see so much more interest in the PTA speakers we have invited to address our group on many different issues. In addition to Online Safety, AP/IB, and Summer Activities, we have a

(Continued on page 2)

January 2015

- 6 Swanson 75th Anniversary Celebration
7:00 pm
- 8 PTA Reflection Reception
6:00 pm, Library
School Board Meeting
7:30 pm, 1426 N. Quincy St.
- 9 Swanson Night at the Movies
5:00 pm
- 13 PTA Meeting
7:00 pm
- 19 Holiday (No School for Students)
- 20 Grade Preparation Day
(No School for Students)
- 22 School Board Meeting
7:30 pm, 1426 N. Quincy St.
- 29 Swanson Science Fair
7:30 pm

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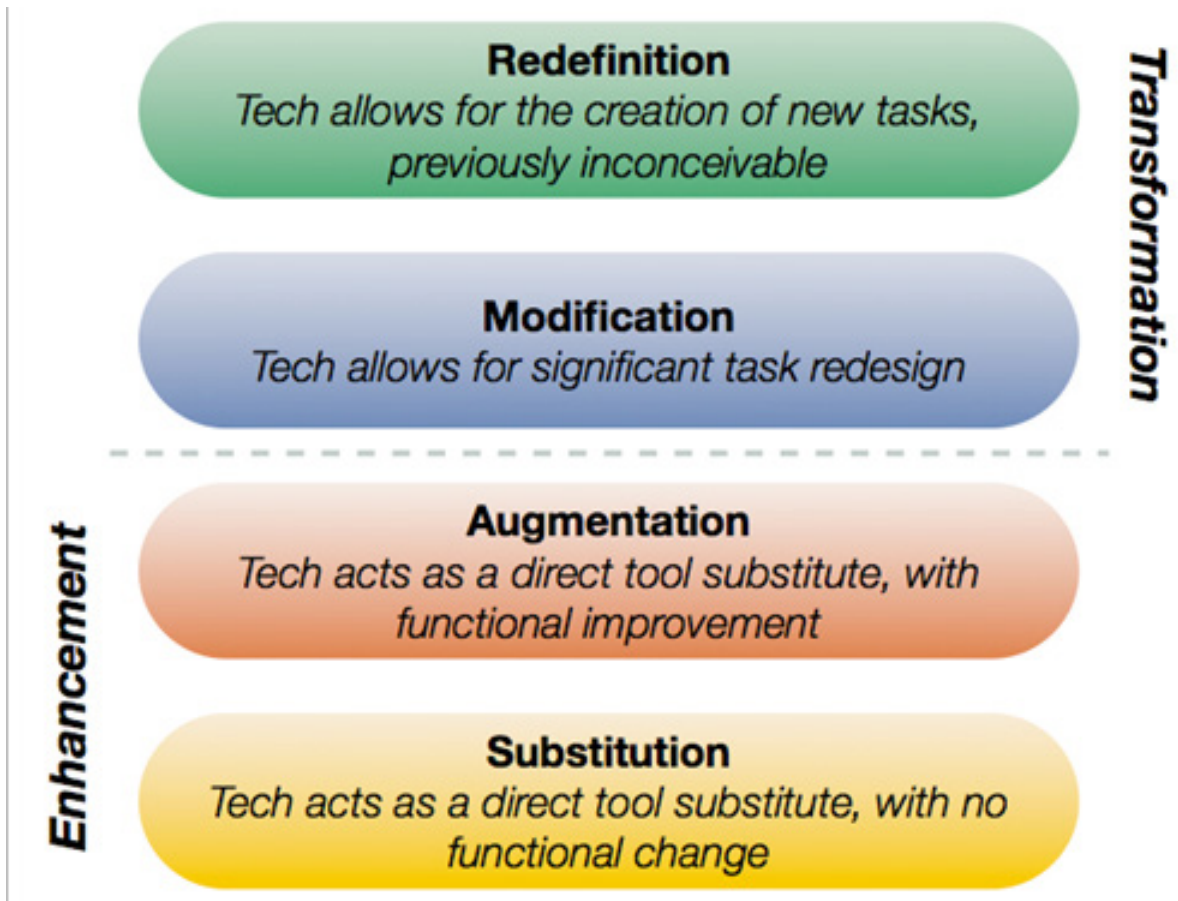
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The following website contains a short video that shows how the SAMR model equates to a cup a coffee: <https://www.common sense media.org/videos/introduction-to-the-samr-model>. (Go to the “SMS Personalized Device Project” link under the “Technology” tab on the Swanson website to access a PowerPoint presentation that links SAMR to Bloom’s taxonomy of learning.)

Our staff has access to Apple’s professional development library, which meets them at their level of readiness. While most teachers have reported to be at the Substitution level of using technology, we anticipate that, with ongoing professional development and the ever-present availability of devices, our students and staff will continue to grow within the SAMR model. Ultimately, access to these devices can enhance our students’ learning beyond what traditional instructional strategies can provide. Stay tuned for more updates from cyberspace!

—Bridget Loft, Principal

From the PTA (Continued from page 1)

strong slate planned for the coming months. Please watch APS School Talk and the PTA emails for more information. If you are not receiving the PTA emails that are sent by me, please send an email to swanson-pta-subscribe@yahoogroups.com to be added to the list serve. We try not to overwhelm your inbox and to send only relevant information that our parents need to know.

One last thing that is no small matter, did you know that Swanson was ranked **THE NUMBER ONE PUBLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL IN VIRGINIA!** I’m sure you are as thrilled as I am to hear this, and if you want more information, click here: <https://k12.niche.com/rankings/public-middle-schools/best-overall/s/virginia>.

—Tish Jenkins, PTA President, 2014–15

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Course Scheduling for Next School Year

Swanson counselors will be coming into classrooms in January and February to discuss course planning for the next school year. Counselors will help students understand the core class requirements and elective options and will discuss high school graduation requirements and academic planning. Students will bring home course request forms in February that may include specific course recommendations.

Course Scheduling Night will be held **February 12 at 7:00 pm**. This event will provide an opportunity for parents to learn more about course options for the next year and beyond. Should we experience inclement weather on February 12, it will be rescheduled February 19 at 7:00 pm.

For 8th grade students, APS high schools also hold academic planning and scheduling nights. These nights provide students and families with the opportunity to meet their new counselor and receive information about course selection. Below are the dates for upcoming sessions as of this writing:

School	Date	Time
Wakefield	January 22	7:00 pm
Washington-Lee	January 28	7:00 pm
Yorktown	January 8	7:00 pm

Reminders for 8th Grade Students

Deadlines for high school programs are approaching:

- **International Baccalaureate (IB) Program:** Applications are due no later than January 16 at 4:00 pm to the IB office at Washington-Lee
- **Yorktown AP Scholars Program:** Applications are due by February 17, 2015 to the Yorktown High School Counseling Office, Room 108. Please mark your applications to the attention of Ms. Henning.
- **Important Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST) dates:**

- January 16: Semifinalist pool notifications posted
- January 24: Essay/student information sheet administration at Swanson
- February 13: Teacher recommendations due

Students who are selected as semifinalists have until January 23 to ask teachers for recommendations. They will have to enter their teacher's information (name and email) on the TJHSST portal.

- April 30: Final admissions decisions posted/mailed

Please see Ms. Hawes or Ms. Goodwyn in the Counseling Office if you have questions.

University of Virginia Summer Enrichment Program

In coordination with the Curry School of Education, the Summer Enrichment Program (SEP) at UVA offers gifted and/or high ability students a rich and rewarding residential learning experience. Students enrolled in grades 4–10 during the 2014–2015 school year may apply to attend a 12-day session. SEP offers three summer sessions to choose from:

- Session I: June 21 – July 2, 2015
- Session II: July 5 – July 16, 2015
- Session III: July 19 – July 30, 2015

Applications are due February 15, 2015. To access the application, visit: <http://curry.virginia.edu/community-programs/student-enrichment/sep/summer/application-process>

Preparing for the Transition from High School to College: Information that Families of Students with Disabilities Need NOW!

Date: Monday, January 26, 2015

- Morning Session: 9:30 am to Noon, Room 171
- Evening Session: 7:00 am – 9:00 pm, Room 101

Location: Syphax Education Center at Sequoia Plaza, 2110 Washington Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22204

This workshop, presented by the Parent Resource Center (PRC), will focus on post-secondary options with academic components, like colleges and universities, as well as postsecondary programs designed for students needing intensive academic and vocational support services. Topics will include:

- IDEA vs. Section 504 and the shift in level of responsibility from school to student

- Disability documentation
- Disclosure – “Telling”
- Differences between campuses that provide “equal access” services and “above and beyond the law” programs, as well as “wrap-around” programs
- Beginning the postsecondary search process
- Summer programs for students with disabilities

Registration is requested. Register online at www.apsva.us/prc/events or by phone to 703-228-7239

ProjectCSGIRLS

Middle school girls interested in using computer science and technology to tackle critical social issues facing the world today are encouraged to register for the 2015 ProjectCSGIRLS Competition. Individuals and teams of up to three girls can submit a project that uses technology that solves a problem under one of three themes: global health, a safer world, and intelligent technology. Winners will receive an awards package and will be eligible to attend a gala in Washington, DC. The submission deadline is March 15, 2015. To learn more, visit: www.projectcsgirls.com

Admirable Admirals: December-January

Admirable Admirals is a monthly opportunity for Swanson staff to recognize students or student groups that exhibit one or more of the six pillars of character: Respect, Responsibility, Caring, Trustworthiness, Fairness and/or Citizenship. Nominated students' laminated picture and write up are displayed on the bulletin board at the Main entrance.

Congratulations to this month's Admirable Admirals!

Allison Craig	Jeremiah Lewis
Reese Feldmeier	Olga Lopez
Elvis Granados	Grace Lynch
Colton Jones	George Stutzman

And these groups...

- Lily Tanenbaum, Celso Amaya-Ventura and James Smith
- Eli Connor, Sophie Finkelstein, Zach Lansbury, Natalie Martin and Emilio Tognelli

- Olivia Case, Sam Celestino, Kathryn Daugherty, William Farley, Lia Hill, Lillian Jones, Amichai Maciel, Milan McCarthy, Alyssa Obenberger and Emma Rosman
- Isabella Gant, Ellie Berenson, Charlotte Howard, Kayla Waddy, Casey Bloome, Noah Troppe, Isabella Cordera, Zoe Tijerina, Sophie Cummings, Sadie Smith, Rylei Porter, Angela Ramirez, Angela Glover, Camille Beck, Maggie Reinhart, Will Fineman, Rowan Meltmar, Peter Fleckenstein, Matteo Roman, Evan Kilmer, Greg Roberts, Jack Hughes and Joel Brown

The New Year Brings New Opportunities for Growth

After the clock strikes midnight on New Year's Eve, you may take a moment to reflect on your accomplishments and set goals for the coming year. Don't forget to encourage your child to do the same! Teens can also benefit from the opportunity to set meaningful goals, and the new year is the perfect time to do so. Research shows that setting goals can help improve teens' confidence, self-efficacy, and sense of responsibility. Allowing your child to take the lead on setting goals and developing a plan of action can help them feel more ownership and pride in their accomplishments.

Swanson counselors have been working with students on setting academic goals for the remainder of the school year using the SMART model of goal setting. Consider helping your child think through the following questions when setting their personal goals:

Specific: What do you hope to accomplish? What are you going to do?

Measureable: How will you know when you have achieved this goal?

Achievable: Is this goal realistic? Do you have the tools to achieve it?

Relevant: Why is this goal important in your life?

Timely: When can you achieve this goal?

Setting the goal is often the easy part. Below are some tips for helping teens accomplish their goals:

- **Visual reminders:** Posting sticky notes with encouraging words or photos that remind them of their goal can help influence teens to stick with it. Creating a vision board with visual representations of their aspirations can be a fun way to keep goals in mind.

- **Create milestones:** Breaking up a long-term goal into smaller steps can make it feel more manageable. Encourage your teen to write out a list of all the small steps involved in accomplishing their goal. They will get satisfaction from crossing them off as they go.
- **Stay positive:** It can be tempting to give up all together if we slip up. Help your teen realize that mistakes are part of learning and having challenges shows just how ambitious your goal is. Maintaining an optimistic attitude can go a long way in increasing motivation and success.



Calling All Scientists!

Are you interested in possibly seeing the future? Do you have a few spare hours in January to view the future? We are offering you the opportunity to answer these questions and many more! Join us at our Annual Swanson Science Fair on Thursday, January 29, 2015 at 6:00 pm. After a light dinner, you will have the time to visit with our students and witness what they have been curious about. Contact Mahi Savage at mahi.savage@apsva.us if you would like to join in the fun. Hope to see you there!

— Mahi Savage, 7th Grade Life Science Teacher

Swanson Chorus Performs at the Kennedy Center!

The Swanson Chorus received an invitation from the Kennedy Center to perform on the Millennium Stage on December 4. They were selected from middle schools in the D.C. Metropolitan Area to represent excellence in choral music in our schools. The program may be viewed on the Kennedy Center website: <http://www.kennedy-center.org/explorer/videos/?id=M6127>

— Mary-Hannah Klontz, Chorus Teacher

The Latest in Latin — Lo Saturnalia!

On Wednesday December 17, on the Roman feast-day of the Saturnalia, APS Latin students and friends celebrated their own version of this ancient holiday with an evening of games, costumes, gladiatorial contests, food and fun, hosted by Yorktown High School. On the original holiday,





a sacrifice would have been made to the ancient agricultural god, Saturn—we made do with bidding farewell to a lion of the stuffed variety. The Romans then feasted, partied, and exchanged gifts, especially little clay figurines called *sigillaria*; students made their own clay figurines to give to friends.

The most intriguing aspect of this popular ancient holiday was that masters and slaves reversed roles for the day, particularly at a special dinner where slaves would be served the meal by their masters. Sadly, all requests for a day of teacher/student reversal were denied...unless you happen to be in Latin IV at Washington-Lee, where the teacher, Nora Kelley, invited Ms. Stowell to join her old students while two of them taught the class, and she and Ms. Stowell were “model” students.

— *Melanie Stowell, Latin Teacher*



Continental Math League Contest

The second Continental Math League contest occurred on Thursday, December 4. The 6th graders continued their strong performance and earned another perfect team score with 20 students earning perfect 6's. After a challenging first contest, the 7th graders rebounded with 25 students earning a perfect score. In 8th grade, the second contest proved to be very difficult, with only two students completing the contest without errors.

Top cumulative scorers in each of the grade levels are as follows:

Cumulative Perfect Score of 12:

6th grade:

Casey Bloome
Joel Brown
Camille Chiu
Daniel Nadel
George Stutzman
Henry Uz

7th grade:

Henry Olson

8th grade:

Hanna Xu

Cumulative Score of 11:



6th grade:

Allison Craig
Reese Feldmeier
Christopher Jennings
Grace Lynch
Andrew Murray
Liam Norman
Nicholas Papavassiliou
Luella Wallander
Samuel Youkeles

7th grade:

Zachary Luzius

8th grade:

Geoff Ax
Calder Lowenthal

Cumulative Score of 10:

6th grade:

Braxton Breed
Matthew Carey
Leah Karush
Emily Mucchetti
Mason Rusk

7th grade:

Max Gieseeman
Kaya Guthrie
Mariana Holladay
Billy Holtz

Michael Kyrychenko
Nina Reich
Brendan Selby
Aidan Witeck
Claire Williams

8th grade:

Erika Christensen
Claire Cofield
Clemens Finger
Max Lane
Sophie Lent
Jonah Margosis
Colin Meek
Samantha O'Brien
Nikola Porto

The next contest, held in early January, will be reported in the February Anchor.

—Laura Partridge, Math Coach

Special Education Corner

Special Education Cycle

The Eligibility Process for Your Child to Become Eligible to Receive Special Education Services

Before your child can become eligible to receive special education services, the school is required by law to determine your child's specific needs. The school determines these needs through a process consisting of many steps, often termed the "Special Education Cycle." When viewed as an ongoing cycle with several steps along the way, the special education process is easier to understand.

See November and December Anchor articles to view the first two steps in the Special Education Cycle.

What are the next steps once my child has been referred to testing by the **Student Study Committee**?

Evaluation for Special Education

What/Who:

After the Student Study Committee's recommendation for evaluation is made and you have given written parental permission for testing to begin, a team of teachers and specialists evaluates your child through tests, observations, and screenings. These evaluations include:

Classroom Observation:

Observation of academic performance in a classroom by a member of the evaluation team other than the student's teacher.

Educational:

A written report by a qualified evaluator describing current educational performance and identifying strengths and weaknesses in academic skills.

Psychological:

A written report from a qualified psychologist based on the use of a battery of appropriate instruments which include individual intelligence test(s) and psychoeducational tests. Also, when appropriate, a clinical/psychiatric evaluation is included. An Arlington Public Schools test battery includes projective testing for students suspected of having serious emotional problems. For students suspected of having mental retardation, adaptive behavior will be assessed.

Sociocultural:

A written report from a qualified visiting teacher or school social worker based on information collected through social appraisal instruments which includes background and social/adaptive behavior in home, school, and community.

Other Evaluations As Necessary:

May include evaluations for speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, adaptive physical education, medical and vision and hearing screening.

When:

All parts of the evaluation must be completed so that the Eligibility Committee can meet within 65 administrative working days of receiving the referral Student Study Committee recommended evaluating your child for consideration for eligibility for special education services.

What Happens Next:

The Eligibility Committee meets.

Please look for highlights of topics related to special education services in future issues. You can also view this information on the APS Special Education website: <http://www.apsoa.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=2865>

Visual Arts Reception a Big Hit

Swanson Middle School held its third Art Reception for 7th and 8th Grade Middle School Visual Arts students. Approximately 100 students participated by hanging their two dimensional artwork on black display boards in the cafeteria. Comments from the guest book included, “The Cafeteria never looked so beautiful!”; “This is such a wonderful opportunity for students’ to display their talent”; and “A wonderful and professional display of a wide variety of media!” Students and their families enjoyed light refreshments as they wandered through the displays viewing the artwork.

— Cecily Corcoran, Visual Arts Teacher



Art Star

Swanson is piloting an ART STAR (homeroom) during this school year. In the beginning of the year, students learned how to stretch two large canvases using canvas pliers and staples. After the 16 7th and 8th grade students created the stretched canvases, they began to paint the Swanson Mission in acrylic paints. With help from friends and the Art teacher, Ms. Corcoran, the ART STAR created a 24" x 86" canvas which now hangs in Swanson's hallways. Swanson's statement is their next major project.

— Cecily Corcoran, Visual Arts Teacher



Career and Technical Education News



**Business and Information Technology, Technology Education,
Family and Consumer Sciences**

CTE Student Organization Meetings at Swanson

Technology Education

Technology Student Association (TSA):

- Technology Education Students
- Meets Every Thursday
- Room 126
- Northern Regional Fair
- Technosphere State Conference

FACS:

Science in the Kitchen (FCCLA) meets the 4th Thursday of the month in Mrs. Taylor's room, #114.

Business & IT:

Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month in Ms. Williams' room, #132.

CTE Student Organizations at Swanson

Career and Technical Education Student Organizations at Swanson allow students to embrace their career interests, learn and practice skills related to real-world experiences and identify other students within our school, who have the same interests as they do.

The benefits of joining and actively participating in these organizations include:

- Creating an internal drive for high academic and occupational standards.
- Development of meaningful business partnerships with the community, parents, and alumni of Swanson.
- Link school-based learning to the real world of work with hands on activities and opportunities for enrichment.
- Develop industry and community leadership skills.
- Enhance student self-esteem and self-confidence.

CTE Student Organizations in Action!

Family and Consumer Sciences:

The Family Career and Community Leaders Association (FCCLA) has a regular attendance of about 22 members. The club focus is on Science in the Kitchen. We meet to hypothesize, experiment and discuss basic science principles in the kitchen including which end



of an orange is sweeter, the breakdown of gelatin, edible bugs, and how chocolate is made. We have crossed curriculum and created cell projects as well with our 7th grade Teen Living classes.

Business and Information Technology:

What BIT students learn in Digital Input Technologies classes is taken from classroom learning to the real world when they learn how to dress for a job interview. These competencies will help students with real interviews for jobs when the time comes and FBLA competitions to happen in the spring.



Technology Education:



The Technology Student Association (TSA) has 28 members this year and they are hard at work to prepare for the Northern Virginia Regional Spring Fair held at Mt. Vernon High school on March 7, 2014. In the meantime these Technology Education students have submitted work to 2 contests; the Verizon App Challenge and Virginia Energy Workforce Consortium (VEWC) Essay. Hanna Xu won the essay contest and was awarded an iPad Mini!



Swanson Middle School

Home of the Admirals

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