



## Tech Day: S.W.A.T. Team in Action!

**November 29, 2018** - Grande Yellowhead Public School Division (GYPSD)'s newest initiative S.W.A.T. - Students Working to Advance Technology - got its start on November 6, 2018, when 42 students from Grades 4-10 and 18 Ed Tech Contacts (teachers who support technology in their schools) from across the division came together at the Hinton Learning Services Centre to learn about the exciting opportunities within the realm of educational technology. Two students from each elementary school (from Grades 4-6) and three students from the high schools (Grades 7-10) were invited to attend the exciting Tech Day workshop along with their school's Ed Tech Contact teacher.

Kelly Smith, Director of Technology Services, was excited by the engagement and enthusiasm displayed throughout the day by both the students and the teachers in attendance. "S.W.A.T.'s overall agenda is to build student capacity within GYPSD schools and empower them to be leaders in their schools. While attention to choosing the appropriate hardware and software for the classroom is prerequisite, it is the knowledge and attitude of the teacher and their students that determines the effectiveness of technology integration into the curriculum. When technology integration in the classroom is seamless and thoughtful, students not only become more engaged, they begin to take more control over their own learning, too. Effective tech integration changes classroom dynamics, encouraging student-centered project-based learning."

Equipped with their new knowledge of the Google tools and digital tools available in the division, the students will now act as technology ambassadors for their respective schools. Michelle Armstrong of Ed Tech Team was the guest facilitator for the introduction to G Suite tools, and the students also had the opportunity to explore GYPSD's expansive Digital Library inventory in the newly constructed Makerspace classroom. GYPSD's Tech Day facilitated peer collaboration and encouraged individual learning and growth as students will continue to build capacity in their schools and have access to resources provided by the educational technology team that they can share with their teachers and school community.

Smith continues, "Since students are already interested and engaged in technology, we can harness that attention for educational purposes. Incorporating the internet, laptops, tablets and even smartphones into the curriculum has many benefits for teachers and students alike. However, most students still need a guide to help them use these digital tools effectively for learning and collaboration. No matter their initial skill level, integrating technology and digital content into the classroom offers the chance to increase student interest and teach valuable professional skills - and have some fun!"

Tech Day also had time set aside in the day for the division's Ed Tech Contacts to get together and discuss integrating technology-based teaching methods and resources to enhance student learning. Tips included ways to deliver content, help students process content, and create products that work together to offer a unique learning experience for all users. GYPSD's technology department continues to build its digital library for the classroom to ensure that schools have access to a variety of tools that match the task at hand and provide them with the opportunity to build a deeper understanding of content - a win for all. Please visit [facebook.com/gypsd](https://www.facebook.com/gypsd) to view pictures from GYPSD's first successful Tech Day.