

Kirchner Teacher Honored as One of Missouri's Outstanding Beginning Teachers 2

Crystal Apple Award Given to Maple Valley P.E. Teacher 3

Planning for Next School Year 3

2009 2010 MSSD School Calendar 4

Internet or Web? How to Get Started Online

By Abbie Workman, Central Office

Are you a rookie at using the Internet? Are you fearful of trying to navigate your way around a Web site? This article contains the basics to help you be more at ease and confident when going online. (Note: Some instructions use commands that are for Microsoft Internet Explorer only. Other Web browsers have similar functions that are accessed in different ways. Consult your browser's help feature for more information.)

Basic definitions

- The **Internet** refers to the network connections among computer networks and organized computer facilities around the world. The term is used to describe the actual hardware and computers used to create the networks.
- The **Web** refers to the information contained on networked computers and shared via the Internet. This information is found on Web pages that link to information on other Web pages or Web sites. Just as a spider web is one continuous string that links together at certain points, information on the Web is often linked to other information.
- A **Web site** is a collection of Web pages on a particular theme or related to a particular company.

What do I need to get to the Web?

To connect to the Internet and access the Web, you need some basic equipment and software. First, you will need a modem (short for modulator-demodulator). This is an electronic device that converts your computer's signal into a usable frequency, allowing information to travel via telephone lines, cable TV lines or satellite links. Once the signal reaches its destination, it is reconverted back into computer language. Second, you need an Internet Service Provider (ISP). An ISP allows customers to subscribe to the provider's huge network of equipment that is necessary to actually connect to the Web. Examples of ISPs are AOL, MSN, EarthLink, Embarq, Verizon and NetZero. Third, you need a connection. The type of connection you use will depend on what your ISP offers. The basic types are:

1. **ISDN or T1** – Typically used by businesses to connect large numbers of users to the Internet.
2. **Satellite link** – Used in locations where other Internet access is unavailable, such as vessels at sea or mobile land vehicles. (One form is known as Bluetooth.) This type of connection can be expensive.
3. **DSL (broadband)** – Also known as high speed, this service is primarily offered by telephone companies. DSL does not tie up your telephone line while in use. It is faster than dial-up and is usually inexpensive.
4. **Cable** – Usually provided by cable companies; runs through cable TV lines. This is another type of broadband that offers the highest speed. It is more expensive than DSL.
5. **Wireless** – Requires a wireless modem; is similar to cell phone technology. This is generally slower and more expensive than DSL or Cable.
6. **Dial-up** – The slowest and oldest form of Internet connection. It requires a telephone line and will tie up your line while in use. This is the cheapest type of connection and is sometimes offered for free.

The last thing you need to access the Web is a Web browser. This is the program used to open Web pages. Just as you need a word-processing program to open a text document, you need a Web browser to open Internet documents. Examples of common Web browsers are Microsoft Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox and Safari. Whichever you choose, you will soon be surfing the Web with ease.

How can I tell if a Web site is secure?

The addresses of non-secure Web sites begin with *http*. Secure Web sites start with *https* and sometimes have a padlock icon to the right of the address. Secure sites may also require screen names and passwords. When you purchase anything from a Web site, it is highly recommended that you only buy from secure sites. This helps to ensure that your personal information is protected during the transaction. Also, make online purchases with reputable merchants that offer some kind of purchase protection. If you have any doubts, place your order by telephone. It is always better to be safe than sorry when it comes to making online purchases. ➔

Parent Focus

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Information concerning other available resources, programs, etc., is not to be construed as an endorsement by Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled for any specific product, organization, or philosophy.

Changing your view (in Internet Explorer)

Did you know that you can change the way your computer screen looks while you are browsing the Web? The following are a few ways to look differently at the Web.

- **Full-screen mode** – On the menu bar, click on *View* and then *Full Screen*. The toolbar at the top of your screen will disappear, but don't panic! If you are using Internet Explorer 7 or later, a floating toolbar will appear when you move the cursor to the top of the screen (and disappear when you move it away). To exit full-screen mode, either click the restore button (the button next to the small x at the top right of your screen) or hit the F11 key.
- **Text size** – Click *View* on the menu bar, and then point to *Text Size*. From here you can make the text size larger or smaller. Larger text helps people with visual impairments to see words easier. (Some Web sites force certain text sizes. To override this, go to *Tools > Internet Options > General > Accessibility*, and then check *Ignore font sizes specified on webpages*.)
- **Zoom** – Another handy option is to use the zoom feature. At the bottom-right corner of the screen is an icon that looks like a magnifying glass. Click on it to display different magnification options. Choose the one that works best for you.

Search engines

We have all been in situations where we need to find information on a subject but are not sure where to look. Or, we might not have a pen handy when we are given a Web address we need to remember. Often we can find what we need by using a search engine. Examples can be found at Google.com, Yahoo.com, Ask.com, Dogpile.com and Clusty.com. These sites search the Web using key words and return a list of the best matches ranked by relevancy. (For more detailed information on search engines, visit *The Spider's Apprentice* at <http://www.monash.com/spidap.html>.)

Saving your favorite sites (in Internet Explorer)

This handy feature is similar to saving telephone numbers in your cell phone. As long as you are at your own computer, you will never have to remember Web site addresses again. Simply go to one of your favorite Web sites, and then click on the little star with a plus sign on the left side of your screen. Select *Add to Favorites*; a window will appear that allows you to rename the Web site as something else if you so choose. You can save the site in the *Favorites* folder, or you can create a new folder to organize your favorite sites. When you are finished, click on *Add*.

To access your favorite places on the Web, click on *Favorites* in the menu bar. Or, click on the solid star (without the plus sign) on the left side of your screen. A list of your favorites will appear. Click on the site you want to visit, and the browser will take you there.

Kirchner Teacher Honored as One of Missouri's Outstanding Beginning Teachers

By Bob Campbell, Building Administrator at Kirchner School

Every two years, the Missouri Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recognize new teachers across the state for their excellence in working with Missouri's youth. Cecily Robinson, a teacher at H. Kenneth Kirchner School for the Severely Disabled, was honored as one of Missouri's Outstanding Beginning Teachers at a ceremony on April 3 at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City.

Robinson joined the faculty at Kirchner in 2006 and worked for two years as a teacher aide. During that time, mentor and supervising teacher Kay Brejcha often commented that she was learning as much from Robinson as Robinson was learning from her. In September 2008, Robinson became a teacher at Kirchner. This new challenge has utilized her patience, understanding, dedication and affection for her students. Her impressive passion for teaching is appreciated by everyone at school.



Cecily Robinson

Crystal Apple Award Given to Maple Valley P.E. Teacher

Compiled from information provided by Susan Miller, Home School Coordinator at Maple Valley

Debbie Gundy, physical education teacher at Maple Valley School for the Severely Disabled, was recently awarded the 2009 Fox 4 Crystal Apple Award. Presented by the Kansas City television station, this annual award honors four teachers who dedicate themselves as true mentors to the students they teach.

Gundy has been a P.E. teacher at Maple Valley for six years. While participating in the Career Ladder program, she developed and designed books featuring adaptive games for students with disabilities. These books have proven so effective that they have been circulated among other MSSD schools.

Gundy has also created many all-school activities that have become annual traditions, including Game Day, Crazy Hat Day, Beach Day and several others. For one such event titled Water Play Day, she constructed a wheelchair wash (similar to a car wash) by drilling holes in PVC pipes.

In addition to her creativity and inventiveness, Gundy goes beyond the call of duty by writing grants for the school to gain additional funding. This has helped Maple Valley to purchase



Debbie Gundy holds up the 2009 Fox 4 Crystal Apple Award. Gundy was one of four teachers honored by the TV station for showing tremendous dedication to students.

additional equipment and to fund various student activities. Her efforts to secure a grant with Nearly New have resulted in a swimming program for students in which they can swim and receive off-campus therapy at a local indoor pool.

(To view Fox 4's coverage of Gundy's award, please go to <http://www.fox4kc.com>. Type Crystal Apple in the search window, and click on the story dated April 13, 2009.)

Planning for Next School Year

In May, you will receive a mailing from your child's school that includes various forms you are asked to complete and return before the start of the 2009-10 school year. During the summer, please visit your child's physician and have the medical forms signed. The school will enclose all forms relevant to your child's needs, and you should receive all or most of the following items. If you have questions, please contact your school building administrator or school nurse.

Doctor's Physical Examination Report

It is important for the school to be kept up-to-date on your child's health so that staff can provide necessary health care (and educational instruction) without any negative side-effects.

Emergency or Illness Form

Having this information is vital should there be an emergency with your child while at school or during bus transportation.

Parent Authorization for Special Health Care/Health Care Provider's Order and Approval of Special Health Care Procedure and Special Health Care Procedure

This information is necessary so that appropriate training can be provided to the staff responsible for conducting your child's special health care procedures. Since your child's health care needs can change, it is important that any changes to procedures be shared with the school so that appropriate care is given to your child as ordered by a physician.

Medication Order

Neither staff nor the school nurse will be allowed to give prescription or over-the-counter medication to your child without a medication order. This order ensures that your child will receive the appropriate medication for his or her condition as deemed necessary by your child's physician.

Immunization Request

State law requires that MSSD students be current in their immunizations in order to attend school. This form will indicate any immunizations your child needs.

Medical Statement for Students Requiring Special Meals

The federal lunch program requires that any special diet is to be ordered by your child's physician.

Bus Transportation Information

This form is important for providing bus personnel and the school with alternate addresses where your child can be dropped off if you are unable to be home to meet the bus. You can update this form at any time during the year, and you may enter several alternate addresses of family members or friends. Phone numbers should be updated if they change.

Free Lunch Application Letter and Application

This should be completed by families that are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.



2009-2010 MSSD School Calendar

School Session Days

August 17	School Opening Day
September 7	Labor Day Holiday
September 16	Early Dismissal at Noon
October 15-16	Staff Development Meetings
October 30	Parent/Teacher Meetings for First Quarter Report of Progress
November 25	Early Dismissal at Noon
November 26-27	Thanksgiving Break
December 4	Early Dismissal at Noon
December 24-January 1	Winter Break
January 4	Classes Resume
January 15	Second Quarter Report of Progress to Parents
January 18	Martin Luther King Jr. Day Holiday
February 5	Early Dismissal at Noon
February 12	Lincoln's Birthday Holiday
February 15	Washington's Birthday Holiday
March 12	Parent/Teacher Meetings for Third Quarter Report of Progress
March 29-April 2	Spring Break
April 5	Classes Resume
May 7	Truman's Birthday Holiday
May 26*	School Closing Day
May 27	Fourth Quarter Report of Progress to Parents

*The closing date will be adjusted as needed to make up for days lost due to inclement weather or other factors.

NOTE: All listings designated in bold are student non-attendance days.

Make-Up Schedule

March 29-30, 2010, would be used as the first two make-up days. Additional make-up days would begin on May 27, 2010, with consecutive weekdays following as needed (except for Memorial Day, May 31).

2010 Administrative Calendar for Extended School Year

June 21-July 30 (July 5 break for Fourth of July)

Cut out and save this schedule to keep track of important dates for next school year after you've finished reading!



MISSOURI SCHOOLS FOR THE SEVERELY DISABLED
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Web site: <http://dese.mo.gov/divspced/stateschools>

NOTE: If you have items of interest for Parent Focus, please call (573) 751-0706 (Missouri Relay (800) 735-2966) or forward them to Debbie Stover, Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; e-mail: debbie.stover@dese.mo.gov.