



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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# **Norwalk-La Mirada Teachers on Track for 2020 Learning Initiative Implementation**

When Waite Middle School teacher Kelly Baker's students researched and wrote a virtual travelogue of San Francisco for a blog that morphed into a survival narrative when zombies invaded, they drew in 7,000 viewers and turned out a compelling lesson in technology-aided collaboration.

The assignment integrated the kind of math, literacy and social studies skills required by the California's new state standards and is an example of the interactive learning envisioned by the District's 2020 Learning Initiative.

"It was some of the best writing I'd seen the students do all year," said Baker, who is now one of NLMUSD's four technology literacy coaches, assisting teachers throughout the district on how to use computer technology in the classroom.

The blending of technology and teaching is a key element of NLMUSD's 2020 Learning Initiative, one that more than 230 teachers explored this week during the district's second annual Blended Learning Summit where their fellow teachers led more than 20 hands-on workshops over two days demonstrating a wide variety of exciting ways they are successfully putting technology to work for students.

Nuffer Elementary teacher Peggy Horowitz was among them. She has an iPad center in her second grade classroom where students have conducted research on big concepts, like outer space, sharing what they learned with their classmates. Horowitz attended the "Intro to Google Drive" workshop because she's interested in ways to further collaborate on lesson planning with peers at her school and beyond.

The 2020 Learning Initiative calls for every classroom – pre-K through 12 grades -- to be equipped with large LCD monitors and wifi hotspots. The District is testing iPads, Chromebooks and other mobile computing devices to determine the best option for each grade and subject. Students in grades four and above will be equipped with personal learning devices and lower grade classrooms will have more of a lap-top cart-based model.

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As introducing electronic devices as quickly as possible is becoming more widespread throughout public schools, NLMUSD's approach to rolling out its technology plan has been a measured one, largely driven by teachers, beginning with the establishment of "model classrooms" in each school in 2010 and a plan to train all teachers and students in the best ways to make use of the equipment with specific goals in mind.

Ernesto Centeno, NLMUSD Instructional Technology Specialist, says the collaborative nature of the district's blended learning professional development is critical to making the 2020 Learning Initiative investment worthwhile -- with teachers engaged and supporting each other, setting annual goals, generating ideas and planning lessons together.

"When all of our classrooms are outfitted as 20<sup>th</sup> Century Classrooms, we will know what tools, lessons and training are most beneficial in reaching the goals of the program – to maximize student engagement and personalize instruction," he said.

For example, teachers can create courses, building in quizzes, lectures, videos, interactive blogs and other online content. The also technology provides students with a collaborative forum to answer questions posted by a teacher, see other students' input and engage with their peers in discussion and work. In turn, teachers can see how students work together.

Centeno said the district is already using digital tools that allow teachers to monitor student growth in math and language arts and then implement targeted interventions and support based on what teachers see from that data, enabling them to meet the needs of 30 students in real time.

"Our 2020 Learning Initiative is about creating learners who are engaged in their world in a much broader way," said NLMUSD Board of Education President Jesse Urquidi.

It's about living and working in the digital age and how to be accountable and successful in that world."

The program is budgeted at \$18 million over the next three years from voter-approved Measure G bond to fund the necessary hardware and infrastructure.

Superintendent Dr. Hasmik Danielian attended the Summit. "You could feel the excitement in the room as teachers heard about new and imaginative ways to engage their students and to meet their students at whatever learning level they may be and stretch them further," she said.

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PHOTO CAPTIONS: Ernesto Centeno, NLMUSD Instructional Technology Specialist and NLMUSD teachers at Blended Learning Summit workshop on August 17; Los Alisos Middle School teacher Reggie Snyder (standing) leads "Intro to Google Docs" workshop.