

Nomination Statement for Shawna Sunday (Educator)

Shawna Sunday, a 6th grade mathematics teacher, is the definition of a dreamer. Idealistic thoughts` dictate this educator's instructional persona. When she boldly stated that her class was going to turn paperless overnight, she was greeted with snickers and eye rolls. To those who know Mrs. Sunday, it was no surprise that her classroom was transformed the next day, with no trace of paper to be found on the students' desks. Mrs. Sunday's use of one-to-one I-pads is not her only manifested dream. Walk into her collaborative classroom and you will be greeted by students discovering mathematics with flip cameras, laptops, Promethean flip charts, voice recorders, iPods, cell-phones and more! What separates this idealistic dreamer from the clouds she dances in, is her commitment to excellence in technological education. Having said this, Mrs. Sunday is the epitome of a teacher who deserves recognition in the field of educational technology.

Shawna Sunday works in an inner-city middle school, servicing at-risk youth. At Western Heights, improving student learning is a prevalent challenge faced by all teachers, which is highlighted in Category one. The vast ability levels in Mrs. Sunday's classroom (ranging from kindergarten to sixth grade) are met through differentiated, student-piloted instruction; Students are strategically grouped based on needs identified through the NWEA's Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP) testing. Using various apps and online resources (ex: Poll Ev, Clicker systems, My Big Campus assigned quizzes and Gradecam), Mrs. Sunday and her students receive immediate feedback on their learning, which is used to group and guide instruction. At any time in her classroom, it is possible that no student is working on the same assignment or level. The use of one-to-one I-pads and other technologies makes this possible through various leveled apps and online learning communities like My Big Campus.

Although this daunting task seems impossible, Mrs. Sunday spends enormous amounts of time creating and researching resources for her students, including her two non-English speaking children. She and her newly created 'tech team', evaluate technology and media through online educational blogs, forums and professional organizations to find the most appropriate usages. With this guided classroom model, Mrs. Sunday highlights real-life, rigorous learning on a daily basis through the complex tasks used to discover concepts. Students are given the responsibility of solving real world problems, as provided by educators like Dan Meyers, to discover Common Core standards. Each task is accompanied with a student chosen, real-life assessment, focusing on discussion and speaking techniques to enhance mathematical understanding. Students are encouraged to use apps, like Show Me or Educations, and other resources, like Podcasts, I-tunes U and flip cameras, to record and self-asses their understanding.

Mrs. Sunday will admit that the full integration of technology can be challenging and exhausting in the beginning. Her commitments to the establishment and enforcement of classroom policies and procedures that address legal, social, and ethical issues have made the implementation easier. Before touching the iPad, students in her room were given research projects based on current and past technology ethical issues. The goal was to create a classroom contract based on ideas and research of past users. Both students and parents were responsible for signing the classroom contract as well as reviewing the school Technology Usage Policy.

Mrs. Sunday's video artifact highlights an example of her unique usage of technology to support learning. Working with students and teachers at Western Heights, Shawna led a collaborative effort for a math music video. By creating a video to address fraction concepts, a difficult sixth grade idea, Mrs. Sunday's goal was to close achievement gaps in this topic through technology and music. Evidence of her success can, not only, be identified by talking to the students, but by comparing her state and county scores on tests as well as her growth rates in MAP testing.

Category two addresses a utilization of technology for professional productivity. Mrs. Sunday's ability to plan and develop technology integrated instructional materials has been a cornerstone achievement with her use of one-to-one iPads. Because her classroom is one-hundred percent paperless, every lesson requires the commitment to advanced promethean board applications, evolving internet knowledge, and educational I-Pad app research. Her lessons, presented professional development documents, and integrated technology understanding, are shared on a daily basis with colleagues, administrators and other education professionals through a district drive. Also a member of various My Big Campus teacher groups, vital information is shared through online forums. Her classroom My Big Campus bundles (for students) are collectively shared with her teammates for grade wide cohesiveness. Google docs, Facebook and 'todaysmeet' are other resources where Shawna collectively shares and reports information with her colleagues. Her most impressive application of professional productivity is her creation and use of her blog (artifact explained in detail later) to inform and discuss technology with parents, colleagues, field experts and community members.

In alignment with Category three, Shawna Sunday is a member of various professional organizations. Using the resources available from these organizations, Mrs. Sunday's instruction is driven by best practices. Mrs. Sunday is a passionate member of Maryland Society of Educational Technology (MSET), National Educators Association (NEA), Maryland State Education Association (MSEA), International Society of Technology in Education (ISTE), Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE), National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), and Maryland Society of Teachers of Mathematics (MCTM). Aside from using the information gleaned from these professional organizations in her classroom, Shawna applies her knowledge to her progressing Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis on Technology Specialization.

Through her four years of teaching, Mrs. Sunday has captured the attention of local education professionals in Washington County. Giving numerous professional development sessions about technology to her home school,

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Mathematics Department, and other school affiliates, Mrs. Sunday is recognized as a captivating and educated speaker. Some of her key presentations involve; “Project Based Learning with Product Card Assessment”, “My Big Campus (online learning) Exploration”, “Flip Camera Fun”, and other technology specific sessions. Each of these sessions details different technologies used in the classroom through a collaborative environment where colleagues get the chance to participate and integrate with the technologies. At the state level, Mrs. Sunday is presenting for the first time at MSET. During her sessions, “Hollywood in the Classroom” and “The Paperless Classroom”, Mrs. Sunday is presenting on her favorite and most current technology usages.

Although Mrs. Sunday is no stranger to presenting professional development opportunities, one of her greatest loves is attending and participating in professional development opportunities. The most recent development opportunity was presented by Apple and teachers at Emma K. Doub, entitled, “I-Pads in Action”. Aside from the monthly professional development series offered by lead teachers at her middle school, Mrs. Sunday is also an active participant in “appy hours” and “webinars”. Her most recent webinar was presented by AMLE with Ruby Paine and her work with at-risk youth.

Mrs. Sunday’s most impressive contribution to her impact and involvement on technology use in education can be seen through her included artifact. Through her weekly blog about her one to one I-pad and technology experience, Mrs. Sunday has demonstrated her quest for knowledge and collaboration. Mrs. Sunday disseminates her newly acquired knowledge through her blog. Her constant action research on one-to-one technology is evident as you read each post. Her goal, through her blog, is to provide education for those who are about to or have one-on-one I-pads. More impressive than that, Mrs. Sunday has opened her blog outside her school; Community members, parents, other teachers and college education students are admiring her blog. She uses her blog as a collaborative atmosphere where colleagues and college education students can ask questions and post new information and knowledge. Her dream is to make this blog a working collaborative environment for those interested in I-pads. Through her work with local colleges and her research with her professional organizations, Mrs. Sunday’s latest endeavor is getting her ideas published. Although she is in the early stages of applying, this dream will not go unfulfilled.

Mrs. Sunday believes the most powerful tool in facilitating collaboration efforts to advance the use of technology, detailed in Category Four, is the students. Mrs. Sunday fully admits, “the students have so much more knowledge about current and upcoming technologies than I do. They teach me!” Because of this idea, Mrs. Sunday has recently created a “Tech Team” at her school comprised of students. To engage and communicate with parents, the students on this team will slowly create a school website, complete with links to the school Facebook page, student work examples, and school/community activities. As the head of the morning announcement crew, Mrs. Sunday was able to acquire the abilities to stream the announcements live this year. The Tech Team is working on a live feed so that parents and the community have the ability to watch the announcements live each day. They will also be a valuable resource for the school teachers, becoming experts on troubleshooting technology. Other communication with parents that she uses on a daily basis is her updates of classroom notes, agendas and assignments on My Big Campus and Evernote. For all those parents who want to help but just don’t know how, Mrs. Sunday includes personal videos on topics to teach parents how to assist their children (see Mrs. Sunday’s classroom newsletter artifact).

Mrs. Sunday’s work with parents and the school community is impressive, but what separates her from other technology professionals is her drive to engage local businesses and outside community members. With the unfortunate passing of the schools librarian, Dean Schroeder, Mrs. Sunday collaboratively created and facilitated a benefit concert in memory of Mr. Schroeder. All technology aspects (lighting, sound, screen presentations and artistic performances) were orchestrated and organized with Mrs. Sunday at the forefront. The most touching moment of the performance was watching a dance performed by students through a technology integrated performance. Watching one of Mrs. Sunday’s famous math music videos or admiring one of her technology and dance integrated performances is a constant reminder that technology cannot exist alone. Mrs. Sunday is dedicated to enhancing all aspects of her educational career, in hopes that “they will blend together and make a more beautiful and technology rich educational experience”. Recently, Mrs. Sunday created and performed a technology tribute to her school during a local business leader luncheon featured at her school, displaying how technology is a leading vessel in our schools’ success.

Outside the school walls, Shawna is working with the Hagerstown Police Athletic League to reconfigure their website and write grants. Incorporating technological understanding and educational knowledge about middle and high school students, the main purpose of the site is to inform the community of programs for at-risk youth in our district.

With all that Mrs. Sunday has accomplished in technology education in her four years of teaching, it is amazing that she is constantly working to integrate more meaningful technology to assist the learning of her students. Mrs. Sunday admits, “yes, I am a dreamer. My students, already fighting so many obstacles at home deserve a dreamer. How else am I going to meet their needs if I do not capitalize on what they know? My goal is to teach them how to transform their learning with the same tool used to Instagram ‘bathroom selfies’ and hashtag their important life endeavors. #TBH I love the challenges and rewards associated with technology integration. Technology is constantly changing, so I am constantly changing and dreaming...”