Stafford County Public Schools use Business&ITCenter21 to empower middle school students

**Stafford County Public Schools
Shirley C. Heim Middle School**

SCHOOL TYPE:
Middle School

COURSE TITLES:
• **Computer Solutions**
• **Computer Applications**

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Like many middle school instructors, Computer Solutions teacher, Natalie Walden, is always searching for ways to make a positive impact on her students. Walden has discovered that with Business&ITCenter21, her students can not only make meaningful connections between computer technology and the world around them, but also feel empowered about their learning.

Situation

Those teaching middle school students understand the challenges of this age group—particularly keeping learners interested and focused on tasks. Natalie Walden is no exception. She recognizes the importance of keeping students engaged in their learning. She wants to create an environment that will get students excited about using computers.

Solution

Walden gets students invested in their learning using Business&ITCenter21.

In the sixth grade Computer Solutions (or Computer Exploration) classes, students use Business&ITCenter21 to study topics such as Internet Safety, Basic Computer Functions, Computer Graphics, and Troubleshooting and Maintenance.

Walden uses the Troubleshooting unit as a practical exercise in problem-solving with her students. "I want them to be independent," she says. "So I tell them, I'm going to give you the power. Because when you go to print and it's not working, I want you to think, 'Why is the printer not working.'"

In the seventh grade Computer Applications, students use ITcenter21 to study Telecommunications & Ethics, Spreadsheets, and Web Page Building.

"We want them to take the knowledge from school, take it home and make it useful." Walden has examples of how her students made their own business cards and even updated their parents' business cards. "Being able to show your math teacher that you know how to do a pie chart is extremely important, that you know how to read and interpret a bar graph is important."

Results

For Walden, perhaps the most satisfying result of using Business&ITCenter21 is to see students realize the impact of their learning. "It's so empowering for these students to know that they are not only learners but also teachers in some capacity at the school" says Walden. After one of her students helped another teacher with a technology issue, the student said, "Wow! I'm teaching the teachers now!" She encourages her students to "show off what you know" to other teachers. And, students take what they have learned with Business&ITCenter21 and apply it to their lives outside of school, as well. Walden shares how some students are empowered to help their parents troubleshoot technology issues at home. And with results like these, it is no wonder that Walden says, "I love using the computers to teach."

Applied
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