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# Verona Public Schools

## MISSION STATEMENT

*“The mission of the Verona Public Schools, the center of an engaged and supportive community, is to empower students to achieve their potential as active learners and productive citizens through rigorous curricula and meaningful, enriching experiences.”*

## Verona Announces Its First Google Teacher Academy

The Verona Public Schools is proud to announce its first Google Teacher Academy for the 2015-16 school year! “We had over forty teachers apply for this exciting opportunity to enhance their classroom instruction,” states Rui Dionisio, Superintendent of Schools. The Administrative Team spent a considerable amount of time figuring out who should be on the Google Team next year. The process included creating a district overview (elementary, middle, and high school) to gain a global view of who was interested. Additionally, grade level, content areas, and departments were all factors in determining who was placed on the Google Team. “The goal for our Google Teacher Academy is to build capacity with as many teachers in as many subjects/areas as possible”, noted Charlie Miller, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. The teachers who were selected range in teaching experience and span the entire district.

## Google Teacher Academy Benefits:

1. Participation in a Google Summit Professional Development Conference during Summer 2015 (July 14 & 15)
2. Professional Learning Community (PLC) collaboration held after school once per month with cohort members for 2015-2016 academic year.
3. Lead professional development day seminars for Verona educators on Google Apps for Education (GAPE).
4. Join online Google learning communities.
5. Participate in additional professional development training experiences throughout the year.
6. Engage in book club discussions on transformative learning.
7. Google Teacher Academy cohort members receive Google Chromebook access in their respective school.



At the elementary schools, the district wanted to ensure broad representation at every school. **Ms. Megan Pellegrino** and **Ms. Karen Sabatino**, both grade 3 teachers, will represent F.N. Brown. **Ms. Joan Weiss**, a grade 1 teacher will represent Forest Avenue School. **Mr. Brian Samples**, a grade 3 teacher at Laning, will lead Laning Avenue School. Both elementary librarian/media specialists, **Ms. Corisa Walker** and **Ms. Katey McAuliffe**, will support all of our classroom teachers in every district elementary school to maximize Google Apps for Education (GAFE) <sup>1</sup>.

At H.B. Whitehorne (HBW) Middle School, **Ms. Sarah O'Connor** will represent grade 5 and mathematics. In grade 6, **Ms. Marissa Albano** will teach science, and **Ms. Jessica Barnes** will represent special education. **Mr. Pete Foster** will represent grade 7 with Social Studies along with **Ms. Kirpa Chohan**, one of our grade 7 mathematics/pre-algebra teachers. In grade 8, our science teachers, **Ms. Amy Heckel** and **Mr. Paul Moschella**, will work together collaboratively to maximize the latest technology to excite their students. Lastly, **Ms. Jen Kleinknecht**, HBW's library/media specialist and Computer Science teacher, **Mr. Andor Kish** will stretch Google to its limits!

At Verona High School (VHS), the Administrative Team ensured that all of the core disciplines were represented. **Dr. Marie Meyer**, teacher of AP Language and Composition as well as English 11 Honors, will represent English Language Arts. In mathematics (Algebra & Geometry), **Mr. Jon Thai** will infuse technology into his classroom instruction. **Mr. Patrick Bresnan** will utilize Google Apps for Education in his US History I & II classes next year. AP & Honors Biology teacher, **Mr. Casey Harris** was selected for science. **Ms. Jessica Calvo** will maximize her opportunities to use Google with her students in Spanish IV Honors and AP Spanish. Two of our special education teachers, **Ms. Jennifer Errico** and **Mr. Matt Swajkowski**, will work with our students to help them reach their fullest potential. Finally, our newly hired librarian/media specialist, **Ms. Maria Benz**, will support the high school teachers with Google as well as vertically articulate GAFE with her elementary and middle school media specialist colleagues.

We received an overwhelming response from our staff who were interested in participating in the Google Teacher Academy. We will be increasing the number of Chromebook devices for staff to use with students who were unable to be in the Academy; moreover, we will expand our Google Teacher Academy to even more teachers the following year, 2016-17. In closing, we would like to thank all of the teachers who applied for the Google Teacher Academy and wish them great success in the coming year.

<sup>1</sup> Note: Google Apps For Education (GAFE) is an enterprise level "software" solution for cloud based collaborative teaching and learning. Applications include but are not limited to Google Drive, Google Docs, Google Sheets, Google Slides, Google Sites, Gmail and Calendar. There are many more applications in the Google Market Place.