

## Websites

[It's My Life](#) is a part of pbskids.org. The purpose is to help kids deal with all kinds of school-related issues; from test stress to time management. There are also games, videos, and discussion topics ranging from starting High School to "My Teacher Hates Me". Other links help kids with things like friends, family, their changing bodies and emotions, and even money management.

## Tips: Signatures and iChat

At the beginning of the year, Larry sends out information on using a signature in your email. He also reminds everyone to set up iChat with a Jabber account (not AIM). Despite the many reminders, most people still don't have both.

Why do we need to do this, you ask? Simple. It saves time. Larry is only one guy, and it's a big district. Often, he can quickly fix a problem remotely if he knows who you are, where you are, and/or can share a screen with you using iChat or Remote Desktop. If not, time is wasted finding things out instead of helping you with the problem.

If you need help setting up either of these things, just let me know.

## Article:

### [Education Needs a Digital-Age Upgrade](#)

Virginia Heffernan wonders if the 19th Century model is useful for our students' future.

## Welcome Back!

Ahh, there's nothing like the beginning of a new school year! Once you all start coming back to your buildings and going to work for kids, the energy in the air changes. I can't explain it, but you all know what I'm talking about.

Teachers have been under fire in the media a lot lately. From the Wisconsin anti-union legislation, to the seemingly constant barrage of criticisms by those who consider themselves experts on education because they drive by a school on their way to work, you've taken a beating. As Kevin Honeycutt of ESSDACK likes to say, "Stop attacking teachers! They can't fight back in front of the kids!"

Anyone who knows anything about what teachers actually do every day knows how much work it really is. No matter how hard it is, though, the beginning of the year can be so invigorating.

Those who criticize what we do like to say things that start with, "In what other profession...". We can counter with many more- and better- arguments about what we do that doesn't happen in any other profession. Rather than list them all here, I'll refer you to a [nicely written article by David Reber](#) for the Topeka K-12 Examiner and focus on one positive aspect of our unique position as educators.

In what other profession do you get to have a fresh start every year? Not many. And it's exactly

what we need. We know that no matter how challenging last year's class was, or how hard this year's or semester's classes will be, we can start over before long. We can reflect and do better. We can try new things, and if they don't work, we can try something else again next time. We can pour ourselves into what we do for the sake of a better educated and prepared American citizenry because we know there is an end in sight.

I hope you all had a chance to recharge your batteries this summer. Chances are good that you'll need them!

Have a great year!

## New Email Lists

This summer, I created a few more email groups. By now, most of you have been emailed using the groups to check if they are accurate. Thanks to your feedback, they should be ready now.

Besides making collaboration easier among grade levels/departments, it should also make it easier to use Google Docs and other Google Applications within USD 418. For example, you can create a template for lesson plans in Google docs and share it with the entire grade level team or department.

When I send a link to a specific group, hopefully they won't delete it thinking it was an all-staff email that doesn't pertain to them. Hey, I can dream!

## Bits and Pieces

**Summer Learning:** Many of you took advantage of summer workshops; learning everything from Google Docs to Wikis and Blogs in the Classroom. Stay tuned for more announcements about upcoming workshops...and feel free to suggest the topics you want!

**Reminder:** If it doesn't work, (tech support) call [Larry](#). If you need to know how to use it or what to use, (integration) ask [Andy](#). If it is related to PowerSchool, [Gwen](#) is the Goddess.

**Under Construction:** There are several parts of the district website that are under construction. Some of them are due to changes in curricular standards (Common Core), some are being built to better serve students (MHS Counseling), some are for easier access to teachers (classroom links on school sites), and some are for your use (technology). I appreciate your

patience as these projects are completed, and would like to make another call for websites: if you have a website, blog, or wiki as a teacher, please let me know and I'll make sure it gets linked on your school's classroom pages where your students and their parents can easily find it.

If you would like to create a website, there are lots of options. Talk with me about your plans for the site, and we'll find what will work best for your needs.

**Lion makes kills:** Not to freak anyone out, but we will eventually, someday, upgrade to the newest version of our operating system: OS X Lion. When we do, there will be some things that become too outdated to run on our laptops. One such casualty of Lion is the Office 2004 set of programs. *It would be a good idea to begin learning about using alternatives, such as Google Docs.* There have been rumors that Apple will stop supporting iWeb, also. Just a heads-up!