



TECH BYTES



Orange Board of Education

June 2018uary 2013



A STRONG FINISH TO THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

8 Epic Ideas for Ending the School Year

Give your students a year-end sendoff that celebrates their learning.

The kids that we teach are precious to us, and they need to know that our time together was worth it. So don't just let the year end: Celebrate learning, celebrate the moments you've had, and savor the time you have left together.

At the end of the race, we like to hear cheers, and when kids graduate, it's a climactic event. Really, the end of every school year should be climactic. It should be exciting. So, as teachers, we have to be very careful not to let the bell ring and have kids wondering what just happened. The end of the school year should be a time of review, reflection, and celebration. Here are eight ideas for making it epic.

1. MAKE A TOP 10 LIST
2. HOST A "CELEBRATION OF LEARNING" FINAL EXAM
3. DON'T PACK UP TOO SOON
4. THE BOTTLE OF DREAMS
5. COMPLIMENTS AND KINDNESS
6. SURVEY YOUR STUDENTS TO CELEBRATE THE MEMORIES
7. WRITE YOUR STUDENTS A LETTER
8. PLAN AN OSCARS EVENT

[Read details...](#)

Summer vacation is on the horizon, with a month (or maybe less) to go. The hard work you've put in throughout the school year has paid off. Your room hums with productivity and wonder, at least most of the time.

You're almost there, but don't relax the reins quite yet. Students can get antsy as the end of the year approaches, and without an end-of-year plan, the days can begin to spin out of control.

Drive the Curriculum to the Very End

Give Students the Reins

Finish With a Positive Message

Leave It How You Want to See It

[Read more....](#)

How to motivate students and keep them on task at the end of the year is challenging at best, especially after state tests are over. In fact, the more we prep kids for tests, the harder it is to keep kids on task after testing ends. Yet, keeping kids motivated at this time of year is actually much easier than you might think. Since kids are more chatty and restless at this time of year, it's just a matter of funneling that energy into something constructive. Here are 12 effective strategies to turn students' end-of-the-year energy into instructional success. [Read more...](#)

Additional Resources

[What to Do on Lame Duck School Days](#)
[Looking Ahead to the Last Weeks of School](#)
[End of the Year Activities Around Up !](#)

TEACHER CHALLENGE

*"YOUR LIFE AS A TEACHER
BEGINS THE DAY YOU REALIZE
THAT YOU ARE ALWAYS A
LEARNER."
WHAT WILL YOU LEARN TODAY?*

ROBERT JOHN MEEHAN

“

**IN LEARNING YOU WILL TEACH, AND IN
TEACHING YOU WILL LEARN.**

PHIL COLLINS



AWESOME TEACHER SUMMER

12 ways to grow and learn



Have you started a countdown to summer break? How will you grow as a teacher and learner this summer?

Summer is full of opportunities to grow as an educator. Here are 12 ideas to check out for Summer 2018.

Our lives as educators totally change in the summer, don't they?

During the school year: hustle and bustle. Plan. Teach. Grade. Answer emails. Go to meetings. Collapse into bed. Repeat.

In the summer, though, the pace changes. Many of us are still busy. (I've been to SO many baseball and softball games already!)

But it's a different kind of busy, and it gives us a chance to do some things that just didn't fit into our hectic "during the school year" lives. Looking for some great opportunities? [Read on ...](#)



Prevent the summer slide by encouraging your students to continue reading articles over the summer in addition to books.

We made it easy!

1. Find curated summer reading packets on a range of levels. Choose packets with or without question sets. <https://www.readworks.org/summer-reading>
2. Parents are educators too! Parents/guardians are invited to create their own free ReadWorks accounts to help their children stay on track

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Summer is a great time to support your child's reading progress! Students who don't read much over the summer show a decline in reading performance from the end of one year to the start of the next. Reading over the summer can help your child maintain the reading gains they made during the year AND also help prepare them for next year!

Here are a few simple ways for you to help:

1. Create your free Parent/Guardian account on ReadWorks.org
ReadWorks is a nonprofit that provides educators with thousands of free, high-quality nonfiction and fiction articles with questions and activities. ReadWorks is inviting you - all parents & guardians - to create your own free account to help your child stay on track this summer, and all year round!
 1. Go to www.readworks.org
 2. Click on "I'm an Educator" (parents are educators too!)
 3. Click on the blue "Sign Up"
 4. Make sure to choose "Parent/Guardian" as your role

Keep these tips in mind when using ReadWorks this summer:

TIP 1: Summer reading should be accessible and enjoyable, so be sure to choose articles that are at your child's reading level. Don't be afraid to start with articles from lower grade levels. The important thing is that students, read, read, read!

TIP 2: Aside from giving your child access to these high-quality texts, helping them keep track of their summer reading and discussing what they've been read with family members can also go a long way!

I hope you and your family have a great summer!



ClassDojo Introduces a New Digital Portfolio Option

For the last couple of years ClassDojo has offered a digital portfolio feature called Student Stories. This summer ClassDojo is introducing a new portfolio option called simply ClassDojo Portfolios.

The new ClassDojo Portfolios will be student-led portfolios. Students will choose the items that they want to include in their portfolios. They can include pictures, documents, videos, notes, and drawings in their portfolios. Just like in the current Student Stories teachers will have to approve all submissions before they are shared. Parents will be able to see only the work of their children and not of other children in the class. And parents will be able to see the portfolio from the same ClassDojo app that they already use to stay informed about how their children are doing in your classroom.

ClassDojo Portfolios will be available to use on iPads and Android tablets. Students will be able to log-in without a username and password. Students scan a QR instead of using usernames and passwords.

The new ClassDojo Portfolios will be available in July. You can learn more [and register for early access here.](#)



10 of the Very Best Online Resources for Early Childhood Teachers

Teaching in early childhood is different. You need a whole other set of strategies and techniques to be effective. There were two things that got me through those years teaching little ones. The first was an excellent mentor. If you don't have one, go find one! An early childhood teacher that's worked in the trenches can be a lifesaver when it comes to helping figure out how to approach this age group. The second thing I relied on during my five years as a pre-kindergarten teacher was online resources. I constantly trolled teaching websites,

Pinterest and Facebook looking for advice and activities. By the time I left the pre-k classroom, my list of favorite sites was approaching 100. I can't share all of my list here, but I can share my favorites. Here are the top 10 early childhood websites that I absolutely relied on when I was teaching pre-k:

<https://www.weareteachers.com/10-of-the-very-best-online-resources-for-early-childhood-teachers/>

The Top 7 Websites for the Enthusiastic Preschool Teacher

Teaching the youngest learners is a tall order. Preschool teachers need to entertain, amuse, and delight their PreK posse, all the while providing them with their first academic experiences. And while every good preschool teacher undoubtedly has an impressive supply of games, stories, crafts, and activities in their arsenal, sometimes a little help, a little inspiration is needed to keep the kids interested, entertained, and ready to learn.

<https://www.preschoolteacher.org/2017/11/the-top-7-websites-for-the-enthusiastic-preschool-teacher/>



[Math Playground](#) offers a huge variety of math games for students. You can locate games according to suggested grade level, by topic, or by question type. Students who need a refresher on a skill, can probably find one in Math Playground's video library. Math Playground's video library offers more than 100 instructional videos organized according to topic. To the right side of each video students will see some suggested games aligned to the topic covered in the instructional video.

Thinking Blocks is one of the most popular features on Math Playground. Thinking Blocks provides interactive templates in which students use brightly colored blocks to model and solve problems. As students work through the problems they are provided with feedback as to whether or not they are using the correct sequence to solve each problem. Thinking Blocks contains templates and problems for addition, multiplication, fractions, and ratios. You can also develop your own problems using the Thinking Blocks modeling tool.

Math Playground is the kind of site that is good to keep bookmarked on classroom computers for those times when you need some quick activities that your students can do independently. It's also a great site to share with parents when they ask for recommendations for educational websites they can use at home with their children.



DEVELOP AN APP THIS SUMMER

Now that summer is almost here many of us start to think about what we can do to bring new things to our classrooms next fall. The summer gives us the time to think and tinker in ways that we can't during the school year. Developing a good, functioning mobile app is one of those things that takes time to do well and so the summer is a good time to give it a try.

Plan and Draw Your App

Just like creating a good video or making a good lesson plan, it's important to go into the app creation process with a good idea of what you want the final product to look like. Before embarking on programming your app, take some time to draw wireframes or a storyboard of what you would like your app's functions and flow to be. You can do this on paper, in slides ([Canva](#) has nice phone silhouette templates), or on a storyboard program like [Storyboard That](#) that offers wireframe templates.

Build an Android App

[The MIT App Inventor](#) is the tool to use if you want to create your own fully functional Android app. The MIT App Inventor works in your web browser (Chrome is recommended). The only download that is required for App Inventor 2 is the optional emulator. The emulator allows people who don't have Android devices to test their apps on their desktops. If you have an Android device then the emulator is not required and you don't need to worry about installing it. MIT provides excellent support for classroom use for new users of App Inventor. [Tutorials are available as videos](#) and as written PDFs.

Build Your Own iPhone/ iPad App

[Thunkable](#) is a free platform for designing, testing, and publishing your own Android and iOS apps. Just like MIT App Inventor Thunkable enables you to create your apps even if you don't know how to write code. That is possible because Thunkable uses a drag-and-drop design framework. That framework shows you jigsaw-like pieces that have commands labeled on them. Your job is to put the pieces together to make your

apps work. Thinkable provides users with detailed written tutorials and [video tutorials](#)

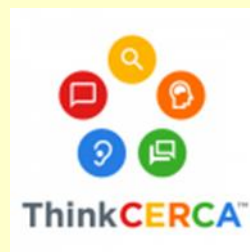
FREE WEBINAR



Transforming Learning with Chrome

Wednesday, June 27, 2018 @ 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm EDT

A growing number of districts are turning to Chromebooks as their 1:1 device of choice. They are affordable, and easy to manage on a large scale. But as with apps, conversations around devices should focus on the learning. What learning opportunities do Chromebooks create? In this edWebinar Michelle Luhtala, Library Department Chair at New Canaan High School, CT, will focus on Chrome features that transform teaching and learning. All K-12 librarians, teachers, and administrators interested in learning more about using Chrome in the classroom and the library are invited to attend. Register here:
<https://www.anymeeting.com/AccountMa>



[ThinkCERCA](#) is a web-based literacy program that scaffolds the development of critical thinking and argumentative writing skills for students in grades 3-12. The CERCA acronym (Claims, Evidence, Reasoning, Counterarguments, Audience) represents the site's structured approach to teaching critical thinking and argumentation, and both unpacking these elements in readings and using them in students' own writing is key to the site's learning experience.

While reading one of the program's numerous text selections, students can click answers to stimulus-based multiple choice, type in responses to short-answer questions, highlight sections of text, develop graphic organizers, and make claims about what they're reading. They're then prompted to support these claims with evidence from the text, explain their reasoning, and address possible counterarguments. Throughout, students are encouraged to use audience-appropriate language as they write, and can reference a dictionary as well as a rubric to make sure their work is on target. ThinkCERCA lesson sets each connect a text with some performance of understanding, whether it's creating a summary or completing a dynamic graphic organizer to form an argument. From there, students can draft an essay that teachers can score online.



Start Your Summer Screen-Time Rules Now!

For some kids, summer means getting on the computer and not getting off 'til September. And even though a lot of parents relax their screen limits over the break, allowing a full-on hibernation is just not gonna happen. And it shouldn't. Kids need to get outside, of course. But they also need to stretch themselves in ways that they can't during the school year -- and that no app, game, or streaming TV show, no matter how educational and meaningful, can give them.

The slide into the summer-screen abyss often happens innocently, before parents even catch on. Your kid starts streaming *Star Trek: The Next Generation* on Netflix -- and then won't leave the house until he's binge-watched every episode. Or maybe they're hooked on *Minecraft*, *Roblox*, or another play-as-you-go game that provides endless learning opportunities -- but turns out to be just ... endless.

As you're mapping out your summer, don't ban screen devices entirely. Not only do they offer entertainment, but they also offer learning opportunities and a chance to stay in touch with friends. Set reasonable limits that allow for family time and other important activities, and incorporate media and tech in ways that bring the family together. [Try these ideas:](#)



Coding in the Classroom: 6 Tips to Get Even Reluctant Teachers—and Students—Started

“I can barely fix a printer. If there is a non-tech way to do something, I will find it,” says Shanti Crawford, a teacher at P.S. 34 Oliver H. Perry elementary school in Brooklyn, NY. Crawford may have never considered herself to be a “tech person,” but she recognized the value of code and discovered how a supportive community could empower her and her students to learn. Now, she’s referred to as LEGO Lady at P.S. 34, where she teaches science, LEGO engineering, and robotics.

Problems- that we all know about.

Educators across the globe are increasingly familiar with the staggering statistics: Between 2010 and 2020, STEM jobs growth will outpace all other jobs at 18.7%, leading to an estimated 1.1 million computing jobs by 2024.

In addition to the number of people needed to propel our world forward through computing, we face another challenge. While women hold 57% of professional occupations, they represent only 25% of the computing workforce; of that 25%, only 9% are women of color. Research has proven that a diversity of information leads to better ideas, so it seems intuitive that we prioritize diversity in technology. Companies like Intel and Apple have launched diversity initiatives, but we have much work to do. And it starts in the classroom.

Problems -that we often overlook and how to approach them

Even if educators recognize the importance of teaching computer science and programming for their students, they often face their own internal roadblocks. We've highlighted some of the most common ones, as well as tips to get past them.

1. Roadblock: I am not a programmer, so I can't learn how to code.
2. Roadblock: Computer programming is too difficult for some of my learners.
3. Roadblock: Only some of my students will be interested in programming.
4. Roadblock: I am a core content teacher—I don't need to integrate CS into my lessons.
5. Roadblock: I am the only one trying to do this.
6. Roadblock: I feel overwhelmed by the amount of resources and don't know enough to get started.

[Read details...](#)



10 Ways to Motivate Your Child to Learn

If you want your child to be a stellar student, don't limit learning to the walls of his classroom. Although the skills he's learning there are crucial to his intellectual and social growth, your child needs your help to open up the world of ideas. His renewed joy in discovery will transfer to his schoolwork, so you'll boost his academic achievement too!

1. Fill your child's world with reading.
2. Encourage him to express his opinion, talk about his feelings, and make choices.
3. Show enthusiasm for your child's interests and encourage her to explore subjects that fascinate her.
4. Provide him with play opportunities that support different kinds of learning styles – from listening and visual learning to sorting and sequencing.
5. Point out the new things you learn with enthusiasm.
6. Ask about what he's learning in school, not about his grades or test scores.
7. Help your child organize her school papers and assignments so she feels in control of her work.

8. Celebrate achievements, no matter how small. Completing a book report calls for a special treat; finishing a book allows your child an hour of video games.
9. Focus on strengths, encouraging developing talents.
10. Turn everyday events into learning opportunities

Entire Article: <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/motivate-school-success/10-ways-to-motivate-your-child-to-learn>



<https://sites.google.com/view/thesuitetalk/home>

The mission for The Suite Talk is to provide educators with best practices and guidance implementing G Suite for Education into the classroom. In order for educators to teach today's learners in future ready schools, they need to equip themselves with crucial digital skills so they can provide the best digital learning environment for their students.

The Suite Talk, will provide educators with comfortable and simple conversations about new or existing features of G Suite for Education, and ideas to implement G Suite for Education and other technology tools into the classroom. I will provide documentation, screencasts, tips, and tricks that help stimulate and engage student learning while making educators work smarter, not harder.



<https://shakeuplearning.com/blog/25-things-you-didnt-know-google-slides-could-do/>



A Wealth of Free Teaching Resources are Available at Education.com

[Education.com](https://www.education.com) aims to empower parents, teachers, and homeschoolers to help their children build essential skills and excel. With over 12 million members, Education.com provides educators of all kinds with high-quality learning resources, including worksheets, lesson plans, digital games, online guided learning platform, and more. Resources come in all grade levels from K-12, take many forms, and cover various subjects.



Creating a Professional Portfolio with Spark Page

<https://classtechtips.com/2018/05/16/professional-portfolio-spark-page/>

The end of the year is a traditional time for reflection. Regardless of the date on the calendar, you can gather artifacts throughout the school year to build a professional portfolio. From examples of lesson plans, pictures of classroom celebrations, and video clips, Spark Page is an excellent tool for creating teacher portfolios!

A professional portfolio captures the memorable moments from your teaching career. It highlights accomplishments and gives you a space for reflection and goal setting. Creating a professional portfolio with a tool like Spark Page lets you tell the story of your work on a blank canvas. You can include movies you've created, images you've created with Spark Post, and links to content hosted on other places on the web.

Although you might create a portfolio when searching for a new position in your district or before interviewing at a new school, you can pause at the beginning, middle or end of the school year to strategically gather items to share. Since Spark Page is a website creation tool, you can add and edit throughout the school year to update your portfolio with new details. On the list below you'll find a few examples of items you might include.

Introduce Yourself
Establishing a Philosophy
Add Media
Student Work Samples
Reflections and Goals

Administrator's Resource Center



When Administrators Keep Teaching

Teaching keeps school leaders connected to students and other teachers and lets them feel the effects of their own decisions.

THE BENEFITS OF THIS MODEL

Walking the walk
Building school community
Staying connected
Recharging batteries

CHALLENGES DO EXIST

So what stops school leaders from joining their teaching staff? Well, for one thing, time. Teachers talk a lot about the hats we wear and the increased amount of work being thrust upon us, but administrators are also overloaded.

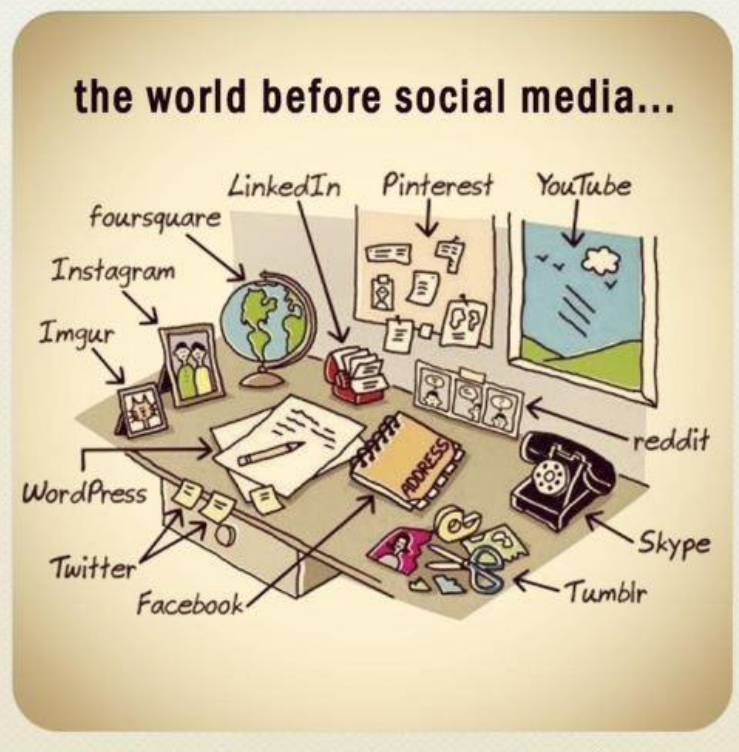
It truly does take a village to educate students. And as teachers and school leaders, we are all in this endeavor together. When a school approaches the mission of teaching with creativity and flexibility, something magical can happen.

[Read more....](#)

TECHNOLOGY HUMOR



"My term paper is almost finished. I updated my software, defragmented my hard drive, bookmarked an online dictionary, and installed new ink cartridges. Now all I need are some words and a topic!"



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E-mail: randyg@norwich.net

"Hello, Bob? It's your father again. I have another question about my new computer. Can I tape a movie from cable TV then fax it from my VCR to my CD-ROM then E-mail it to my brother's cellular phone so he can make a copy on his neighbor's camcorder?"

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"You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say may be used against you on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube!"