1.4

Students use technology resources to conduct research, demonstrate creative and critical thinking, communicate and work collaboratively.

The administration and staff at Munster High School are dedicated to the fully integrated use of technology by all students to conduct research, demonstrate creative and critical thinking skills, and communicate and work collaboratively. We are fortunate to be a 1:1 school, so each student has a Dell laptop complete with a suite of programs including the Microsoft Office Suite (both online and offline versions), Windows Movie Maker, Audacity (a sound editing program), Photo Story for Windows, and Microsoft Outlook. In addition, all students have access to PowerSchool (the electronic gradebook), Moodle pages for each class, Turnitin (for paper submissions), Google Drive, and access to the Lake County Public Library's digital research resources, such as Lexis/Nexis.

The 1:1 initiative and the access to both Google Drive and Microsoft Office Online has greatly enhanced our students' ability to request help from teachers, work collaboratively in groups, and develop their analytical skills. Before 1:1 if students ran into difficulty with an assignment, it would either remain incomplete or be completed without the student's complete understanding of the task. Since 1:1 if students run into difficulty with an assignment, they email their questions to the teacher who then can help work the student through the assignment. Students are now also able to monitor their own progress by checking their grades and noting any assignments they are missing. If they are absent, they can check Moodle to see what they missed, so they can be prepared for class when they return. Students are no longer limited to the data and facts available in the books purchased by the school library, but have the vast array of sources and experts on the Internet at their disposal. Students are no longer restricted to work in groups with students who live near them or share similar schedules, but through the use of Google Drive and One Drive, are able to work collaboratively with any students at any time. Students also now hold virtual and/or skyped meetings, so a lack of transportation is no longer hinders collaborative efforts.

Each student at MHS also has an account with the College Board that connects their PSAT scores with Khan Academy, which then creates an individualized program for each student that focuses on strengthening his or her weaknesses in critical reading, writing, and math. Most courses also provide online textbooks so students can access their homework or coursework at any time. Not only have students embraced the easy access to the digital world, but teachers have also welcomed the digital world into their classrooms. Teachers are now creating performance tasks that require students to solve real world problems by conducting research, working collaboratively with both students and staff members, and preparing presentations that both explain and defend their solutions.

Students have created and posted YouTube videos of their preparation for a Robotics competition. The video shows the collaboration and problem-solving skills needed to successfully building a working robot. They also demonstrated their critical thinking skills by creating sound designs for silent movies that accurately reflect the tone and purpose of the films' creators. They create presentations that incorporate videos, animation, and sound. Students regularly use virtual documents to work collaboratively on school or personal projects. The use of technology by students at MHS is no longer limited to simple PowerPoint presentations; it is only limited by the imagination and creativity of the students themselves.