



# Multnomah ESD

Katy Tibbs, the Educational Technology Specialist at Multnomah ESD (MESD) comes to her position having spent her career as both a classroom teacher and licensed teacher librarian in West Linn-Wilsonville. Within her role at MESD, it is her goal to center digital literacy within all that she does - be it through the Multnomah ESD Digital Learning Newsletter she puts out monthly or professional learning that she plans and facilitates. The Multnomah ESD Digital Learning Newsletter provides edtech resources as well as support for librarians by curating meaningful digital resources that can be used by librarians, classroom teachers, TOSAs, curriculum directors, and administrators. You can read the most recent newsletter here: [Multnomah ESD Digital Learning Newsletter](#) and can sign-up to receive future newsletters by completing a [Google Form registration](#).

In addition, Katy has led professional learning within the area of digital literacy - last spring she, along with Jodi LePla (Instructional Technology Specialist at NW Regional ESD), planned and facilitated a book club on the book *Digital Detectives: Essential Lessons for Discerning Fact from Fiction in the 'Fake News' Era*. Currently, she facilitates a Social Science Leaders Meeting which creates space for social science teachers and leaders to come together to engage in dialogue about social science – it is a goal of Katy’s to include media literacy and information literacy within these conversations. If you are interested in being a part of the Social Science Leaders Meeting, reach out to Katy at [ktibbs@mesd.k12.or.us](mailto:ktibbs@mesd.k12.or.us).

Katy also co-hosts the Google Educator Group for the state of Oregon. This group meets monthly, to connect and network, provide demonstrations, tips, and tutorials, and share best practices. This group presents an opportunity to learn more about the literacy aspects of the Google Platform. You can learn more about [Oregon’s Google Educator Group on their website](#).

This coming month, Katy will be joining our Teaching and Tech Session (see below for more information and registration links) to share about ChatGPT which is a chatbot launched by OpenAI and being used in classrooms across the country. This is a hot topic issue and a great opportunity to learn about ChatGPT and the opportunities and challenges within this platform through the lens of digital literacy and digital citizenship.

# Oregon Charter Academy

Oregon Charter Academy (ORCA), originally founded 18 years ago, is an independent tuition-free online public charter school serving grades K-12. ORCA’s mission includes incorporating 21st century skills in all aspects of learning with the goal of applying these skills to a variety of careers and real-world situations. Students attending ORCA engage in daily interactions with highly qualified, certified teachers and peers through the use of Canvas LMS as well as optional in-person courses and meet-ups, including over 40 student facilitated clubs and 200 field trip offerings throughout the state each year. You can learn more about ORCA at their [website](#).

As students at ORCA engage with their learning virtually, embedding digital literacy and digital citizenship into the curriculum is a natural part of course development for educators. These skills are taught at ORCA as early as kindergarten with lessons focused on how to properly communicate with each other in live classes and within the chat pod. Further, there is a characteristic of the month with lessons designed to support that characteristic in the digital environment, along with student of the month awarded to students who display those characteristics in their classes (for example, empathy or grit). Allison Galvin, ORCA's Executive Director, notes that integrating digital literacy and digital citizenship into the curriculum early on is important.

Educators across ORCA have developed creative and intentional ways to support their students in developing digital literacy skills, being mindful about their digital footprint, and increasing their knowledge of digital citizenship. These lessons show up in classrooms across K-12 as well as through lunch bunches, which are weekly SEL lessons co-designed and facilitated by ORCA's counselors, Diana Hammond and Shannon Churchill. In the spring, the focus of these lunch bunches is digital citizenship with discussions focused on supporting students in understanding their digital footprint, taking care of themselves online, considerations when engaging in social media, and understanding and disrupting cyberbullying. Diana and Shannon use Nearpod's lessons as a foundation while revising those lessons to make them relevant for their students. One important aspect of the lunch bunch lessons is a focus on engaging with scenarios that depict the longevity of internet and social media posts and how these might impact future situations, such as applying for jobs.. These sessions are grounded in the following questions: What are you sharing? Why are you sharing? Who is your audience?

This focus on considering the impact of one's digital footprint is also centered in Summer Highfill's business pathways courses. Centering the term [phigital generation](#), Summer thinks intentionally about how to support the students in her classes through her curriculum and pedagogical approaches. Summer notes that while today's K-12 students are often considered digital natives, this is a myth. Rather, it is important that digital literacy and digital citizenship are attended to when developing curriculum as students need scaffolding and support to ensure they have the skills to safely and effectively navigate the digital world in school, in the workplace, and beyond. The first course in the business pathway that students take is a digital literacy course with the remaining courses embedding principles of digital literacy and digital citizenship including a link to the [Oregon Employability Skills](#) – one of which is digital literacy. One example of an activity that students in Summer's courses engage with is a social media simulation which gives them the opportunity to think intentionally about their use of social media, providing education to students about how to use social media safely. Centering digital literacy within classroom instruction occurs seamlessly throughout Steph Imig's senior English course. In one particular unit, Steph supports students in becoming digitally literate in preparation for a long-term research project. This unit is grounded in three essential questions:

1. How do I become a critical consumer of information?
2. What strategies can I use to determine the validity of an argument or source?
3. How can I share media responsibly?

Through a variety of synchronous and asynchronous activities, students learn about logical fallacies, lateral reading strategies, how to discern the quality of a statistic, and how online algorithms shape the information they see. The unit culminates with an asynchronous discussion, in which students select one of the essential questions, synthesize evidence to support their responses, and engage thoughtfully with their peers' responses. Honors students also produce a PSA about how to avoid falling for misinformation.

The focus on supporting students in thinking about digital literacy and digital citizenship beyond the classroom and toward thinking about the workplace is also present within Elizabeth Washak's medical sciences CTE pathways courses. Within these classes, students engage in research around health topics in order to learn digital literacy skills – learning how to evaluate sources and read laterally. In addition,

students engage in real-life scenarios focused on the use of social media within the medical profession. These lessons are designed to support students in learning the skills needed in the medical field in order to develop the digital literacy needed to effectively enter the workplace.

While the teachers highlighted in this piece illustrate the ways in which educators at ORCA are thinking deeply about intentionally supporting students in navigating the digital world, they are not the only ORCA teachers doing this work. Rather, teachers throughout the school are thinking deeply about supporting their students in learning the skills to navigate technology safely and effectively.

## Albany Public Schools

Jean Gritter is the teacher-librarian at West Albany High School and the district librarian for Greater Albany Public Schools. Prior to starting her work in schools over 25 years ago, Jean worked in a tech field, which has continued to support her interest in, and support of, technology in classrooms and schools. Jean does this in several ways, including supporting content area teachers through leading discussions with students around digital literacy skills, including but not limited to understanding how to find and evaluate credible sources, and using library databases to deepen learning. These conversations are important as they support both students and teachers in understanding what the library has to offer in addition to the digital literacy skills needed to support strong research practices. In addition, as non-fiction materials (what Jean refers to as the “cold hard facts” section of the library) are often out of date once they reach print, West Albany High School has focused the use of non-fiction resources toward online formats in order to ensure that they are regularly updated and provide students with accurate information.

Prior to the pandemic, Jean was able to expand on the discussions in content area courses through co-teaching a Media Literacy course with the Journalism teacher at the high school, Michelle Balmeo. This course was part of a freshman rotation where all freshman students had the opportunity to engage with CTE course offerings for 6 weeks – with the goal of learning more about the various opportunities provided. The focus of the Media Literacy class was around developing strong research skills, e.g. identifying credible sources through evaluation protocols, integrating sources into writing, and respecting intellectual property of authors. This class provided a foundation for other classes to build on regarding students’ digital literacy skills. While this class is not currently being taught, Jean and her colleagues are exploring where else instruction in those skills might fit in the schedule.

As part of her role as a teacher-librarian, Jean has contributed extensive time toward supporting educators and students in the role of digital learning and digital literacy in learning. She serves as a member of the district technology committee which focuses on providing support to educators across Albany as they integrate technology into their classrooms - this has become particularly important as all Albany Public Schools have 1:1 Chromebooks. During those meetings, she has been able to uplift the voices of both teachers and librarians. In addition, Jean works closely with Dan Rothwell, who serves as the EdTech TOSA for Greater Albany Public Schools. Jean and Dan work together to identify needs across classrooms and develop support plans for teachers related to digital learning. Currently, they are working with others in the district to develop the Learn Platform which will support teachers in understanding what technology is available within the districts coupled with support.

Moreover, Jean supports educators in her district in the areas of information literacy through multiple avenues – including sending out a weekly newsletter with digital resources to support various grade levels and content areas. She has also led professional development sessions district-wide focused on digital library resources, technology integration, and topics related to equity, diversity and inclusion. While Jean wears many hats in her school district, she is dedicated to supporting students and educators in developing their information literacy skills because libraries are *all* about information!