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 – Steve Manor, Homestead High School



## THE FOUNDATION HELPS STUDENTS NAVIGATE ON CAMPUS AND VIRTUAL LEARNING WITH TECHNOLOGY



**Hannah Kennedy**  
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The MTEF granted new tech devices for all MTSD schools amidst the COVID-19 outbreak to help ensure that every student and teacher would have access to technology, no matter what the school year looked like. The MTEF began reviewing grant requests in February; however, when COVID-19 hit, their original plan was altered to accommodate anticipated technological needs. These tech devices provide students with the flexibility to work from home or school, which is important as schools have needed to transition between the two options. The MTEF also granted audiovisual devices for teachers, who are turning to new technology to communicate and interact with their students. Since its inception in 1998, the Foundation has granted over \$4.6 million to MTSD.

Students from third all the way to 12th grade are reaping the benefits of these grants, as each student is ensured to have access to a school laptop as part of the MTSD 1:1 Chromebook initiative. AnaMaria, a fifth grader at Wilson Elementary School, uses her Chromebook daily, regardless of whether she is on campus or distance learning. It is “easy to use and sometimes works like an iPad if you have one with a touchscreen. It is small, so I can easily bring it to school and it helps me focus,” she said.

At middle and high schools, students are using their devices daily as well. Ben, a seventh grader at Lake Shore Middle School, says he likes “how we are able to use our individual computers at school and then bring our computers home and use them for homework.” Paige, a senior at Homestead High School, reports that her Chromebook has “helped me a lot with online learning. I thought it was going to be a struggle to connect

with my teachers and understand the material but it's been fairly easy to communicate.”

As for teachers, they too have appreciated how technology has helped them adapt to the new learning landscape. Devika Werth, a seventh-grade teacher at Lake Shore Middle School, explained how helpful her devices are. “Due to COVID social distancing procedures this year, my classroom was moved to the Science Lab because it is a bigger space.” Ms. Werth uses two Mobile Presentation Stations, which are large smartboards on wheels that were previously donated by MTEF. She is able to broadcast both virtual learners via Zoom and lessons at once with the two screens. And instead of having students change rooms, this technology allows students to safely stay put yet mix it up via a live-stream lesson from a teacher in another room. “With the help of MTEF, I am able to teach all my students at once and keep students engaged with the lessons,” she said.

Steve Manor, a math teacher at Homestead High School, synopsised the importance of tech this year. “I don't really know how I would teach a blended learning class effectively without technology--my brain would have to multitask at a rate that I couldn't keep up with.”