

TO: Mrs. Hollish, Principal; Ms. Rutsters, Director of Academics, Lower School Faculty
FROM: Heidi Hutchison, 5th grade teacher
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Subject: Kidblog to Support, Enhance and Excite Your Literacy Program

Experiential learning is an instructional approach we utilize regularly in our Lower School. Students learn best when they can construct knowledge, reflect, and apply their understanding. We would like to propose an online writing tool that allows us to continue to utilize the experiential method in a 21st century way. [Kidblog](#) is an online tool that opens the door to the real world for students. Online writing is very different from writing for just one's teacher or classmates. It is quite different for students to hang their written work up on a bulletin board where they receive no comments from their readers than being able to post their work online for a global audience to read and respond. Publishing online allows students to receive feedback from: other students in their classroom, other students in classrooms from around the world, friends and family, and there is a possibility for the intended audience of their writing to see and respond as well! Authentic audiences can be found in a number of ways; however, the simplest way is to check a list of online blogs via the [Student Blogging Challenge](#). One does not need to participate in the Student Blogging Challenge in order to have access to hundreds and hundreds of [student](#) and [class blogs](#). Teachers and students can comment on other student and classroom blogs and ask for those writers to visit their blogs. Teachers also have the option to connect with other classrooms through using the hashtag, "#comments4kids" on Twitter to solicit feedback for their students' writing if they are comfortable with using that tool. In addition, parents can interact with their children by reading their child's writing and then provide immediate feedback. Blogging through Kidblog encourages students to read their own writing through a critical lens and reflect on their own learning because they have a *real* audience. Reflection and journaling are extremely important parts of an authentic experiential literacy program and easily achievable with Kidblog. Many times, when students read and look back on work they have done, they have grown as critical readers and writers. Because of this, they are motivated to go beyond what is required and edit their work again to make it even better *without* prompting from the teacher. Lastly, teachers are able to continue to utilize rubrics as effective forms of assessing student writing, and students have a wonderful online portfolio of their written work so that they can see their growth as authentic writers. Using Kidblog provides students with a vehicle to communicate and connect with cultures that are new to them, comment on other students' writing, and voice their own opinions.

We propose that teachers in grades 3 through 5 incorporate [Kidblog](#) into their literacy program. Technology educators will continue to plan and teach with teachers as they have in the past; however, teachers and technology educators will *also* plan integrating blogging as part of their students' reading and writing experience. Teachers will be instructed how to set up a classroom Kidblog account, how to choose appropriate settings so that students' writing and any comments posted to students' blogs go to the teacher and technology educators before it becomes public.

Lastly, teachers will be given a letter to send to families explaining Kidblog and how it will be used to enrich their child's literacy experience. All teachers are invited to participate in blogging as soon as they want to do so. Teachers may also choose to join us in a summer grant this summer to learn more about blogging and how to integrate blogging into their literacy program. Please email me if you are interested in the summer grant and I will add you to our list. Thank you so much for considering the incorporation of blogging into your literacy program, as well as what you already do for our students!