

Notes from Cyberbullying/Sexting Workshop  
Wednesday, May 25th, 2011

Mike Williams, GUFS Guidance Counselor, and Beth Greco, PTA VP for Fundraising and Director of the Walter Hoving Home, provided lots of great internet resources for parents and led a productive discussion about how parents can help their kids be safe and responsible in the digital world.

- "Do you know where your kids are?" at night is now replaced by "Do you know what your kids are doing online?" at night: 1) put computers in public areas of the home, 2) parents take cell phones and electronic devices each night at a certain time and recharge them
- Lots of kids and parents don't know about privacy settings available on Facebook and other social networking sites.
- Things kids put online now will have an effect on their college admissions and job prospects down the road. What they are doing and saying may be developmentally appropriate, but in a digital world these things become public and permanent, and they never turn off.
- Kids will mimic what they see at home: 1) empathy takes a while to develop, but if kids see empathy modeled at home, they will develop it sooner; 2) parents should set the example by not writing back after 10 p.m.--let email and Facebook have a curfew.
- GUFS kids are more into Facebook and Skype than other kids are at other schools, perhaps because of the geographical distances in our community.
- Kids are often afraid to tell their parents what is going on because of parent overreaction: 1) help kids step outside and look at how others see them, 2) help them see consequences.
- Start young. Make the giving of passwords to parents as common as insisting kids wear seatbelts.
- Perhaps school's internet policy statement could include a digital contract for home that would be signed by parents and students.
- Perhaps parenting workshops could be sponsored by the PTA each quarter to piggyback with the guidance curriculum Mr. Williams is presenting to the students in school.

Helpful internet resources can be found at:

[www.netSMARTZ.org](http://www.netSMARTZ.org)

[www.commonSense.org](http://www.commonSense.org)

[www.getnetwise.org](http://www.getnetwise.org)

[www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com) (has good games and tutorials for kids)

[www.safekids.com](http://www.safekids.com)