MCPS IT Wire

Information and updates from the Office of the Chief Technology Officer

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Past Issues

[Data Privacy and Security: Website and Guidance](#)

[Summer Training Opportunities!](#)

[New Project Website: Business Systems Upgrades](#)

[MAP Testing: Best Practices for Keeping Scores Private](#)

[Free! Microsoft Office for Home Use](#)

[Update to Scenes for GoGuardian Teacher](#)

[Email Retention Reminder: Changes Coming Next School Year](#)

[Gift Card Email Scams...Again](#)

Data Privacy and Security: Website and Guidance

Beginning with the 2019-2020 school year, Montgomery County Public Schools employees will participate in the module, Safety in the Digital Age, as part of the annually required compliance training. This module will introduce and reiterate the importance of keeping employee and student data safe while using technology. It is recommended that all employees looking to utilize new online tools and platforms visit the MCPS Data Privacy Website for more information about the initiative to protect our data including a set of guidelines to follow when choosing new educational tools and an approval form for vetting of these online digital tools."

DATA PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Back to Top

Summary Training Opportunities!

Looking to learn more about how best to leverage the technology you have available to you? Check out summer offerings from OCTO via the 2019 brochure: http://bit.ly/octo-summer19

Back to Top

New Project Website: Business Systems Upgrades

The MCPS Business Cloud implementation for financial and budgeting systems has launched a new web page on the MCPS website!

Click or tap this link or go to the Staff page and search "Business Cloud Project" under Business Services. Login with your MCPS username and password.

MAP Scores: Best Practices for Keeping Scores Private

As you may know, students complete the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment for Reading and Mathematics several times throughout the school year as a way to assess their academic growth. Once a student is finished with the assessment, their performance score appears on the computer screen for both the student and the test administrator to review and note as needed. Since these scores are considered private and confidential, here are a few tips for ensuring the privacy of MAP scores at the conclusion of the assessment:

- <u>Monitor Covers</u> - If students are completing the MAP assessment in a computer lab setting, consider using laminated sheets of paper that can be taped to the top of the computer monitors. During the assessment the cover can be flipped up so the assessment is visible. Upon completion of the assessment, the cover be be flipped down to cover the monitor and therefore the performance score.
- <u>Discourage Discussion</u> - Remind students that their MAP assessment scores are private and used to inform instruction. Students should not be discussing their scores on the assessment with other students since they are relative to their performance and not others.
- <u>Seating Arrangements</u> - If students are using Chromebooks or other mobile devices for completing the MAP assessment, ensure students are not able to view each other's screen based on their seating arrangements. While this is already a common assessment practice to prevent cheating, it is important to note that this also prevents students from reviewing the performance scores of other students.

Free! Microsoft Office for Home Use

All MCPS employees are entitled to download and install the Microsoft Office Suite (including Outlook, Word, Powerpoint, and Excel) on up to 5 PC or Mac computers. Rather than using webmail, you can use the Outlook desktop application if you download and install Microsoft Office on your home computer!

- ➔ **PC User?**
  - ◆ Download and Install MS Office (PC) - directions for downloading and installing MS Office 2016 on your home computer
  - ◆ Configuring Outlook 2016 (PC) - directions for configuring Outlook 2016 on a PC.
- ➔ **Mac User?**
  - ◆ Download and Install MS Office (Mac) - directions for downloading and installing Office for Mac 2016 on your home computer.
  - ◆ Configuring Outlook 2016 (Mac) - directions for configuring Outlook 2016 on a Mac.


Back to Top

Update to Scenes for GoGuardian Teacher

GoGuardian scenes are a great way to ensure that students are only accessing specific websites while in the classroom. But, sometimes things go awry when a student is stuck in a previous teacher's session and is being managed by that session's scene.

GoGuardian's new feature, Scene Statuses, allows you to quickly resolve this issue.

When a student is in a scene, a scene status icon will appear. When hovering over the icon, the scene status for that student will appear and indicate one of the following:
- The student is in the current teacher's active scene
- The student is in another teacher's active scene (another teacher is in control of that student's browsing restrictions)
- There is no active scene
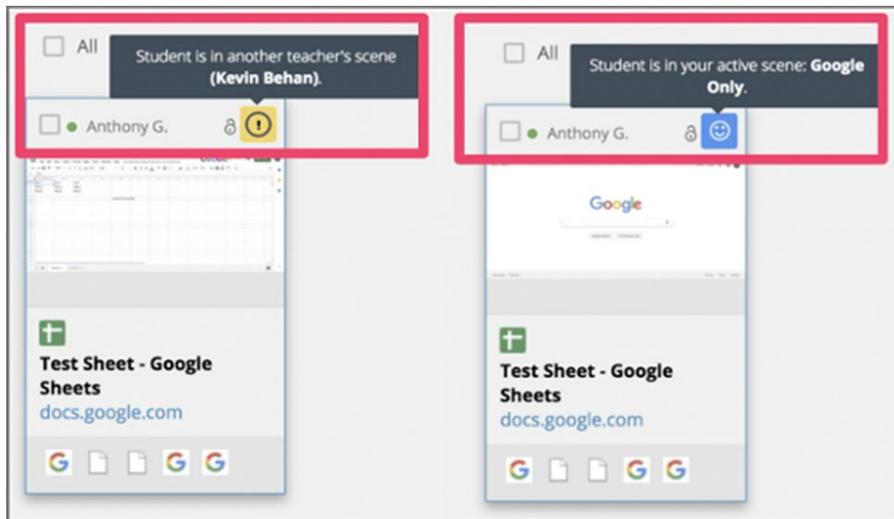
You can now "Clear Scenes" to remove any scenes applied by other teachers, which allows your scene to work as planned.
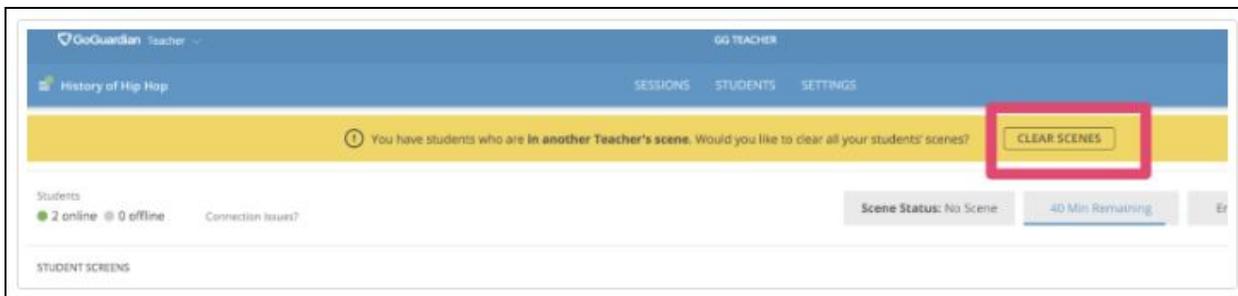
To learn more about this new feature, check out this article: Scenes Statuses
To learn how to create a scene, explore Components of a Scene

Back to Top

Email Retention Reminder: Changes Coming Next School Year

Currently, MCPS has set the district's email retention policy at 30 days. This means 30 days after the creation of an email, that message will be automatically deleted from MCPS Outlook accounts and the servers. All electronic communications are discoverable and must be provided when issued a subpoena by the legal system.

On September 1, 2019, the email retention policy will be changed from 30 days to 365 days. This applies to MCPS-provisioned email accounts in both Microsoft Office 365 (.org) and Google Suite (.net). All electronic communications will continue to be discoverable and must be provided when issued a subpoena by the legal system.

Furthermore, It will be prohibited to use automatic forwarding rules to forward incoming or outgoing email to email addresses that are not provisioned by MCPS. This includes forwarding to any and all personally owned email addresses. Users are allowed to forward emails from any MCPS provisioned email accounts to other MCPS provisioned email accounts.
More information about this change will be forthcoming over the next several months to ensure staff are clear on the changes that will go into effect next school year.

Gift Card Email Scams...Again

We continue to experience a noticeable increase in the number of phishing scams in which a staff member receives an email that appears to come from a colleague (usually a principal or administrator) asking them to buy Amazon and/or iTunes gift cards for other staff members but to keep it quiet so it would be a surprise. After purchasing the gift cards, staff are asked to scratch off the hidden codes on the back of the cards and send them via email to the requestor. In the end, the scammer ends up with hundreds or thousands of dollars while leaving the tricked staff member holding the bill.

While we utilize some of the industry's best tools to prevent these emails from reaching mailboxes, these tools are unable to stop them all since they come from legitimate mail providers such as Outlook.com, Gmail.com, and Yahoo.com. Additionally, each one appears to be personalized in a way to remove any detectable patterns.

As shared in the October 2018 issue of the IT Wire, we are prefixing emails that come from external senders with the text [EXTERNAL] to indicate that the message was not sent by an MCPS employee or administrator account. The purpose of this change is to help employees recognize when a message is not from MCPS and may be a possible phishing scam. Before acting on any request to purchase gift cards via email we encourage staff to be very cautious and speak with colleagues in person to ensure the request is legitimate.