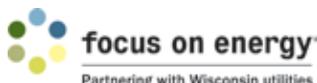


Meet Our Learners Where They Are

Technology integration specialist **Kevin Honeycutt** encourages school leaders to dive into technology

Keynote sponsored by



Kevin Honeycutt, a technology integration specialist, former art teacher, and school board member from Kansas, is living proof that every child, no matter their background, can fulfill their potential with the help of a few good teachers.

Growing up the son of a repeat criminal, education and teachers were all Honeycutt had to help him reach his potential. Honeycutt remembered as a young child hiding his dad's guns when his dad came home drunk. Honeycutt remembers going to school as a poor kid with no prospects or hope for a better future. And, yet, Honeycutt remembers a few teachers who took him into their arms and welcomed him in school.

"Years later, I found those teachers and I thanked them because they saved my life," Honeycutt said. "I'm the first Honeycutt in memory to graduate high school. And I went to college and that's because of the work you guys do, one day at a time, one classroom at a time."

In his work as a teacher and school board member, Honeycutt sees the important role education and good teachers can have in a student's life.

"I believe it's possible to flip a kid any single day," Honeycutt said. "We can will kids to be amazing."

As a technology integration specialist, Honeycutt believes technology can, and should, play a role in developing and nurturing students. However, Honeycutt has some caveats.

He said schools need to teach students how to use the tools of technology effectively but also justly. He emphasized that students need to be taught that everything they do online is a reflection of who they are and what kind of people they are. For instance, posting mean things about a student online or even "liking" posts aimed at hurting other students can have lasting and harmful effects.

"We've got to be better at raising kids who are kind," he said. "How are you treating people with nothing? That says something to me about you."

He also encouraged school leaders to model good use of technology for students. "We need to be where they are," Honeycutt says.

Teachers, school leaders, and parents need to be using Twitter, Facebook and any other social media sites or online tools that their students are using. Second, Honeycutt says students shouldn't be allowed free range on the Internet. Rather, students need to be challenged to use technology to create content and use

it productively. And parents and teachers need to know what their kids are doing on the Internet.

Honeycutt has many examples of how teachers can work with students to help them use technology in productive ways. For instance, in English class, have students write a book and then publish it via one of a number of book creator tools and websites. Or use a website like Café Press to help students create their own online stores where they can sell their artwork or designs on a mugs, t-shirts, etc.

"You want students to learn about business, what better way than for them to start their own?" Honeycutt said.

With all of these tools at the tips of our students' fingertips, Honeycutt encourages school leaders to develop policy that make these available to students and encourage teachers to use them in the classroom. This kind of forward-thinking policy enables teachers to cultivate innovative learning and opportunities.

"A quarterback doesn't throw the football where the receiver is, but where he is going," Honeycutt said. "We've got to meet our students where they are going. We've got to predict the future." ■

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