Using Technology Respectfully, Responsibly and Safely

Technology is an integral part of everyday life at school and an animated character named "Sammy Smart" is helping Arcadia Unified School District students use computers respectfully, responsibly and safely.

Sammy is the voice of AUP *Online*, an interactive online curriculum created by Lersun Development, a company specializing in digital safety education. Students login to Lersun's AUP *Online* website and work with Sammy through a series of self-guided and interactive lessons that address using computers at school, making safe and responsible choices when navigating the Internet, and taking responsibility for decisions made. The program has lessons for all grade levels and is currently being implemented in AUSD's elementary and middle schools.

At the kindergarten level, Sammy introduces students to basic Internet safety concepts such as what constitutes personal information, the importance of not sharing this information online and how school technology should be used. The lessons become more robust as students grow older so that the 4th and 5th grade version contains information and activities about not only personal safety online but also cyber bullying and ethical responsibility. In the middle and high school programs, the character becomes Cyber Sam and Samuel B. Safe III respectively and introduces new concepts such as source credibility and attribution, safety when participating on social networking sites and the dangers of sexting and sharing photos and personal information online.

For many years students have been annually required to sign a paper agreement that acknowledges that the teacher has reviewed the District's acceptable use policy. Documenting this acceptable use agreement and the district's instruction on internet safety is important for all school district receiving federal e-Rate funding, a program that provides discounts of up to 90 percent of the cost of telecommunications service and Internet access to eligible schools and libraries. With AUP *Online*, after completing the required lessons, students electronically sign the Acceptable Use Policy and Lersun then electronically compiles time- and dated documentation of student participation. This gives the school district easy and credible documentation for federal compliance audits.

Because the lessons are self-guided and hosted on a Lersun website, the course requires no teacher training and little support from schools' technology staff. Teachers can take students to the computer lab during class or simply assign the course as homework. Students can access the lessons both at school and at home. AUP *Online* teaches online safety skills much more effectively than the former method of just reading and signing a copy of the student agreement said Baldwin Stocker teacher Lisa Shigemasa, shown right in a recent photo with her fourth and fifth grade students working with the program.