

Meet Our Technology Support Specialist - Ms. Cheryl Szczepaniak



"Diversity is one thing we all share and, because of that, we all have SO much to learn from each other. By helping others feel welcomed and included, I hope to create a nonjudgement zone where they can just be who THEY are and I can learn from them."

Ms. Szczepaniak has been working in D123 for a little over 9 years. She works at three different schools in the district, including Hannum. We are lucky to have her for all of our technology needs!

Explain your position to the D123 community. Also, how long have you been with D123?

Ms. Szczepaniak: I am the technology support specialist at 3 schools in our district. Hannum, Hometown and Sward are the three schools I support. My position requires me to maintain and support all of the technology the students and staff use, to assist with troubleshooting in Google apps and other apps approved by our district, and to keep a precise inventory of all the technology throughout my 3 schools. I have to complete all these tasks while maintaining a calm presence, which I just do naturally. I have been working for D123 for a little over 9 years.

What is the best part of your job?

Ms. Szczepaniak: I've always been a social person and my position fosters that part of me. I support either or both staff members or students daily. These interactions give me an opportunity to get to know them

better while helping them find the answer to their problems. Our jobs take up a majority of our day and I feel it should be our home away from home.

What is your favorite memory with staff or students?

Ms. Szczepaniak: About a year after I started, two 3rd grade students really showed an interest in technology. They spent some of their recess time learning as much as they could about my position and especially Mac OS. Both of them tried to "assist" with what they could. I enjoyed sharing my technical knowledge with them and watching them learn. I was also supporting OLHMS at the time, so when they got to middle school, I was able to continue fostering their interest in technology.

You do homework club with 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders, which is different from what you do during the day. What do you learn from those clubs? What do you enjoy about those clubs?

Ms. Szczepaniak: Homework club gives me an opportunity to help students. Not only do I help with their homework, but also, to help build their confidence. An hour isn't a long time so I'm purposeful with the time I have with them. I love giving high fives or fist bumps, smiling with them, and encouraging a love for learning. I am also a union representative, a Wellness Committee co-chair for Hannum School, and I'm a part of the Social Committee for Hometown School. All of these positions focus on the emotional, social and/or physical health of our students and staff. These roles allow me another opportunity to give back to my school community.

What is one interesting or unique thing about you?

Ms. Szczepaniak: I would say helping others feel welcome and included, whether it's at school, in my home, or with a group of friends. Diversity is one thing we all share and ,because of that, we all have SO much to learn from each other. By helping others feel welcomed and included, I hope to create a nonjudgement zone where they can just be who THEY are and I can learn from them. As a child, an adult and a mom, I've dealt with the difficulties of myself and my child being bullied. It's a tough road and I don't wish it on anyone, parent or child. However, I will say these experiences have helped me and my child develop into a more understanding, empathetic, and loving person, all of which helps others feel welcome.