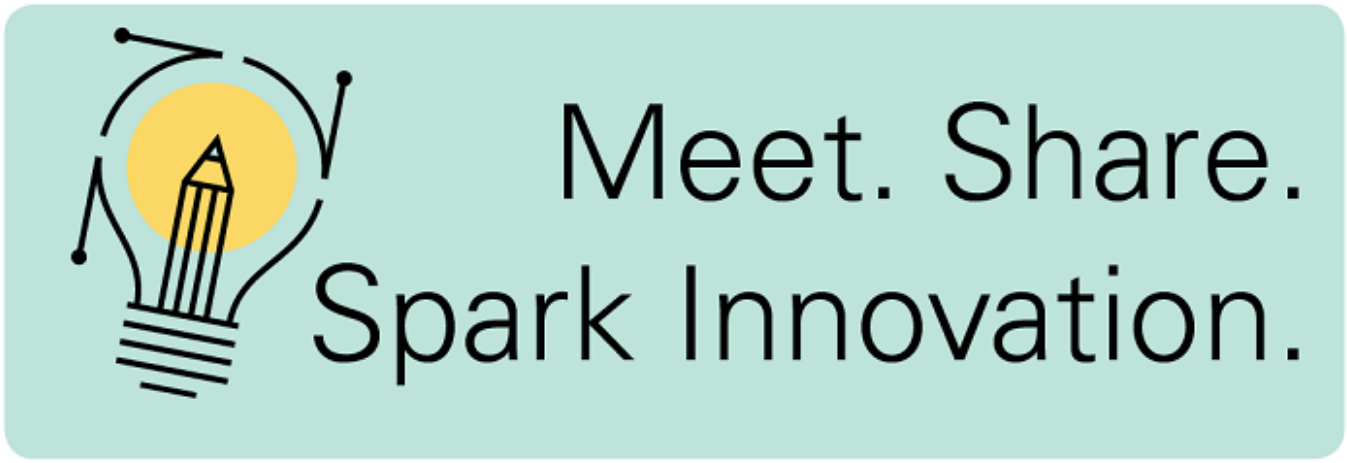
ISACS Independent Schools Association of the Central States



Dear Colleagues,

Let your faculty meetings be a time when information and conversation spark innovation.

The ISACS Spark is an initiative to provide our member schools with quick and engaging professional development opportunities to spark conversations in 15 minutes or less. These "sparks" can be used as food for thought or as opportunities to engage in larger conversations among peers. ISACS sends Sparks throughout the school year and we hope you will find them helpful in stimulating conversations around exciting research related to teaching and learning. As we head into the month of the school year often referred to as "the dip" in optimism, we offer the following videos to lift your spirits!

March's Topic - Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a language-based learning disability that includes poor sight word reading, decoding, oral reading fluency and spelling. 20% of the total population struggles with symptoms of dyslexia. According to the U.S. Department of Education more than 2 million students ages 3-21 have learning disabilities and many of them are associated with reading.

- **Clip #1: The Big Picture - Rethinking Dyslexia -** This trailer offers a glimpse at the movie directed by James Redford and featuring personal stories of children, experts, and famous individuals who struggled to overcome the implications of a dyslexia diagnosis. (1:48 minutes)

- **Clip #2**: **Overcoming Dyslexia, Finding Passion: Piper Otterbein at TEDxYouth@CEHS** - Piper Otterbein was diagnosed with a learning disability in first grade. She struggled all through elementary school and was finally diagnosed with dyslexia in seventh grade. Finally in high school she had an epiphany and decided to focus on her strengths rather than all of her challenges. (7:12 minutes)

(Length of time for the two clips: approximately 9 minutes)

Additional articles of interest:

- Dyslexia and the Wider World of Creativity and Talent

- Who Helps Kids With Dyslexia Gain Reading Fluency
- Why Recognizing Dyslexia in Children at School Can Be Difficult

We hope these ideas ignite thinking and conversations in your school!

Regards,

The ISACS Professional Services Committee & the ISACS Professional Development Team

The ISACS Spark has been developed by the Professional Services Committee (PSC). The PSC is comprised of teacher leaders from around the region who are passionate about professional development. All sites and clips have been reviewed and deemed appropriate for sharing.

PAST SPARKS

February 2016 Spark:
February's Spark focuses on Random Acts of Kindness Week, February 14-20, 2016 with an emphasis on EMPATHY.

- **Clip #1: "Unsung Hero" - Thai Life Insurance Commercial** - This three-minute spot follows a good Samaritan whose daily deeds go largely unnoticed - mainly because he's not looking to be recognized. Instead of searching for recognition, he places himself in the shoes of those who need his help, expressing empathy toward their position. Eventually, though, the man's kindness is rewarded when he sees the power of his actions. (3:05 minutes)

- **Clip #2: Understanding the Difference between Sympathy and Empathy** - For educators, this animated video acts out a well-articulated section of Dr. Brené Brown's lecture on the difference between an empathetic and a sympathetic response. It wraps up a difficult subject to pinpoint the consequences of both responses. Empathy is the ability to place yourself in someone else's shoes and to understand relate as best as you can to how that person feels in the situation. (Make sure to scroll to the middle of the page to view the video) (2:52 minutes)

- **Clip #3: Sesame Street: Mark Ruffalo: Empathy** - For students, this Sesame Street video with Mark Ruffalo provides an easy to understand explanation of empathy. The best part: at the end, you can do the happiness dance with Murray and Mark! (2:28 minutes)

(Length of time for the three clips: approximately 8 ½ minutes)

January 2016 Spark:
January's Spark focuses on Millennials. Who are the Millennials and what is their impact on our school communities? Hear about the unique circumstance of hosting 4 generations in our workplaces, and then learn about the values and behaviors of our students, our youngest employees and parents who may be millennials!

- **Clip #1: Four Generations in the Workplace. What's That Like?** - Is there really a generational divide in the workplace? Find out what it's like with millennials, Gen-Xers, Baby Boomers, and Traditionalists all working in the same place. (2:06 minutes)

- **Clip #2: How are Millennials Different From Other Generations?** - Right now, Millennials are between the ages of 15 and 34. This year, they are set to outnumber the baby boomer generation, which is in decline. Are Millennials set to take over the world? (3:15 minutes)

- **Clip #3: Millennials or Generation Y, Who They Are and Why They're Hated** - Discover, distill, and understand who they are. Generation Me. Trophy Kids. Generation Stuck. Whatever they are called, Millennial

Generation is changing the way people think and work. They're poised to be the most educated generation in American history. (10:06 minutes)

(Length of time for the three clips: approximately 15 ½ minutes)

December 2015 Spark:

December's Spark focuses on coding. A parent at one of our ISACS schools recently asked the following question: "I hear so much talk about coding. When I was in school, *colored chalk* was a cause for excitement. What exactly *is* coding?"

We hope the following clips will be helpful to you and perhaps the parents in your school in understanding the benefits of learning to code!

- **Clip #1: Mark Zuckerberg talks about coding** - Founder and Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg talks about the importance of coding and the importance of teaching kids to code. Great for sharing with students and parents.(5:43 minutes)

- **Clip #2: Thomas Suarez: A 12-year-old app developer** (Filmed at TEDxManhattanBeach) - Most 12-year-olds love playing videogames -- Thomas Suarez taught himself how to create them. After developing iPhone apps like "Bustin Jeiber," a whack-a-mole game, he is now using his skills to help other kids become developers. (4:40 minutes)

- **Clip #3: Top Ten Reasons to Code** - This video reviews "top 10 reasons to code" while providing an introduction to computer programming. In the video, students will learn about the different types of work computer programmers do and some of the perks of a career in coding. This video features a celebrity hip hop artist, a basketball player and two tech moguls. **Click here** to find the complete lyrics and a printable worksheet. (2:13 minutes)

(Length of time for all three clips: approximately 12 ½ minutes)

Additional resources for teaching kids to code:

- **Website: ScratchJr Coding for kids**

- **Clip #4: Learning How to Code: Scratch at LA Makerspace** - In this workshop spotlight, Brian Foley of CSUN highlights how makers of all ages take their first steps toward learning how to code and how to connect computers to mechanisms in the physical world with the help of MIT's Scratch program. (3:30 minutes)

- **Clip #5: Khan Academy Computer Programming in the Classroom: Video Overview** (5:57 minutes)

- **Clip #6: Is Computer Programming hard to learn?** - This last video is slightly longer but we think it might be interesting for those who teacher older students. (9:15 minutes)

(Length of time for all three additional clips: approximately 19 minutes)

This email has been sent to heads of school, division heads, assistant/associate heads, deans of faculty, deans of studies, directors of professional development and ISACS teacher representatives.