Chris Barnabei is One of 50 Educators Worldwide Selected to Attend Apple Conference

Chris Barnabei, librarian at the Career Magnet School, has been selected as one of 50 educators from around the world to be invited to attend Apple's Worldwide Developers Conference (WWDC) which will be held in San Francisco the week of June 12. All of the educators who were selected to attend teach in Apple Distinguished Schools.

"This is Apple's big conference for software developers where they announce new products and services and teach best development practices. This is the first year that they are inviting teachers and the goal is to start a network of educators to share resources and best practices for teaching coding in school. We'll have some special programs and sessions for us, but we'll also be permitted to attend the regular ones as well," said Barnabei.

Since being named an Apple Distinguished School, CMS has partnered with Apple and has hosted several site visits from other schools who wish to achieve that status and also learn how the 1:1 iPads are used.

"We've had some visits and phone calls by Apple this year and they have been impressed by some of the coding and app development initiatives that we have been doing at CMS. Coding and computer science are going to be Apple's next big push in education," Barnabei explained.

He teaches a course called Mobile App Development with his colleague Corey Grove. This class focuses on building apps for IOS – the operating system used for Apple's iPhone and iPad. The coding initiatives that the students learn about in this class help them develop a series of directions that the computer can read. There are six students at CMS who are working on developing an app for the school. Ultimately, this app will manage announcements and other resources, such as Home Logic, for all students.

"This class has something for everyone. You don't have to do extensive coding if you don't want to. The overall goal of the class is to develop an app, so I had to do some coding, but I focused more on the design elements I wanted to include to build an app for my mom's candle business," said junior Keityn Zullinger.

When asked what he was most excited about learning at the conference, Mr. Barnabei exclaimed, "I am going to learn a ton! I've basically been self-taught when it comes to coding and computer programming. I am going to learn how to get better at coding and computer programming. I will have a network of educators that I can access to share resources and ideas for student projects."

"Right now Corey and I are a couple of steps ahead of the students. But, we are learning just as they are. When we encounter a problem in the class, we all problem solve it together. I am hoping that I will bring back a lot of new information that I can apply to the class," said Mr. Barnabei.

He explained that coding is an educational trend right now. It is all about getting students to understand the basic logic behind computer programming. Students from CMS assisted elementary students throughout the district in a coding initiative earlier in the school year.