



SC/TA music teachers shine in new technology program

All Laurel Nokomis School will participate in the precedent-setting program, which starts now with student compositions and ends with a spring concert.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Sept. 15, 2015

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Charles Allen, AllenSCTA@comcast.net or 941-356-0842

SARASOTA – Leading into “Arts in Education Week,” SC/TA is proud to announce that two of its members are the only Sarasota County music teachers chosen for a prestigious new “Trailblazer” program focused on making the greatest possible use of computer tablets.

Charles Allen and Amanda Bauman, music teachers at Laurel Nokomis School, were chosen out of 112 applicants to be part of the “Technology Trailblazers” program built around Microsoft Surface tablets. SC/TA is announcing their distinction in honor of “Arts in Education Week” Sept. 13-19, a nationwide celebration of keeping the arts alive in classrooms.

Allen and Bauman will lead their entire K-8 school in “Scratching the Surface of Music Creativity,” a year-long venture to create musical compositions on the Surface tablets; use them to study concepts like phrasing and dynamics; and perform their own compositions in the spring.

“This has made us excited about our jobs all over again,” said Allen, also a member of SC/TA’s executive committee. “It’s allowing us to stretch ourselves as teachers, and empowering us to press our students to see how creative they can really be.”

Another 22 applicants – including 19 teachers or teams with SC/TA members -- were chosen to participate in the Trailblazer program in subjects ranging from general first-grade instruction to visual art to astronomy and nuclear radiation. In addition to being the only music teaching entry in the program, Allen and Bauman are also the only co-applicants with a project that “integrates their entire school in a holistic approach,” said Joe Binswanger, head of information technology for Sarasota County Schools.

“We’re really excited to see how their project turns out,” Binswanger said. “It has an incredible amount of potential. They really looked very closely at this tool.”

Allen anticipates that fifth- and sixth-grade students will use Surface tablets to compose starting melodies. Middle schoolers at Laurel Nokomis will compose multiple parts for the melodies. Younger students will use the older kids’ work to study the basics of music.

The Trailblazer program is in its debut year and will bring almost 700 Surface tablets into the hands of a minimum 2,500 students district-wide. Surface tablets have getting new attention in the classroom because they are pre-loaded with the widely-used Microsoft Office, Adobe Design, and One Note software suites; have built-in USB ports; and have both keyboards and digital pens that enable simulation of almost any traditional form of art. A list of all Technology Trailblazers is attached.



SC/TA Technology Trailblazers*

Amanda Bauman and Charles Allen
Laurel Nokomis

Gretchen Betts
Venice Elementary

Cheri Dame
Cranberry Elementary

Cherish Eagen
McIntosh Middle

Megan Ehlers
Sarasota High

Lisa Figueroa
Taylor Ranch Elementary

Stacey Gallagher, Elizabeth Lewis, and
Helen Reardon
Suncoast Technical College

Jessica Gardner
Southside Elementary

Seth Gardner
Pine View

Becky Bolstridge
Brentwood Elementary

Andy Harshman
Sarasota High

Catherine Lankenau
Southside Elementary

Leah Lapham, Doris Peer, and Melissa
Giovanni-Walters
Ashton Elementary

Josh Mocherman
Riverview High

Rachel Montisano
Ashton Elementary

Elizabeth Ashley Najjar
Wilkinson Elementary

Bridget Rizza
North Port High

Jennafer Slanger
Toledo Blade Elementary

YES ON BOTH
Tracie Watje, and Jennifer Ahn
Tuttle Elementary

Susan Wilhelm
Bay Haven School

* for non-SC/TA Technology Trailblazers,
contact the district