

# MEMBER profiles

Mary Wegner

## Inspiring Deep Learning Through Technology

Through 23 years of teaching—12 of those spent teaching kids with special needs—Mary Wegner has had ample opportunities to see the effect of technology.

“Technology is an equalizer for my students, and, when used wisely, is a vehicle to inspire deep learning,” she said. As district-wide coordinator for educational technology for 60 elementary schools in Anchorage, Alaska, she said she helps teachers use inquiry-based projects that are infused with the thoughtful and meaningful use of technological resources.

The Technology Teacher Leader (TTL) program she organized in the Anchorage School District is now in its sixth year. It gives teachers the knowledge and resources to increase student understanding of content

by focusing on best practices in technology-infused learning, and provides a supported community of K–12 teachers who have become leaders in technology integration. Both the Master Technology Teacher Leader and the Technology Integration Educator programs have spun off the TTL program, extending the impact of the program.

“Digital equity means that every student has access to best practices pedagogy, connectivity, and technological tools.

“We have to help policy makers understand that transformation doesn’t happen without adequate resources.



It’s critical that every educator, every parent, and every student take every opportunity to share their story of the value of technology-infused learning to every policy maker. Our students are far too valuable a resource to miss the opportunity,” she added.

Volunteering through ISTE connects her to “research, resources, and breaking news that I can bring to my district and colleagues around the state.” Connections to “amazing individuals” can be life-altering.

“I find that being part of the development process through my work with ISTE helps me to make sense of the wealth of information that is available to all ISTE members and to the greater education community.”

Special Interest Group

## Getting Advice from Assistive Technology Experts

Kevin Anderson is the assistant superintendent for teaching and learning at Oak Park Elementary School District in Oak Park, Illinois. He is also the president of ISTE’s Special Education Technology Special Interest Group (SETSIG).

The primary purpose of SETSIG is to advance knowledge about specialized technology products and effective practices for enhancing opportunities for children, youth, and adults with disabilities and for students who are gifted. In addition, SETSIG seeks to provide leadership, policy development, resources, and training for members and serve as a catalyst for engaging the special education community within ISTE.

“I find the interaction with other professionals to be very important for me,” Anderson said. “Having the help of assistive technology experts around the country and world enables me to provide better services for those students in my own school district. SETSIG provides this connection through conference calls and at our annual meeting at NECC.”

Anderson said SETSIG is working to establish a set of online trainings and professional development offerings using the expertise of the board and general membership.



[iste.org/setsig](http://iste.org/setsig)

“We hope to have collections of PowerPoint lectures on specific topics, wiki discussions, and webinars on special products, methodologies, and research,” he said.

In addition, he said, SETSIG has published a collection of software and product reviews for use by schools in making purchasing decisions, and SETSIG has provided a handbook of activities at the AT Playground at NECC for teachers to use in their classrooms.

SETSIG also sponsors AT-related presentations annually at NECC, and the group submits articles on this topic to various education publications including *L&L*.