

## EDUCATION

# Scott students take parents to school

### Dinner and Digital Night draws more than 350 people

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Pioneer Press

Jacob Myszka takes a photo of himself, a friend and his mother using an iPad. Using a program called Thinglink, he creates icons of question marks in a circle, which he scatters around the photo.

Click on an icon in his mouth and a little box comes up with the words "I like Chris and Jeff." Click on the icon on his forehead and the words "I like computers" appear.

April 15 was Dinner and Digital night at Scott Elementary in unincorporated Leyden Township. It used to be called Tech Night, but this year, the format changed.

"For a few years, it was teachers showing off students' work," said Assistant Principal Michael Courington. "Attendance was so-so."

This year, students worked with the parents to create a digital project on an iPad. The idea of doing something with their kids drove up attendance to about 360 people.

So far, every student in second, third and fifth grade has an iPad tablet computer. Next school year, fourth- and fifth-graders will get them, too.

Among those students using the iPads is Katherine Ortiz. Using an app named Tellagami, she creates an animated character onscreen, choosing everything from eye color to hair style to facial emotion. She then asks her father, Lionel Ortiz, to read a short script she helped create into the iPad.

"My name is Lionel Ortiz," he reads. "I was born in Mexico in 1972. When I was a child, I used to ride horses."

When he's done, Katherine presses a button and the animated character on screen reads — along with facial expressions and gestures — what her father just recorded.

These computer apps aren't just for showing off for parents. Katherine, for example, has used Tellagami for a report on immigration.

"I had to pretend I was Gabriella (an immigrant)," said Katherine, explaining that she researched being an immigrant and then created an animated character who gave a report.

In another classroom, 5-year-old Emily Hernandez takes photos of her family, teacher and more. Using an app named PicCollage, she makes the photos larger or smaller, adds "2015" to the top of the screen. She finished her piece by putting a bow on top.



JON LANGHAM/PIONEER PRESS PHOTOS

First-grader Jullanna Santiago giggles with her mother, Rebecca, as she shows her a math problem on her iPad. Scott School hosted a Dinner and Digital Night for students and their parents Wednesday, April 15.



Humberto Sarmiento smiles as his son, Christian, 8, ponders the next sentence in his story.



Younger sister Candace, 9, wants to help out big sister Ellysa, 11, with her project as their mother, Tracie Bredwell, watches the results.