



## The Genius Bar Goes to School: aka/ RJK iHelp Café

@ Donna Meehan, Technology Integrator

### *Creating Student and Teacher Technology Leaders*

#### The Basics

In our school we thrive to create a school culture that will foster good citizenship, respect, and responsibility. We actively try to engage students in their learning and promote lifelong learners. Our goal is to create an environment to share, help and learn from each other. By using the model from the Apple “Genius Bar®” we can leverage teachers’ and students’ interest in technology to create a support system for our 1:1 iPad Initiative at RJK Middle School. With training and a commitment to service, we can create a school culture of collaborative support and high expectations for technology integration.

This document is written and intended as a live document to show our process of implementing a teacher and student-led Genius Bar-style program at RJK Middle School, Monticello, NY.



#### What is a “Genius Bar” and why is a good model to follow?

The Genius bar is a place in an Apple Store where customers can go with a problem, ask questions, and get help. This is a great model of informal, friendly support. Having a help desk in our school gestures that we don’t know everything and getting help with technology is part of our day. We have created a hub in the lobby of our school building to make it accessible to all.

Many “tech support” issues are simply both students and staff who need a reminder about how things work or need a question answered. Providing a service like a Genius Bar will aid in helping each other and building a school culture around service support. At the same time empowering students and teachers to show what they know.

Finally, having a Genius Bar creates leadership opportunities. Students will learn technical and people skills that are valuable and empowering through providing a service to their school community. We are very grateful to our tech and art department for their input into designing and creating the space. The next project idea from the art department is to paint a mural of apps with students. Our completed iPad mural will be in a future post.

#### Who should be Geniuses?

Our next step is to establish procedures for who should be Geniuses. This is not just for gifted and techies but for a wide variety of students and teachers open and willing to give time. Stay tune for more to come.