

# BACK TO SCHOOL

Students from  
Marble Hill's  
Atmosphere  
Academy are  
already in  
uniform and  
ready for class

**SECTION C**  
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David 'Dee' Delgado



# Tech 'experts' share their insights

## Part 2

As the city aims to expand technology use and education in New York schools, The Press took a closer look at how the plan is working out at one specific school, Atmosphere Academy in Marble Hill.

The charter school, which has been in the neighborhood for about a year, provides Chromebooks for all of its students, allowing them to use an array of Google applications and other web-based resources, such as the BrainPOP educational website, for instance, throughout the school.

Going online has eliminated the need for printers – which traditionally had presented a “barrier and impediment for students with-

out printers at home,” principal Colin Greene said. These days, students receive and submit their assignments by using Google Classroom, and share materials through Google Drive and Google Docs, he said.

Meanwhile, educational websites and apps “allow students to engage in hands-on and engaging science, math, literacy and history investigations and simulations,” he said.

“If students are able to experience a phenomenon firsthand, they are able to more fully appreciate and process it,” Mr. Greene said. How do students themselves feel about all of this? The Press interviewed a few students at Atmosphere Academy to find out.

**Jadun Baker, 11,  
starting sixth grade:**

Technology at school is “really good. We have a lot of laptops.” Students “have Chrome books. I’ve been inside all the classrooms – they have the new [Smart] boards.” Meanwhile, online access makes finding the necessary bit of knowledge or information easier: “I can go on the computer and search my answers, instead of looking through text books and searching for a specific thing,” Jadun said.



**Brianna Molina, 12,  
starting seventh grade:**

“We have a lot of technology. We have Smart boards and a lot of computer time,” Brianna said. “It helped us because some kids are visual [learners],” Brianna said, adding that she was one of those kids. “They see and then they learn. Not just by listening. So, it helped a lot.”



All photos by David ‘Dee’ Delgado

**Jhoanna Almonte, 11,  
starting seventh grade:**

“We always use computers and we learn how to use different kind of docs and spread sheets. “And we always do an activity called a ‘cupcake sale,’ and we had to go online, look up the recipes. We had to paste it into another doc and then we had to put it on a spread sheet and use the fraction of how many ingredients you would need ... to make the cupcakes, in total.” The whole process “was kind of hard but then I did it,” she said, with a small smile appearing on her face. Technology “is helping me because, let’s say, we have a report and we need to know something we haven’t learned yet ... we could just go on the Internet to look and see what we will be learning.”



**Joshua Alvarez, 11,  
starting seventh grade:**

“We learned different apps and applications, especially Google apps. We use it for projects and activities. We have Chrome, iPads and a Smart board.” “They’re fun. They’re easy to use. You can do a lot of stuff on them,” he said. “Sometimes we do essays. We do iReady. We have [apps] for science. We use different applications to play games about science, and also we play math jeopardy. We play math games.”





# Tech 'experts' share their insights

## Rosangeli Figueroa, 12, starting seventh grade:

Computers, tables and the Internet mean that researching a topic for an essay or keeping track of assignments and deadlines is much easier for today's students than it was for their parents, Rosangeli said.

Technology is "helping us with learning because if we had to do an essay ... we'd have to do research," Rosangeli said. "It's helped me because they always put the homework on Google Classroom, and it's helpful because they give us all the papers we need. They say what we have to do and when it's due. It's helpful for me because if I don't write it down, or if I don't write all of it down, I could just look at Google Classroom or my email and it says it," Rosangeli said.



## Aaliyah Duverge, 12, starting seventh grade

Bringing more technology to schools is "actually good because we are learning more about it," Aaliyah said.

"I know how to type faster now," she said. "I used to type like this," Aaliyah added, proceeding to demonstrate the way she had once used one finger on each hand to hit letters on a keyboard.

"We used to do these typing games, not typing games but stuff to do," Aaliyah said. Technology also helped her with other skills, she said: "There are a lot of good apps, learning apps. They have health apps and stuff like that and math apps."



But no matter how much the students may enjoy the ways technology has made their schoolwork easier, it is not a panacea, Mr. Greene, the principal, warns.

"Atmosphere does not rely exclusively on technology," he said.

"Instead, Atmosphere seeks to leverage technology to further enhance its diverse course offerings, field trips, and enrichment activities."

"Atmosphere students can use their Smartboard to investigate shapes and contours in an after school visual arts class taught by Lincoln Center Education. They can use the Google Earth app on their iPads to explore the system of watersheds and reservoirs that bring drinking water from Westchester to the Bronx while working with Atmosphere's nature education partners Westchester Land Trust and Westmoreland Sanctuary. They can watch videos in Japanese in their Japanese elective class and listen to Arabic music in their Arabic elective class," he said.

Riverdale Press file photo by David 'Dee' Delgado

Atmosphere Academy charter school opened in the Marble Hill neighborhood a year ago.