Bonnie's #GridPals Adventure Passport

Bonnie McClelland

Do you remember?

As a young girl, I remember my second grade class having pen pals with a neighboring school. I'm sure you remember the kind...the ones where we had to use (yikes!) a pen or a pencil to write a letter, introduce ourselves, ask questions, and share ideas. Sheesh! It had to be neat and it had to have the perfect grammar and punctuation. Yes of course, writing skills ARE important, but what I recall being the most painful, is the TIME between communication. Here I had this mysterious friend who I was so excited to connect with, and I had to wait WEEKS to get a response. And sure, telling each other our eye color and hair color created a visual in my mind, but it didn't even compare to those in my class who were lucky enough to get a wallet photo sent. I was SO jealous of those kids! But nevertheless, I will never forget the day when my teacher stood in front of the class with a big yellow manila envelope adorned with a ton of lick and stick postage stamps, announcing that our pen pal letters have arrived...

What are #GridPals?

#GridPals are the here and now of pen pals! Educators leverage the power of FLIPGRID to break down the walls of their classrooms, connect students, and create meaningful learning experiences around the globe.

Introduction

When I approached the Flipgrid team with the idea of simply creating a hashtag for students outside of their own school that are interacting and learning together on the Grid, they flipped! #GridPals was born! But of course, it didn't stop with a hashtag. After our own Joey Taralson handed me the keys to create a Google Form so I can assist in getting classes matched, my world exploded! #GridPals completely took the Flipgrid community by storm!

Flash forward and, oh my goodness, 1,500 matches later, I am over the moon to bring you the *Official #GridPals Adventure Passport* in getting started with building your own special learning connections around the world. But this is only the beginning! #GridPals is empowered by YOU! Buckle up and get ready to blast off! There's no telling where this journey will take you and your students. I can't wait to see and hear all about it!

Bonnie

It's finally HERE!

Back in March when #GridPals were first introduced, we had no idea the community would go absolutely gaga! With every connection, our hearts swelled a little bit more. It was all possible because of YOU! The stories we've heard have only proved what true champions of student voice we are proud to call family. The learning in your classrooms has grown while your world has gotten smaller. We certainly knocked down those walls! #GridPals have connected students from sea to shining sea!

And now, it's time to make our #GridPals even BETTER!

Your Passport Path

1. Making Matches
   a. The New Dashboard
   b. Account Settings
   c. Building Your Profile
      Your Bio
      Grades and Subjects
      Social Media
      It's You!
2. Where in the World?
   a. Getting on the Map
   b. Become a GridPal
   c. Navigating the Map
3. Search and Find
4. Make the Connection
5. CoPilots for #GridPals
6. Adding a CoPilot
7. Building Your First Grid
8. Your Grid Is Ready!
9. Time for Topics
10. Connection
11. More Connections
12. Conversation
13. Collaboration
14. Even More (for the younger rockstars!)
15. Even More (for the older rockstars!)
16. #GridPals and Digital Citizenship
17. The Journey Begins!

Making Matches!

YES, they HAVE done it again! The amazing team over at Flipgrid have truly transformed the way you can find, contact, and connect with #GridPals!

YAY! Before blasting off, check out the following quick steps to be on your way to creating powerful learning connections for your classes!

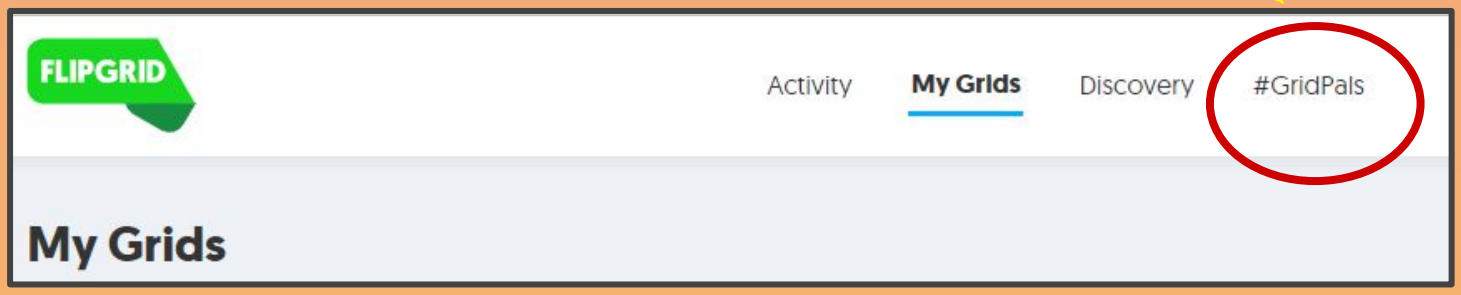
And remember, as your tour guide, I will be here EVERY step of the way! Please reach out with any questions, suggestions, and stories of your student travels! I'll be waiting to hear!

Bonnie

1a.

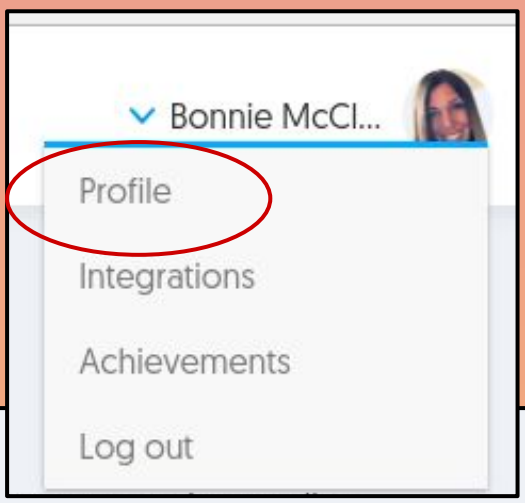
Log in to Flipgrid and take a peek at the top bar of your Educator Dashboard. See something new?! YES! There's now a clickable #GridPals button!

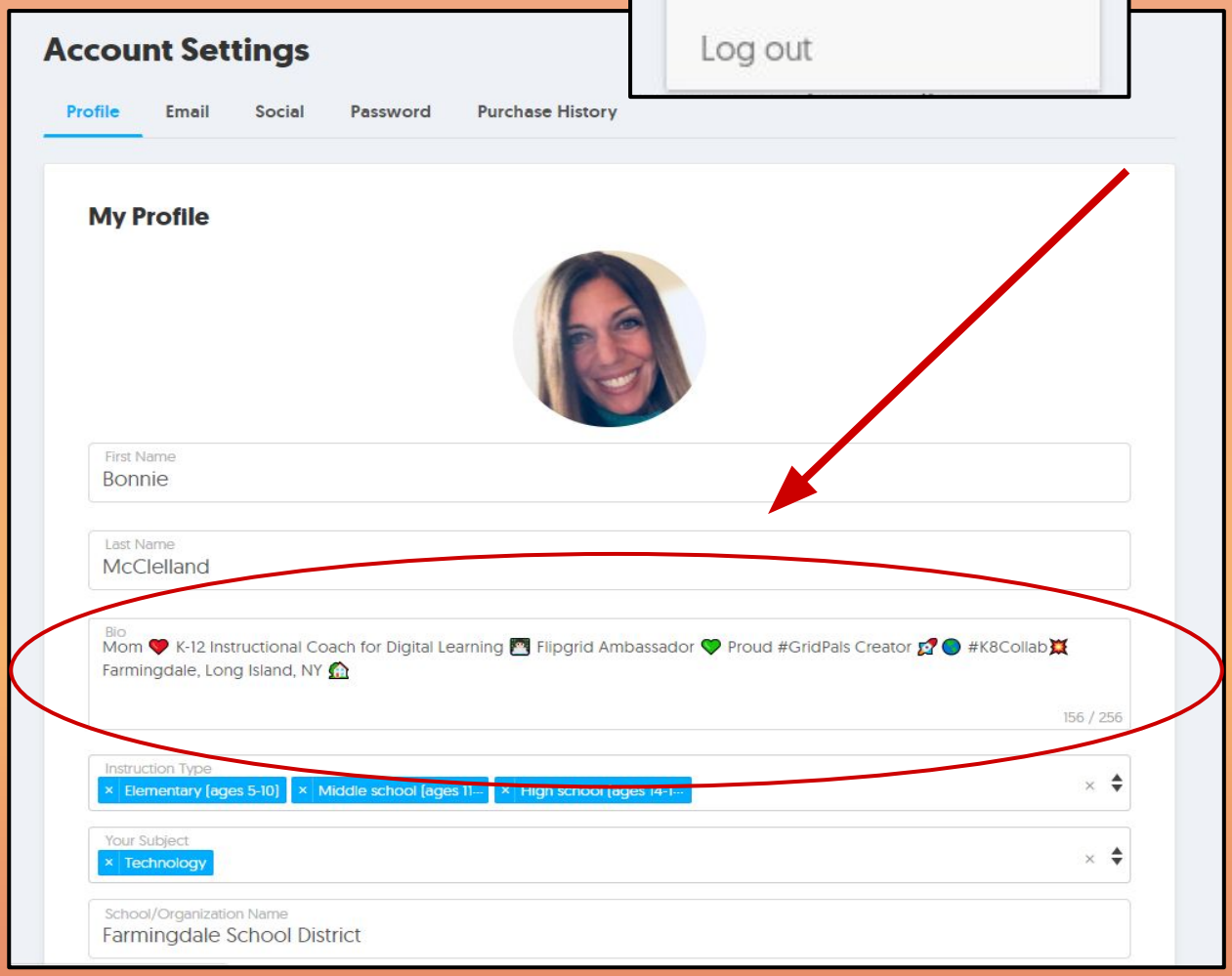
Hold on! Before clicking, (I know it will be difficult!) go to your profile pic all the way to the right to begin filling in all things special about YOU!



1b.

Go to your Profile where you will begin to build your story. Don't be shy! You did it? Add it!





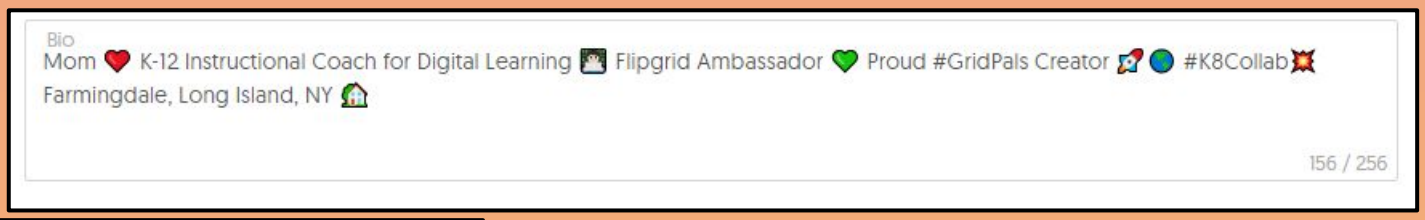
PROFILE TIPS

1c. Building Your Profile!

On your quest to find the perfect #GridPals class match, let's explore some tips on how to tell the story of YOU!

YOUR BIO

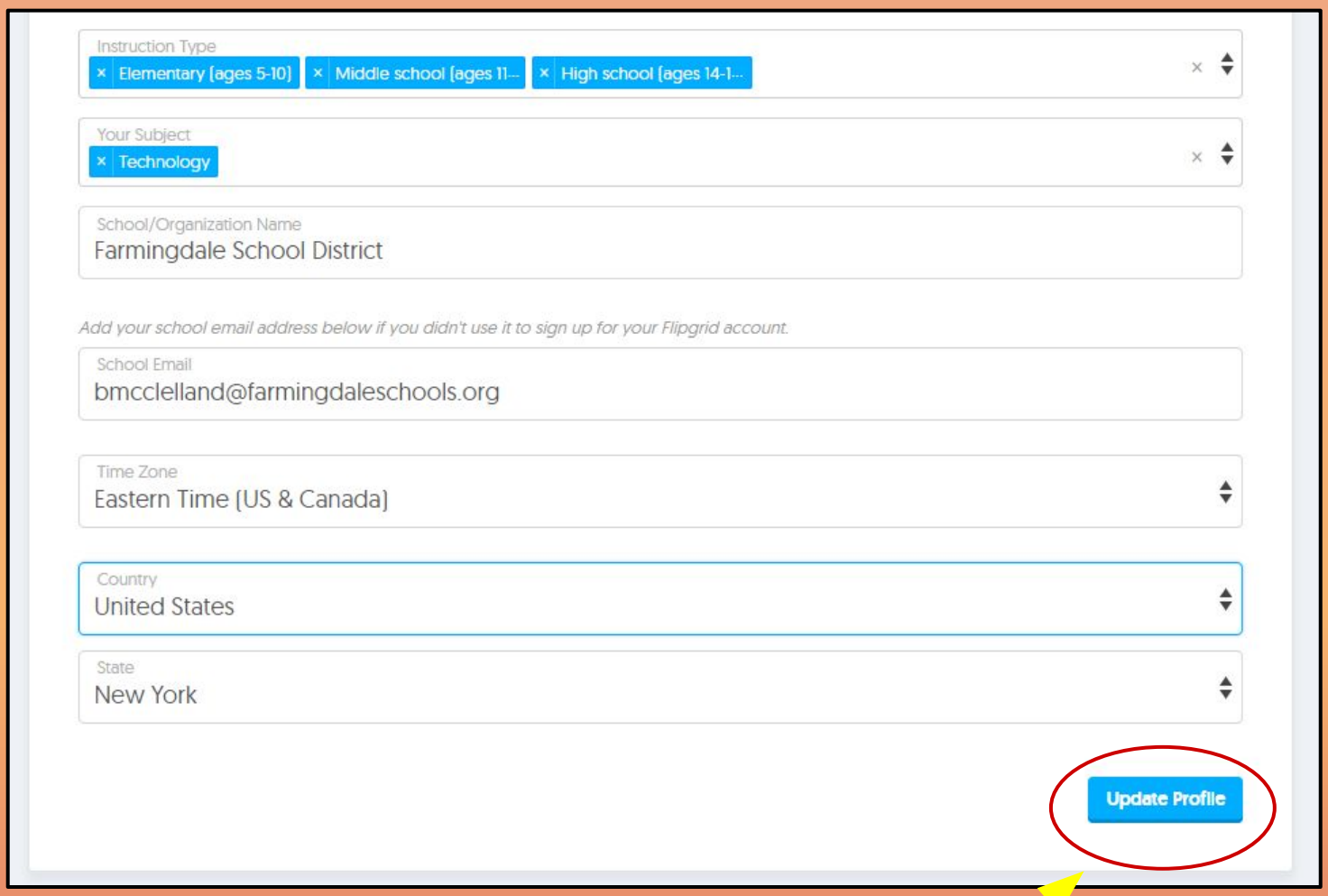
Under *Bio*, in 256 friendly characters or less, tell your story! It can be a short narrative or a list of titles, hashtags, favorites, and/or emoji bling. ** I used my iphone to complete my bio so I could easily add those happy little icons!*



Your bio will be seen by fellow educators who are looking to connect their classes with #GridPals. If there's something specific you'd like to highlight in search of the ultimate match, be sure to include it!

Grades and Subjects

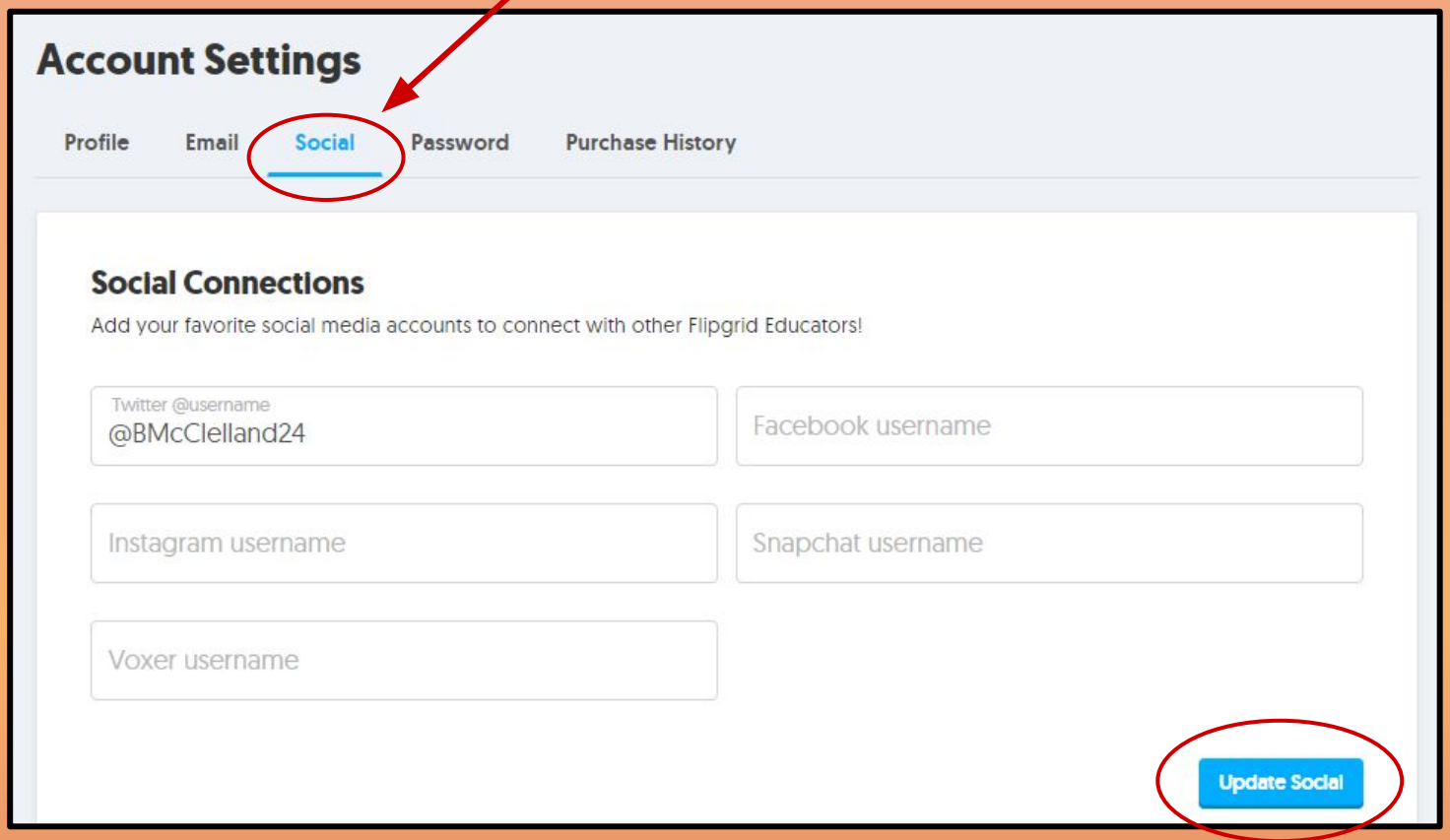
Teach more than one grade? Include it! Teach more than one subject? Include that too! These, along with your location will show up in the #GridPals search! I'll be sharing that soon...



Don't forget to update!

Social Media

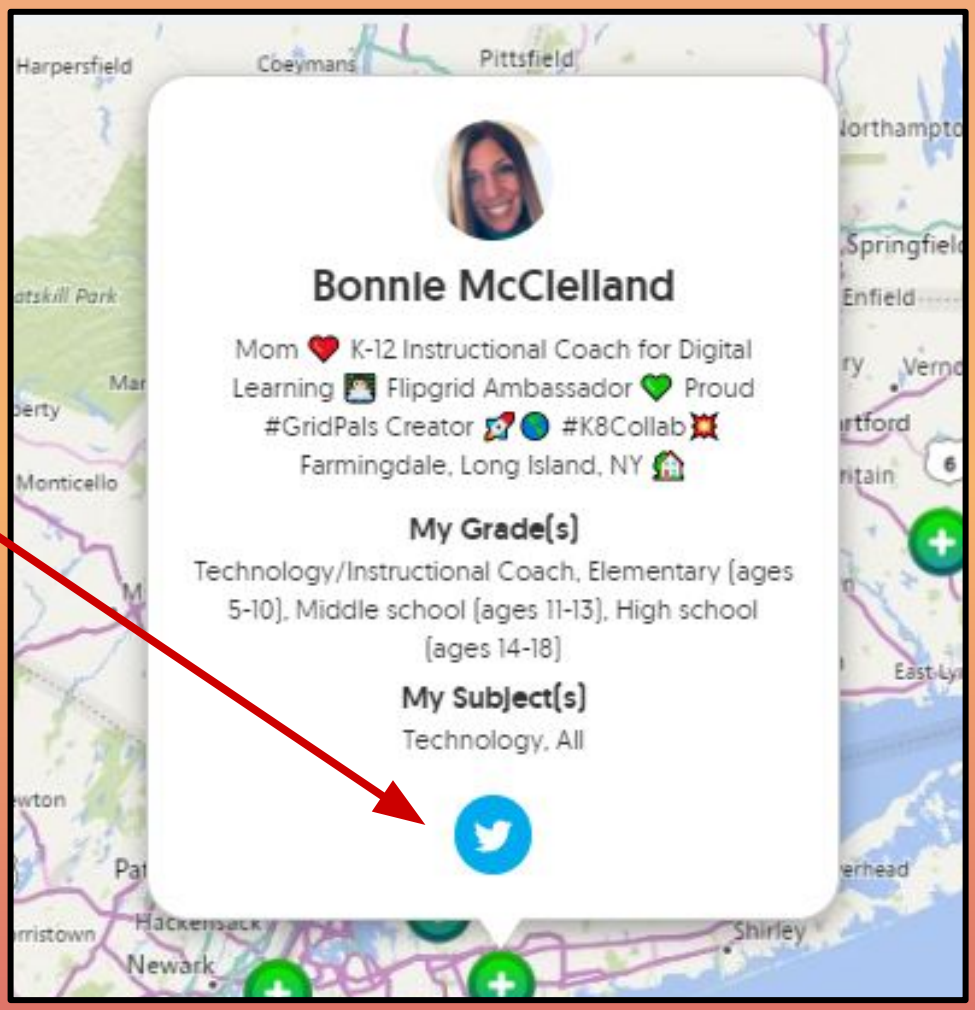
The next important step is your social media connection. Add one or more so that potential #GridPals educators can contact you!



Don't forget to update!

IT'S YOU!

Woohoo!! Your final product will look something like this...with your own personal touch of course! The social media button will take your potential #GridPals educator directly to your account to begin a conversation!

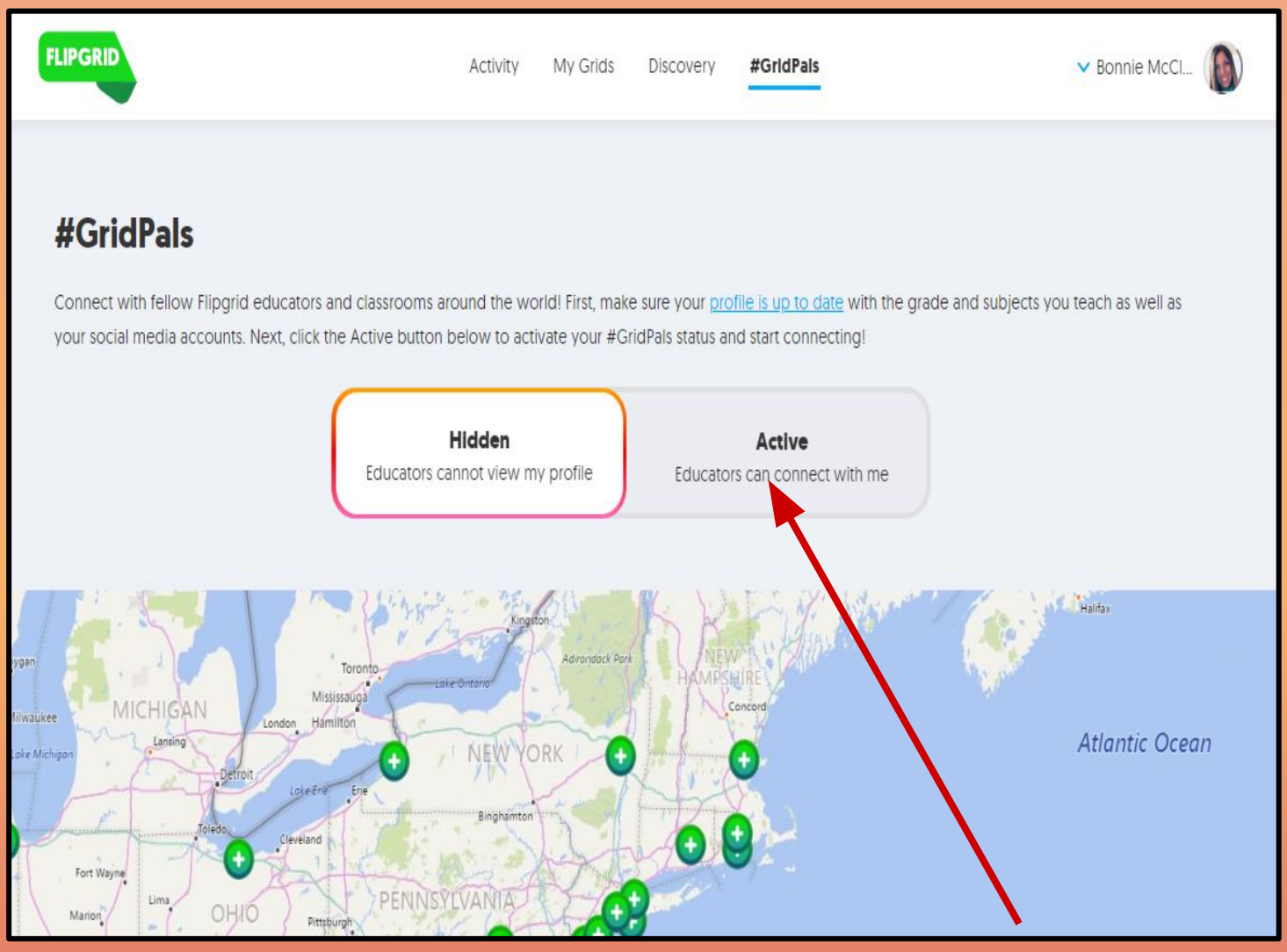


2. Where in the World?

Now that your profile is set, let's get you on the map of #GridPals!

2a. Getting on the map

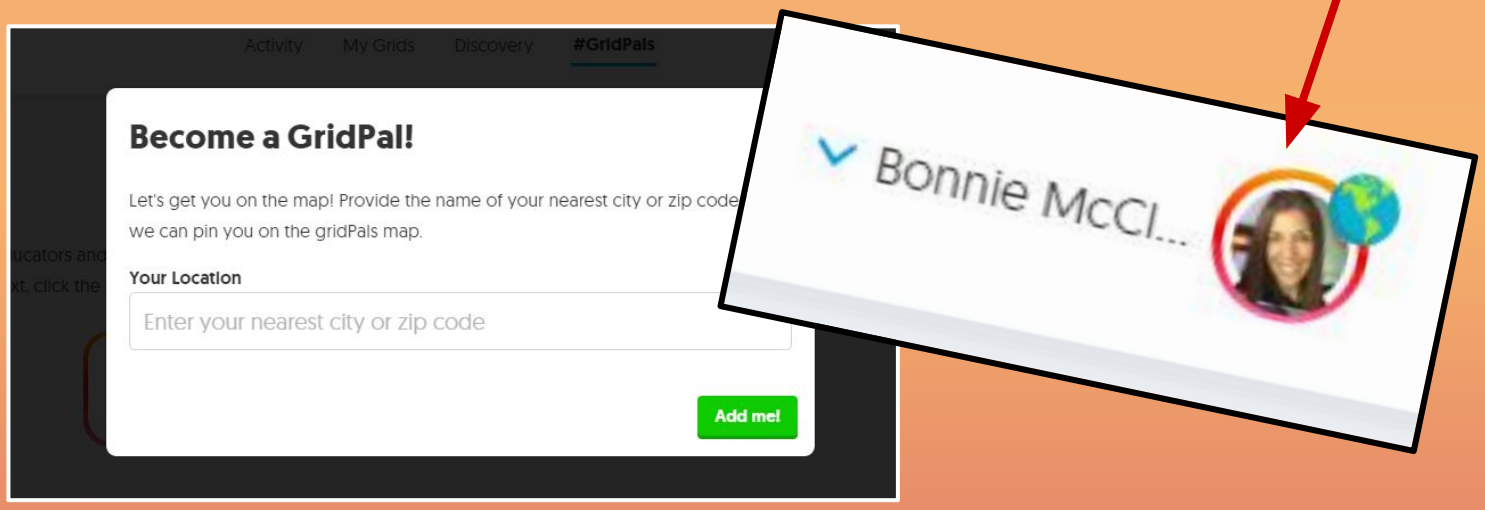
When you're finished with your profile information, click #GridPals (yes, now!) and switch from Hidden to Active, so others can find you!



2b. Become a GridPal

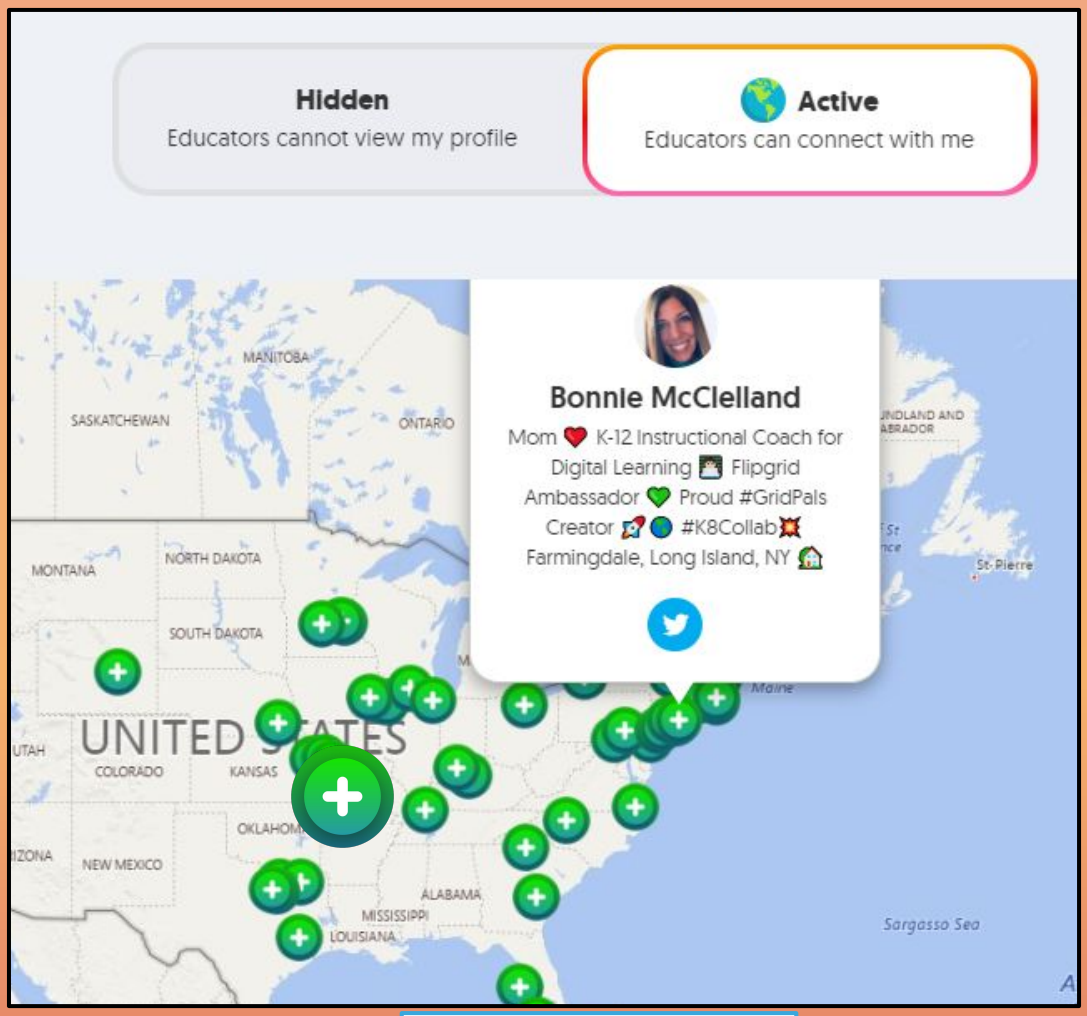
After clicking Active, you'll see a pop-up to "Become a GridPal"! Fill in your nearest city or zip code and click **Add me!**

Welcome! Right away you'll notice that a ring and globe will light up around your profile image. This reminds you that you are visible to anyone who would like to search for a #GridPals match. Find yourself on the map and you'll see your little bio pop up! So cool, right?!



2c. Navigating the map

Roll over the Flipgrid plus signs to see other educators. Click and drag on the map to see other locations and educators around the world!



3. Search and find!

Another way of finding a connection is to scroll down and do a keyword search. Look for a match by grade, subject, or even city by using the available engines!

Grades: Select Grades

Subjects: Select Subjects

Search

Name	GridPal Since ↓	City	Country	Subjects	Grades
Bonnie McClelland	07/25/2018	Farmingdale	US	Other	Technology/Instructional Coach
Shelly Lansford	07/25/2018	Haltom City	US	All K-12	Technology/Instructional Coach
Michael Drezek	07/25/2018	Angola	US	STEM	Pre-K (ages 3-4)
Jennifer Saarinen	07/25/2018	Warren	US	Math	Middle school (ages 11-13)
Loreen Sullivan	07/25/2018	Andover	US	World Languages	High school (ages 14-18)
Monique Agueros	07/25/2018	Warrensburg	US	All K-12	Technology/Instructional Coach
Kimberly Barrett	07/25/2018	Murray	US	Language Arts	High school (ages 14-18)
Sean Arnold	07/25/2018	New York	US	All K-12	Technology/Instructional Coach
Angela Manzo	07/25/2018	Locust Valley	US	Math	High school (ages 14-18)
Kris Conway	07/25/2018	Orland Park	US	All	Elementary (ages 5-10)

4. Make the connection!

So you've explored the map, checked out the bios, and looked through the grades and subjects. You think you've found the perfect class of #GridPals?! What next??

1. Using the social media connection info on the bio, reach out! Introduce yourself, and let your fellow educator know that you found them on Flipgrid.
2. Tell them a little about you and your students and why you think you're a good match!
3. Ask the golden question: Would you like to be #GridPals?!
4. If the answer is YES, proceed to Building Your First Grid and Adding Topics!
5. If the answer is NO, perhaps the timing isn't right or they already have #GridPals, turn that frown upside down and dive back into the search!

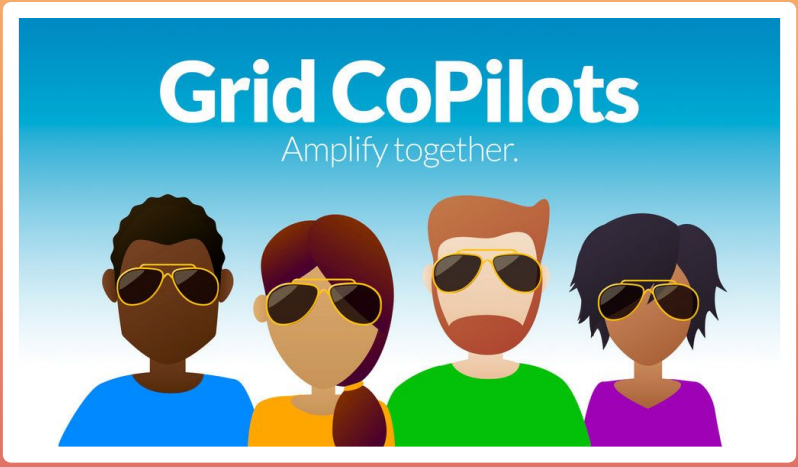
If you have accepted an invitation to become #GridPals, remember to go back to your Teacher Dashboard and change your availability to *Hidden* so that you are not contacted again.

5. CoPilots for #GridPals

Most educators have found that the CoPilots feature works amazingly well for #GridPals.

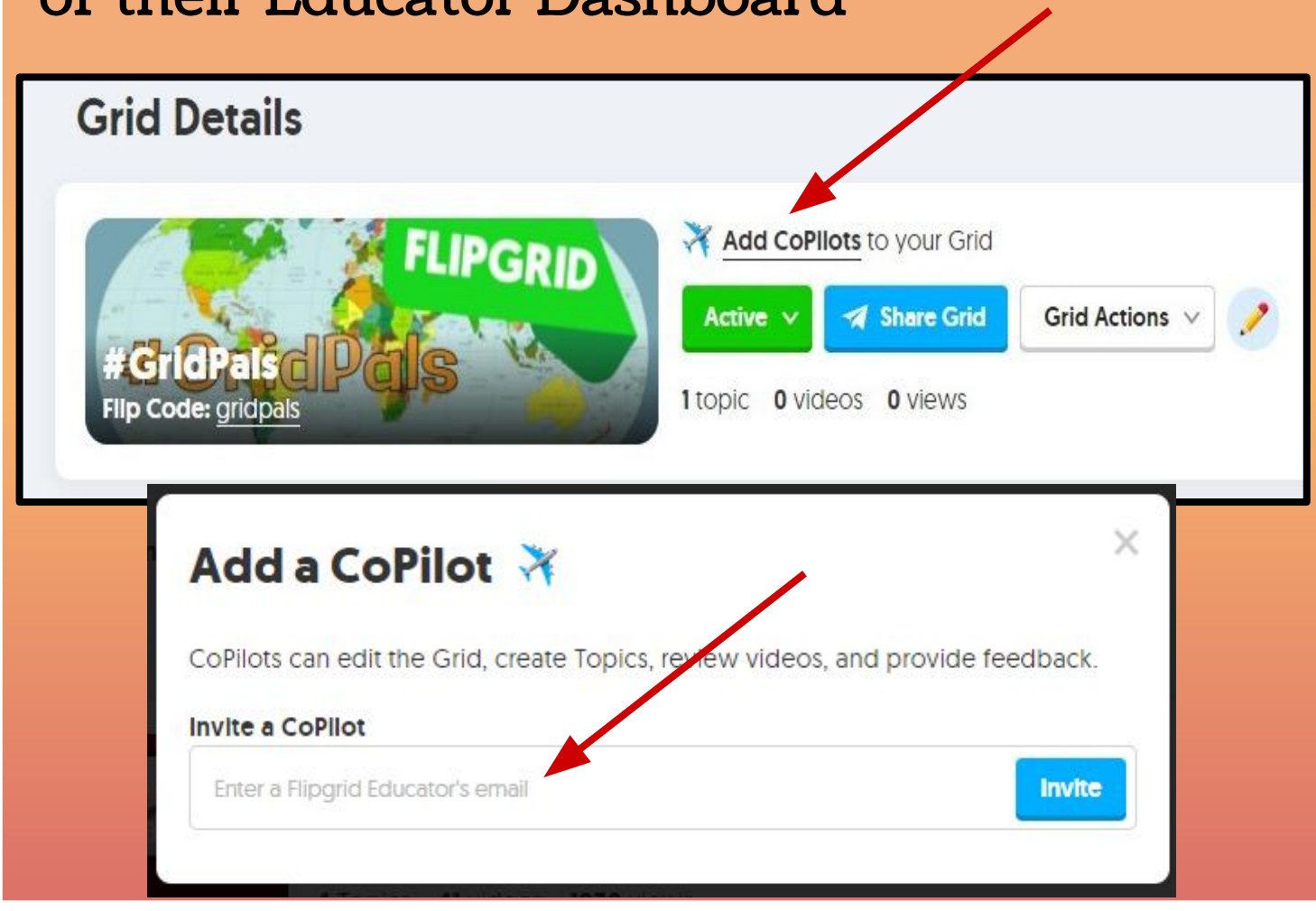
With CoPilots, both teachers can edit the Grid, create Topics, review video Responses, and give feedback. Just PERFECT for #GridPals!

Decide among the two of you who would like to set up the Grid and then invite the other to be a CoPilot.



6. Adding a CoPilot

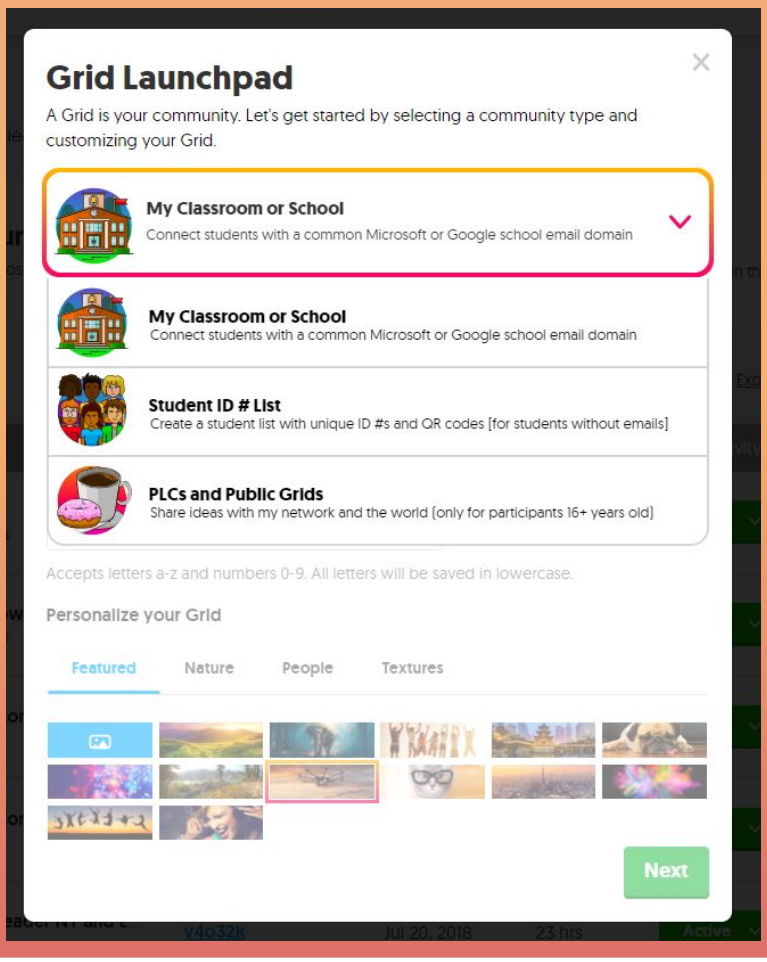
In your Dashboard click on My Grids. Select the Grid you would like to add a CoPilot to. Click Add CoPilots and enter the email address of your GridPal educator. They will receive an email and a notification at the top of their Educator Dashboard



7. Building Your First Grid

In your Educator Dashboard, click the blue New Grid button to begin creating your Grid.

There are now three different types of Grids. For #GridPals, your best options are either My Classroom or School or Student ID # List.



Let's see the difference between the two!

8. Grid Options!

Once you and your #GridPals educator have decided to join forces, you need to determine which Grid will work best when you become CoPilots.

The My Classroom or School option is best if you both are using either Microsoft or Google school email domains. Remember...you BOTH need to have the emails for students in order to use this type of Grid seamlessly. Once created, your students will log in using the Flip Code AND their school email.

If one, or both, of you do not have student emails or a common email domain, the Student ID # List is your best option. You will upload a CSV of your students' names and a unique student number, or you can manually enter them. The list of codes can be downloaded to share with students so that they can log in with their number and the Flip Code.

9. Time for Topics

The power of #GridPals is in the discussions! As the educators, you and your CoPilot can start with a variety of topics, and then allow your students to introduce new ideas as their conversations begin to develop. I divided Topic ideas into three categories, according to where you are in your #GridPals journey. These are just suggestions. I'd love to hear your ideas! It would be fabulous if you added them to the Discovery Library too!

CONNECTION is getting started, introducing yourselves and becoming acquainted with each other.
CONVERSATION is things to discuss, debate, and share ideas about.
COLLABORATION is projects or lessons that you can create and work on together.

Connection

- Where in the World are Our #GridPals?
  - Begin with a clue from each of your students about your location.
  - Ideas include landmarks, weather, famous foods, etc.
  - Use maps and begin narrowing down the possibilities.
  - Use the reply option to ask even more questions or to keep your #GridPal informed of your progress
  - Celebrate with a whole class video when you think you've discovered the location!

- Getting to Know You!
  - This works great for an introduction Topic.
  - Share 3-5 facts about yourself. Who makes up your family? What do you like to do for fun? Favorite foods/snacks?
  - Have students reply to a video, then record their own.
  - The reply feature is important to have that personal pen pal feeling.

- Our School Tour
  - Students love seeing their #GridPals' learning spaces!
  - Assign 2-3 students to different locations around your building. Have one student film, while the others narrate, then switch!
  - Some spaces to include: the gym, art and music rooms, lunchroom, playground, theater, and of course...your classroom!

- What Are You Learning?
  - This is an excellent starter to see what kind of work you can support each other with.
  - Have a few different students share out from each of your subject areas.
  - Ideas include: books you're reading, math you're working on, science concepts being studied
  - It's a great formative assessment for your own students too! ;)

- 1:1 or Whole Class
  - Some classes paired their students with one #GridPal each
  - Others kept it an open conversation for all
  - The choice is yours!

Conversation

- What's Cookin'?
  - Everyone loves food! This topic is great for sharing different kinds of entrees and snacks that are popular to your area. This works especially well for #GridPals from different countries!
  - Have a student or two bring a device to the lunch room and share what's on the menu.
  - Bonus points to take home and share your dinner!

- Book Talks!
  - Students share with their #GridPals what they're reading and give a short review
  - Same grade classes can choose to read the same book, and then have discussions on the Grid
  - Little pals can read books aloud to each other to practice fluency.

- Here's the Story…
  - #GridPals go back and forth adding a sentence or two to a story until it's complete.
  - Focus on genre being studied!

Collaboration

- Study Buddies!
  - Working on the same unit? Post and answer review questions for each other.

- I Have a Solution!
  - Using white boards and perhaps a buddy to record for you, share a math problem.
  - As the GridPal, use the reply feature, share how you solved the problem.
  - Record another video and send one back.
  - Be sure to give each other feedback!

- Lots of Language
  - Based on the unit, #GridPals have a conversation in the language being studied.
  - ENL #GridPals share discussions in their home language, and then support each other in English learning

- STEM Thinking
  - Share your STEM ideas and experiments with your #GridPals and have them make predictions
  - Share the results

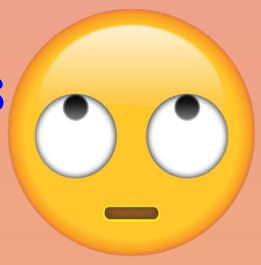
Even More Topic Ideas!

For the younger rockstars!

What are you currently reading? Book suggestions and reviews!	Tour of your classroom and school! Have students share different areas of their school and narrate.	Show me your lunch! How are the foods similar or different in other parts of the world?
What sports do you like to play? For foreign countries...how do you play that?	For primary grades: Create Letter Grids and have GridPals add words that begin with that letter	Share a fun fact or two about your state...or part of the world you live in
Can you solve this math problem? Student creates...GridPal solves!	Tell a story! Using the student response feature, have GridPals go back and forth adding the next sentence to create a story.	Find math in real life! Challenge each other to find an example of how you use math in the real world, then ask your GridPals to solve.
For foreign countries...what does your money look like? When you have your own, what would you buy?	Book Club! For same grades, read the same book and share reflections questions and ideas.	What would a historical figure say? Act out men and women in history and have GridPals guess who they are.

Even More Topic Ideas!

For the older rockstars (*who are too cool to be called rockstars*)!



Have your scientists collaborate on an experiment with their GridPals	ELL students: share your home country and ask a question in English, and then in your native language.	Overseas GridPals: what are you doing to protect your environment?
Studying the same unit as your Social Studies GridPals? Post review questions for each other!	HOT Topics! Choose a controversial topic in education and debate pros and cons. Ex/Homework, grades, cell phones in the classroom, etc.	Foreign language classes: record your video in the language you're studying. Ask questions according to a shared unit and be sure to reply in the language too!
Science Experiments! Share your topic and ask your GridPals for their hypothesis and/or ideas for next steps	Current events have different views depending on where you live. Have GridPals share thoughts on a recent happening.	Make it real! Ask GridPals to share a real life example of how they would use a current math topic..then solve!

#GridPals and Digital Citizenship

It truly is an amazing world we live in today. There are more ways to connect and collaborate that we would never have thought possible. As all superheroes know, with great power comes great responsibility. When we teach digital citizenship to our students, we are creating a culture that supports safe and responsible technology use.

I suggest a classroom discussion about appropriate video responses before beginning with your #GridPals. The Flipgrid Moderate Response feature (when creating Topics) can be used at the start so students understand misbehavior will not be published to the Grid. At your discretion, once you feel that they're ready, turning off the moderation and allowing students to take the lead will then turn into more powerful classroom discussions!

The Journey Begins!

You're on your way! You ARE a champion of student voice! Remember, #GridPals are powered by YOU. As you embark, keep in mind that this one of a kind experience for your students is what you make of it. Stay close to your #GridPals educator match and build connections and learning stories for your students that they will never forget!

As always, we love getting a peek at your journey!

Share your stories @Flipgrid, @BMcCleland24, and of course, #GridPals!

Let me know how I can support you! I'm on this journey with you and I'm not looking back! Here we come, world!