

Neary School
4th Grade One:One Pilot Project
Parent Meeting -- 9/24/13
Notes from Meeting

The following are notes from the parent meeting regarding the one:one pilot project for 4th graders at the Neary School, organized under the major headings from the PowerPoint presentation at the meeting.

The Project: *To implement use of a personal digital learning device in the 4th grade at Neary School, with each student having his/her own iPad.*

> If the project is successful, we expect that students will continue using their iPads at least through middle school.

> Many other districts in our area have already implemented 1:1 programs for their students. We have researched different approaches taken by other districts and are planning to use the best of these approaches and to do our best to avoid the problems and pitfalls identified by the other districts.

Goals: *To prepare our students with the skills they need to be successful, productive 21st century citizens*

> It has been said that “fully 65% of today’s grade-school kids may end up doing work that hasn’t been invented yet.” To be successful 21st century citizens, our children will need to be able to engage in continuous, self-directed, independent learning throughout their lives.

> Having and using your own digital device is becoming as common as having and using your own pen or pencil – it’s a necessary tool for many of us, and will become even more so in the future.

When every student has a personal digital device:

> Learning can continue without arbitrary interruptions, because each student always has his/her tool.

> No need to put creativity or flow of ideas on hold, because they don’t have to wait for computer time or the next week when they can again use the cart of iPads

> Each student can access materials at his/her best level, so the ability to challenge each student at the right level to maximize his/her learning is significantly enhanced.

> Parents can be true partners in their child’s learning, because projects on the iPad will be available at home and at school.

> Students will also be learning about being good digital citizens, developing a positive digital footprint, and engaging in learning at their own levels.

> One of the advantages of having your own device is that you then have the opportunity to personalize it. Most students who have a personal device develop a very personalized **use** of the device, beyond the obvious. The obvious are things like – using your accounts like Google Drive and leaving yourself logged in so that use is seamless and barrier-free, personalizing the background, fonts, and other system preferences that we hold standardized when it is a school device, and having it available anytime, anywhere – not just at school. The less obvious things are around unleashing creativity and opportunities for meaningful “play” that become available when they have extended access to the device beyond what is needed to complete an assignment.

We ask ourselves the question: “What do they need to know?”

> Clearly not just facts – they will need to be able to find and analyze relevant information, access content at their own reading/comprehension levels, collaborate with others, learn and practice new skills, create presentations to share what they’ve learned.

> In the 21st century world, students will need to be able to learn about something new, retrain themselves for a new job, at a moment’s notice

> To be informed citizens of our democracy, they will need to be able to access and analyze information from a wide variety of sources, and know how to express and share their own opinions.

> To be successful in the kind of 21st century occupations we want kids to be able to access, they will need to be fluent in accessing and analyzing information, collaborating with others, communicating their thoughts and opinions, creative in developing new solutions to problems, and able to fluently use a variety of technology tools to do all this.

Examples

> We have been using this tool in school for a couple of years now, almost since it first came out in 2010, and have seen its potential to enhance student learning, even though it doesn’t work as well when it is used as a shared device.

> Short video provided some examples of student work using the iPads

Project Structure

> “Bring Your Own [specific] Device” – an iPad

> Students having the same kind of device is important for this project. In high school, college, and beyond, students will be expected to know and understand a wide variety of digital tools, to have their own device, and to be able to choose the best application for the assignment. At this age, in 4th grade, we need all students to be using the same device because they will be learning how to use it effectively and starting to become fluent with choosing which application is best for which purpose.

> Rationale for choosing the iPad -- We investigated a variety of choices, and concluded that the iPad currently has the most functionality and flexibility for our purposes – see the table below for some examples of comparisons with the Android tablet.

Topic	Apple	Android	Notes
Initial Cost	Fair	Good	Android Nexus 7 tablet costs \$229, less than Apple iPad2 (\$399)
Availability of core educational apps	Excellent	Fair	There are many more apps available for Apple than Android. Some of our core apps are not available for Android.
Operating System	Excellent	Good	The Google Android OS is open source software, meaning it is up to each Android device maker to test, certify and roll out updates to their respective devices and it all happens on their schedule. Google pushes updates to their own devices (e.g., Nexus) but doesn't have authority to push updates to others'. Apple completely controls its iOS operating system.
Future apps	Excellent	Fair	It is much easier for developers to create applications for Apple because of the consistency inherent in iOS. Android developers need to test their apps on hundreds of different devices. A majority of the new apps being developed are for Apple iOS only.
Cost of apps	Same	Same	
Teacher training	Excellent	Poor	Our teachers have been trained on Apple products and have experience using iPads in previous years. They have no experience with Android devices.
Battery Life	Excellent	Good	iPad - about 10 hours; Nexus 7 - about 9 hours. But when Nexus 7 tablet is in standby, fully charged, but idle for 3-4 days, available battery charge drops from 100 to 62%. iPad loses only a couple of percentage points in same amount of time.
App Fluency	Excellent	Fair	Android apps function differently on different devices. Apple apps are consistent across different iPad models.
Ecosystem	Excellent	Poor	Apple is only company that creates all of its own hardware and software, which creates integration and consistency between tablets, computers and online services. Google doesn't provide the same tight, integrated experience.
Accessibility	Excellent	Fair	iPad offers stronger parental controls than Android
Apple TV	Excellent	Poor	Southborough uses AppleTV frequently to display content from individual iPads for the entire class to see; Androids are not compatible with AppleTV

Project Structure

- > Parents are asked to provide an iPad for their child – there will be options similar to those provided for the acquisition of musical instruments
- > If parents choose not to provide an iPad for their child, he/she will be able to use a school iPad during the school day
- > If parents want to participate in this program but have financial issues, they are asked to contact the principal and provide information as to financial need, and we will try to help

Acquisition Options

- > Purchase package from school vendor, including warranty, insurance, case, & card for apps – choices will include two different devices, outright purchase, & lease to own. The package includes 3 year insurance, with unlimited repairs for accidental damage, drops, spills, liquid submersion, theft, fire, flood, power surge, etc.
- > We are continuing to negotiate with vendors, but anticipate that the lower cost option will be somewhere in the \$500s (maybe around \$550) and that the newest iPad will be more around the upper \$700s. We are working on 3- and 4-year lease to own options, shooting for around \$200/year as the cost. These costs are similar to the options provided to parents by other local districts, except that we are planning to have the devices owned by the families, not by the school
- > Purchase package on your own
- > Use an iPad that your child or family already has (minimum of iPad2, 32 GB recommended)

Timeline and Learning Sessions

- > Parents will receive information about acquisition options in early November.
- > The project will begin mid-January.
- > There will be learning sessions for parents and students, covering technical basics, expectations for students, and parental controls
- > There will also be follow-on tech support sessions as needed

Questions/Feedback:

Q: What will a typical day look like – how much work on the iPad vs traditional work?

A: We know that teacher-student interaction is key to learning. It will not be 100% of the day and homework will not be all iPad. We will be looking for a balance and asking parents for feedback

throughout the project. We're thinking maybe students might be using the iPad between $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of the day initially. Some other uses may develop, but we want to make sure that students are developing in all areas, not just using technology.

We will be developing a fluid balance based on our observations, surveys of students, and parent feedback. Education is changing, shifting to inquiry-based learning, with students having the tools to foster and further their own learning.

Q: Concern over too much screen time with untethered access, and concern regarding having the iPads out on the bus.

A: Students will not be allowed to have their iPads out on the bus. Teachers stated that they will be working on the balance to ensure that there's not too much screen time. Use of the iPads will not have the usual concerns about screen time because they will not be being used as passive entertainment; they will be used as productivity tools. In addition, parents will be in charge of iPad use and may limit students' time using them. A big advantage of students having these tools will be that they will be learning about balance at an early age, using the technology as tools but not being taken over by it.

Q: What metrics will we use to measure success?

A: We will be using the same metrics that we always use to assess learning in each subject area, and we should be able to see the difference. Teachers will be able to compare student achievement with the previous year and assess the impact that the technology tools are having on student learning. One teacher noted that using the iPads last year for the habitat project students were able to do more than one habitat, in some cases up to five interactive projects, as compared to one static habitat project the previous year using paper, pencils, & posters.

We will also use student and parent surveys to help analyze the impact of the project.

Q: Are all the teachers on board with the project? I would hate to see one class using it all the time while another is lacking.

A: Yes, all the teachers are committed to this project. The team is working together to plan their use of the iPads so that students have a common experience with respect to use. There will be some differences, but there should not be significant disparities between classrooms with respect to students' experiences. Teachers have received, and will continue to receive, professional development geared about use of iPads in the classroom and have already demonstrated significant sharing of what they have learned in the classroom.

Q: Will there be specific guidelines for parents and students to help create boundaries?

A: Yes – that is one of the things our committee is working on and there will be another meeting to talk about those guidelines.

Q: Will there be a balance between pen and paper homework vs iPad?

A: Yes, we will be working toward that balance. There will still certainly be written work, including written homework, and we will be revisiting this issue throughout the year. The balance can also vary depending on the parents' preference.