**iPAD INITIATIVE**

**BLAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**2013-2014**

**(Updated 3/14/13)**

**iPad Program Details/Rollout**

**Who will be using the iPads?**

For the 2013-2014 academic year we are working towards a 1:1 iPad initiative for the entire 8th grade, with students purchasing their own iPads or taking part in a 'Lease to Own' program through the school. As part of our program, we will have a system in place for families with demonstrated financial need.

**What iPads are acceptable?**

We have determined that the ‘minimum specifications’ necessary for the iPad program is the iPad 2.  All versions of the iPad released after the iPad 2 will suffice for the students’ needs in school.  The iPad Mini has the same specifications as the iPad 2, with the difference in screen sizes (7.9” vs 10”).

**What is the cost of the iPad?**

iPad 2 at market price is $399 ($379 through the ‘lease to own’ program).  The 32 gb iPad is $429 and 64 gb is $529.  The price of the iPad mini is $329. The ‘Lease to Own’ program details are still being finalized.

**What if I can not afford the iPad?**

We are committed to providing an equitable learning experience for our students and have a system in place for families with demonstrated financial need.  Families with this concern should contact Nat Vaughn (nvaughn@medfield.mec.edu) directly.

**What case should be purchased for the iPad?**

This is a family and personal decision.  We will continue to provide information regarding options for families to purchase.  Three websites that we have found to be useful, as they detail the various covers, rates them, and describes why covers are needed, are:

<http://ipad-cases-review.toptenreviews.com/professional/>

<http://ipad-cases-review.toptenreviews.com/rugged/>

<http://www.griffintechnology.com/survivor>

**Why an iPad?**

The iPad has become a preferred educational tool for a wide variety of reasons:  flexibility, portability, and engagement, to name a few.  Many possibilities exist for integration with Web 2.0 tools such as slideshows, podcasts, whiteboards, videos, and e-books.  The iPad’s multi-media functionality provides the forum for students to interface with text, images, and videos, as well as the vehicle for teachers to differentiate their instruction for all learners while also utilizing cross-disciplinary tools for executive functioning support.  We have found that the iPad helps to establish opportunities for students to research, organize, create content, brainstorm, write, collaborate, create audio, present material, and create screencasts and videos.

**Why an iPad vs laptop or other tablet?**

Through our work with the pilot and the research we have done, we have found that the iPad offers the following advantages:  portability, flexibility, start-up time, screen casting, app selections, capabilities/potential for creation, camera/video features, and battery life.

**When will students receive their iPads?**

Students who will be bringing in their own iPads from home may purchase them at any time.  The current plan is for students who will be taking part in the district’s ‘Lease to Own’ program to receive their iPads in mid-August of 2013.  Those students involved in the ‘Lease to Own’ program will be required to attend one of the information sessions at Blake Middle School.  All ‘sign-off’ and ‘release forms’ must be turned in before iPads are received.

**May students in the 8th grade opt out of using an iPad?**

Our hope is that all students in the eighth grade will participate in the initiative so that we can have a comprehensive understanding of how they impact student learning.  For those families not interested in purchasing an iPad, we do have a plan in place for students to ‘check out’ an iPad for the school day, so that access to the program is in place.  Research has shown that students who own their own device and have access to it 24/7 are more invested in their learning.

**Implementation**

**What is the time frame for this program?  Will my child be able to use the iPad at Medfield High School?**

This iPad program initiative will begin in September of 2013.  The district has committed to the use and support of 1:1 mobile learning with iPads for these students for their Medfield High School experience.

**My child already has an iPad.  Will he or she be able to use that one for this program?**

Yes, contingent on the specifications of the iPad that is currently owned.  If the iPad is a ‘family iPad’, it should be recognized that the intent of this program is for students to have a personal mobile device that will be utilized both at school and at home.

**What training will be in place for teachers?**

Professional development for our teachers is at the heart of this program.  We have been working with EdTech Teacher ([http://edtechteacher.org](http://edtechteacher.org/)) and also have been relying on the expertise of our Technology Integration Specialists.  This training pays forward with mentoring by current teachers as a part of the professional development for the future. Training will be taking place in the spring of 2013 and will continue through the 2013-2014 academic year.

**Will there be any ongoing training on how to use the iPad?**

In addition to ‘in-class’ training/instruction for students, we plan on distributing ‘training and tips’ throughout the year for families.  These tips and other iPad information can be found at the [iPad Pilot Blog](http://mlearninginmedfield.blogspot.com/) (<http://mlearninginmedfield.com>). We also have plans in place for parent workshops.

**Will students and staff be using the iPads every day?**

The expectation for students is that they will have them in school and in class each and every day.  As with all educational resources, there is not a one-size-fits-all approach, and the implementation will be balanced and purposeful.  However, the iPad will be an integral learning tool over the course of the school day for the eighth grade students.  The teachers are planning on having the students use their iPads as their ‘agendas’, and to develop organizational and time management skills across curricular areas, as well as a part of the core instruction and learning.

**Student/Parent/School Responsibilities**

**Will the school provide additional parent communication about the iPad?**

Yes.  In addition to the initial information sessions for both students and parents, we plan on holding parent training, parent feedback sessions, and providing updates throughout the year.

**Will my child be bringing the iPad home?**

Yes, we are encouraging students to use this tool as a personal learning device and as a bridge from school to home.  All students and parents will need to sign a contract around appropriate use, care, and guidelines for the iPad.  If you have concerns about your child bringing the iPad home, please contact Jen Dondero, Kelly Campbell, or Nat Vaughn.

**What is the cost of the apps?**

Teachers will make every effort to use apps that are free.  This past year, however, we did purchase one app (Explain Everything) that cost $2.99.

**Can students install their own apps?**

Yes - this is a family decision.  We recommend that parents set up iPads with an iTunes account not linked to a credit card.  We will be providing a list of apps that should be installed. If students/families have suggestions for apps, they can contact their teachers directly or e-mail ipadpilot@medfield.mec.edu.

**Where in school can it be used or not used?  Where should students leave the iPads when at school?**

The Blake administration and staff will clearly articulate where and when the iPad can be used, and where it is prohibited or ‘off limits’.  Areas like the gymnasium, locker room, cafeteria, bathrooms, etc. will be ‘No-iPad’ areas.  Students should have their iPads with them as they go to academic classes and can store them in their locked lockers when not needed.

**What happens if an iPad gets broken, lost, or stolen?**

We recommend that parents purchase Apple Care+ with any new iPad purchase to insure against accidental damage.  Families who elect to participate in the ‘Lease to Own’ program through the school will have the opportunity to insure the iPads against loss through theft or damage, but the student/parent is responsible for any damage or loss that is due to negligence.  We will be working hard to instill in our students a sense of ownership and responsibility for this tool.  The students involved in our pilot program this year showed great responsibility with the ‘ownership’ of their device.

**How will the teachers address the inherent ‘distractions’ that the iPad may present in the classroom?**

We are fully cognizant that we work with middle school students and will do our best to remain vigilant.  Our teachers are very skilled at supervising students using our existing computer technology.  Managing this technology is an ongoing challenge for middle school students, and it is important for us to teach them about responsible use.  We will discuss ‘terms of use’ at our information sessions.

**What security features are enabled on the iPad?**

These settings will be configured or set up on a family basis.  Families should contact their Internet service providers for directions about filters and security.  When students are at school, our filters will be in place when they are accessing the network.  Our continued goal is to educate students about responsible use and teach each student how to protect and preserve his/her iPad.

**How will online safety and exposure to inappropriate content be addressed?**

The Blake staff has shared concerns with parents regarding student safety online and in the ‘cyberworld’.  We will need to continue teaching students to use technology and the internet in a safe and responsible manner.  We need to make sure that we, as adults, stay informed and current regarding existing risks, likelihood and consequences of risks, and the benefits/costs associated with the risks.  Teachers will be teaching students about Digital Citizenship and Media Literacy to help students to best use technology in a responsible manner.  These concepts should also be reinforced at home.

**Will the Internet be filtered on student iPads?**

The Internet will be filtered while the students are connected to the Medfield Public Schools.  However, devices will not have Internet filtering on them outside of the Medfield Public Schools network. Families should be mindful about 4G capability and connectivity when purchasing iPads. Students will not be permitted to use the 4G features when they are in school.

Finding appropriate content will always be our goal, and limiting inappropriate content will always be a challenge.  At school all Internet access through our wireless network infrastructure (WiFi) is filtered for inappropriate content.

In all of these efforts, we also recognize that nothing is perfect.  Communication between the school and families concerning any possible loopholes in the safety programs is critical.

**Can we put personal media (music, books, videos, etc.) on the iPad?**

Yes.  However, families should consider the amount of memory that is used for personal music, books, and videos.  It is important for students and families to be mindful of the ‘academic needs’ necessary for the iPad, rather than it solely being a personal media player.

**Will the school set rules for use of the iPad at home?**

We expect that families will observe the Blake guidelines regarding decency and treatment of others, as well as our guidelines for age-appropriate supervision of students.  When in school, the district’s Acceptable Use Policy applies, and we will be asking all parents and students to sign off on the ‘Blake iPad Guidelines’.

Parents should continue to use the same strategies they have been using to keep students focused on their work at home.  Parents may want to consider charging the iPad in their room overnight so students would not have access to it during the late evening hours.

**When will the iPads be charged?**

It is our expectation that the iPads will be charged every night when the students go home.  If the iPads are fully charged, they should last throughout the school day. Students will not be allowed to charge their iPads at school.

**What happens if my student forgets his/her iPad at home?**

It is our hope and expectation that students will bring their iPads to school every day, but we do recognize that middle school students do forget their materials from time to time.  Students/parents should respond in the same manner as if a textbook, binder, or project is left at home.

**Technology**

**Am I required to have wireless Internet access at home for the iPad program?**

No, but it will help with the overall student experience.  (The iPad does not plug into a hard-wired Internet connection.)  If students do not have Wi-Fi access at home, they can connect to the Internet at school or the public library.  If students experience technology issues with their iPads at home, parents should write a note or e-mail (if e-mail works) to the teachers explaining the situation.

**Will students still need laptop or desktop computers once they have iPads?**

While the iPad should be able to handle many of the student’s computing needs, it will be used in conjunction with a laptop or destktop computer.

**Will students be able to sync their iPads with their home computers or iPhones?**

Yes, however this should be a family conversation.  There is a great benefit to having the ‘sync’ features in place, but this is a decision that should be made at the family level.

**Are all textbooks available electronically?**

Not yet.  Though some of the courses will be using e-texts, not all textbooks are currently online.  We are evaluating our current textbooks and will make transitions to electronic versions as they become available and meet our students’ needs.  Some novels are available electronically, and we are continually evaluating which titles we will support in electronic format.  Traditional textbooks will be sent home, both as resources and as traditional tools of learning.  However, in many instances where electronic versions are not available, our teachers will use electronic supplements and ‘open sources’ that will allow students to use the iPads as their resources.  We have made the commitment as a district through long range planning to use R&D time to digitize our curriculum.  Teachers will be using professional development time to work on this long-term project with the goal of reducing the need for ‘the backpack’.

**Will students need iTunes accounts to use with iPads?**

Yes.  All the apps that are downloaded will be tied into the students’ iTunes account and Apple ID.  iTunes accounts should be non-credit card accounts.  Directions for setting this up will be distributed as we get closer to the start of the school year and will be available on the blog.

**Will my student need an e-mail account for this program?**

Yes.  We will be working with students and families to set up a separate ‘gmail account’, as Google Apps will be used throughout the program.  Directions for setting up a gmail account will be distributed at the information sessions.

**Should the built-in video camera, messaging, and Facetime application be enabled?**

 Students will need the camera enabled for use at school. The decision to enable Facetime and messaging is a family one, carefully considering each child on a case-by-case basis.

**Evaluation, Questions, and Feedback**

**How will the school system be evaluating the program?**

Surveys, meetings, and focus groups; student and parent feedback will also be analyzed carefully.

**What is the plan for the following year?**

We are thinking through our technology options as a school and district and our hope is that this program will help us to make informed and thoughtful decisions for our students and staff.

**Will the following year’s eighth grade be using iPads?**

We are taking our time to make sure that thoughtful decisions are being made regarding the next steps with this initiative.  That answer will be determined as the year progresses.

**What if I have questions that are not answered here?**

Please ask!  We welcome your questions and understand that new technology brings forth much discussion:  excitement, concern, optimism, and more questions.  We can not think of everything and are truly open to constructive feedback.  Please call us, or send an e-mail to ipadpilot@medfield.mec.edu if you have questions or concerns.