**iPAD PROGRAM**

**BLAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**2013-2014**

(Updated 3/14/13)

**Overview of Technology Implementation**

In conjunction with our increased implementation of technological hardware in our schools, our Administrative Technology Team has been working to strategically plan the most effective ways to integrate technology into the classrooms.  We are committed to taking the time to make thoughtful, informed decisions and our guiding compass throughout has been to employ educational technology tools that meet the varied needs of all of our students, enhance student learning and the educational experience, and foster the professional growth of our staff.  Our hope is to foster students’ executive functioning skills and growth, complex communication, creativity, critical thinking, and opportunities to collaborate with one another.

**iPad Pilot for 2012-2013**

A significant element of our recent work has been the exploration of a uniform, school-wide platform for the implementation of mobile devices in the classrooms.  In many school districts, 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.  This year at Blake we have had the opportunity to explore the potential benefit of these devices by having the Stars cluster in 8th grade participate in a yearlong pilot program.  The pilot study was implemented to allow our teachers and staff to thoughtfully implement and review the effectiveness of the iPads, while assessing their feasibility and impact on a smaller scale before any full-scale changes are put in place.

While these technological advances have offered many potential benefits to our curriculum and education here at Blake, at the heart of our work we have remained mindful that they do not ‘replace’ or serve as a substitute for excellent teaching.  Our goal and efforts have centered around the belief that they serve as a vehicle to enhance the practices that have been in place.  A key component of our work this year with our students on the Stars cluster has been the modeling of the responsible use and implementation of technology, always keeping in mind the ethical and safety issues that are inherent in these endeavors.  Students have also followed the same curriculum frameworks and common core curricula.

**Expanded Program**

The feedback we have gained from 2012-2013 pilot program has been a critical factor for both the school and district's future implementation and direction we will take with technology.  We established the following as benchmarks or evaluative measures for determining the efficacy of the pilot and the iPad:  organization, access to presentation and learning tools, collaboration in and out of the classroom, communication between student and teacher, and the fluid adaptation with new ways to ‘learn and do’.  The evaluative measures we have used to assess the efficacy of the pilot have been:  organization, access to presentation and learning tools, collaboration in and out of the classroom, communication between the student and teacher, and the fluid adaptation with new ways to ‘learn and do’.

We have found that the iPad helps to establish opportunities for students to research, organize, brainstorm, write, collaborate, create audio, present material, and create screencasts and videos.  Through classroom observations, professional development, informal and formal feedback from parents and students, and staff input, we have been pleased with the efficacy of the pilot and have determined that it is worth expanding the program for the 2013-2014 academic year. In an effort to expand upon our current iPad Pilot Program, we are working towards a 1:1 iPad initiative for the entire 8th grade for the upcoming academic year, 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.

To assure and maintain classroom consistency and device management, and stay true to the guiding principles of our pilot program, we are currently not permitting students in other grades to bring their mobile devices into Blake Middle School.  We are excited about this opportunity and look forward to sharing our findings and developments throughout the year.

**Where can I learn about the iPad and the iPad Program at Blake?**

Blake’s ipad website: [http://mlearninginmedfield.blogspot.com](http://mlearninginmedfield.blogspot.com/)

Apple offers a wealth of information on the iPad:

http://www.apple.com/ipad/features

<http://www.apple.com/education/ipad/>

Throughout the year we plan on providing additional resources for both students and parents.