
Personal Technology Fee FAQs

Why are we proposing a Personal Technology Fee?

We are proposing a Personal Technology Fee to develop and sustain a 1:1 technology initiative in which each student in grades 5-12 has access to a dedicated, personal learning device inside and outside of school. Few districts in Massachusetts and around the country are able to sustain a 1:1 technology program solely with appropriated funds and Shrewsbury is no exception. Districts like ours that are committed to developing and sustaining a 1:1 program, but lack the funds to do so through the appropriated budget, are asking parents to either fund their students' technology by providing them with something to bring to school (so-called Bring Your Own Device or BYOD), or by funding the student's technology through a fee.

How much is the Personal Technology Fee and why is it a good deal?

Parents that would like their students to participate in this program and give them the ability to use their personal learning device both in and out of school have two options; the annual \$165 Personal Technology Fee that includes exclusive use of a district-owned iPad, or purchase an iPad and pay the annual \$40 App and Management Fee.

- The Personal Technology Fee is an annual, \$165 fee for families that wish to take advantage of the district's device program. It allows us to aggregate our purchasing power and leverage our not-for-profit status to deliver a complete package at a very reasonable cost, helping to cover the costs of purchasing the devices, cases, and apps and of operating the program. Because the fee is an annual payment it operates similar to a 0% financing agreement, allowing families to pay over the lifetime of the device. Due to our volume purchasing and tax exempt status, the value realized from the technology fee is higher than the retail cost. For example, a grade 5 student paying a \$165 technology fee for 4 years (\$660 total) realizes use of the following: 16G WiFi iPad (\$499), case (\$25), \$50 of apps/year for a total of \$724. This represents a savings of \$64 and is not only less expensive than purchasing a new iPad for this program and paying the required, annual App and Management fee, it also provides access to school-based service with loaner and alleviates the need for a large, up-front outlay.
- The App and Management fee is an annual, \$40 fee for families who already own a current iPad and decide to provide exclusive use of it to their student for this program. It covers the required apps and enrollment of the iPad in our Mobile Device Management system. It also provides up to \$50 worth of apps/year.
- Reduction of Needed School Supplies: No need to purchase a graphing calculator or certain other school supplies (e.g.: binders, paper, index cards). In an assessment of current school supply lists, we anticipate an annual savings of approximately \$80 per student.

What if my student already has an iPad or I want to purchase one myself?

- Families owning their own 9.6" iPad2 or newer will need to pay the \$40/year App and Management Fee. If you are purchasing the iPad yourself we ask you to consider the following:
- Bring your own iPad with a \$40/year App fee is definitely one of the options but we're not encouraging parents to go out and buy an iPad for this program. An iPad2 will be acceptable but an iPad1 is definitely not appropriate due to the lack of camera, and the iPad Mini is too small to be suitable. Our concern with parents purchasing an iPad2 is that in our opinion it is less likely to have the 4 year lifespan--not due to hardware failure but due to potential incompatibility with future apps that will require a newer device. So for parents who already have an iPad2 then there is no risk to going with it until its lifespan is over. For parents buying an iPad, there is the risk that if they buy an iPad2 it will not be usable for 4 years.
- We recommend WiFi-only iPads rather than 3G because they're less expensive, do not require a data plan, and they're not necessary; there is plenty of WiFi access on campus and in the community to meet our students' needs.
- We recommend purchasing a case for the iPad to protect it, preferably one that provides good protection to the corners of the iPad.

What happens to my student's family owned iPad when it is enrolled in the program?

With payment of the \$40/year App fee, your student's family owned iPad is enrolled in our mobile device management and a small app and several configuration profiles are installed on it. We will require that the iPad be "wiped" (returned to the initial factory settings) during our iPad distribution in order to ensure that student iPads arrive to school in the same ready state. This process will not prevent it from syncing with its iTunes library but it will remove all content from the device so please be sure that important content is saved or available elsewhere. The changes that will happen are: a configuration for the school's wireless network will be installed, a configuration for the student's email account will be installed, a configuration that allows the cameras/facetime to be turned on and off at the teacher's request will be installed, and an "age-appropriate" configuration will be installed that will set allowable app and media age ratings, disable in-app purchases, and disable multi-player gaming and Game Center friends,.

Can my student use our family iPad that we share among us? What if we have two students who need iPads, can they share one?

Personal learning devices like the iPad are not designed to be shared by multiple users and attempting to do so diminishes the educational and organizational value. We have found that the value is maximized when the student is the sole user of the device has it available both in and out of school.

Why is it important for students to have the iPad available outside of school?

Our work with the iPad pilot has shown that the educational value increases significantly when the iPad becomes a personal learning device integrated into your child's learning both inside and outside of school. Students have referred to this as "bringing the teacher home."

What about liability?

We are trying hard to balance concerns families have about liability with the district's concerns about minimizing the cost of repairs and replacements. Upon damage to a district-owned device, the school will complete an accident report and if negligence is found then the family will be charged the complete repair or replacement cost. Damage sustained while the device is out of its protective case will be treated as negligence.

For accidental damage that occurs at school and during school hours but is outside the control of your student there will be no charge for the first repair. In the unlikely event that more than one repair is needed, the family is charged \$50 for the second repair, \$100 for the third repair, and the full repair cost for any subsequent repair. Families will not be liable for a device that is lost or stolen at school during school hours provided that "Find my iPad" is turned on and used.

For accidental damage that occurs outside of school, the district will assess the family a repair cost of \$50 for the first repair, \$100 for the second repair, and the full repair cost for subsequent repairs. Families will be liable for the full replacement cost of an iPad lost or stolen outside of school.

What about insurance?

If you are concerned about bearing the cost to repair or replace a district or personal iPad we recommend insuring it against loss and damage either through supplemental insurance from a 3rd party or by adding it to your renter's or home owner's policy. (Worth Ave Group sells \$499 of coverage w/\$50 deductible for the iPad 3 for \$37-\$52/year (\$99-\$156 for 3 years).

Will there be an opportunity to own the iPad after paying the \$165 take home fee?

Yes. At the end of the fourth school year of paying the \$165 take-home fee, the family may elect to keep the iPad at no additional cost.

Can my student use the iPad over the summer?

Yes. We support the summertime use of a student's iPad to continue their learning, but we will require families to sign a Summer Use Agreement, assuming full liability during the summer vacation.

What if I don't want to pay the fee or purchase an iPad?

Your child will be given access to an iPad and required apps to use during class time however they will not be allowed to bring the device home. While we cannot require parents to pay the fee we strongly encourage all to do so. Your student's ability to access the learning opportunities and resources in and out of the classroom will help maximize the educational and organizational benefits of the program and the fees ensure that the program is sustainable and able to continue beyond grades 5 and 6.

What if we leave the Shrewsbury public school system?

You will need to return the device and all of its accessories (case, charger, and charging cable) to the school or the school department central office at Town Hall and get a signed receipt.

