
Welcome to the 1:1 Initiative at Sherwood Middle School

May 29, 2013

Dear 4th Grade Parents and Guardians,

We look forward to welcoming you and your 4th grader to the 1:1 program at Sherwood Middle School this fall.

In our district, we have seen that this initiative has tremendous potential to take advantage of the fact that the entire body of human knowledge can now be available at your child's finger tips and can be accessed as needed at the point of learning. In addition, this program provides students with a wide range of tools that enable them to effectively communicate their thoughts and learnings through a wide range of professional looking products that are representative of the type of work they will be expected to produce in this digital age. As we come out of our experiences with a 6 grade iPad pilot (2011-2012) and a full iPad implementation during this current school year, we continue to receive feedback that this program has the capacity to significantly increase student innovation, motivation, collaboration, and organization.

During the first full year of implementation, we learned a great deal about how to better support 5th grade students in developing the strong digital citizenship skills that are needed to maximize the value of a personal electronic device in an educational environment. As a result of this learning, we will be instituting a "Gradual Release of Responsibility" model around those aspects of the technology that 5th grade students have had the greatest difficulty managing this year:

- For the first year with a personal electronic device (5th grade) students will not be allowed to have games on their iPads. As they move through the grade levels this will eventually transition to a family decision.

- For the first 2 months of school, 5th grades students will not be able to access messaging on the iPad. After this time period, access to this tool will be a family decision, provided a student does not make choices that interfere with other students' learning. If this is the case, the decision to restrict access will be made by a building administrator.
- For the first 2 months of school, 5th grade students will not be able to use the camera features on the iPad. After the first 2 months of school, the camera will be permanently turned on for all students. Any individual who does not use the camera in the appropriate manner will be subject to our Acceptable Use Policy.
- During the school year, students will be taught a digital citizenship curriculum and expectations for responsible use of the resources listed above will be emphasized.
- We are delaying the iPads arrival to class until the second week of school.
- The distribution of the iPads will be combined with a mandatory orientation for both parents and students around the purpose of this program and expectations for appropriate digital citizenship.

This Friday, May 31st, you will be receiving a detailed communication around the different options available to incoming 5th grade students to participate in the 1:1 program as well as information around how to register for one of these options. There will also be staff familiar with the program options available to answer any questions you may have at Sherwood Middle School on June 4th and June 6th, from 4:30 pm to 5:30, prior to the New Student Open House events.

We look forward to working with you and your students as we continue our efforts to provide all of our students with the type education that will leave them strongly prepared for the demands of 21st century career and college environments.

Warm Regards,

Mary Beth Banios
Assistant Superintendent of Schools