

# **Northwood School Netbook Project**

## **Overview, Status, and Recommendations**



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## **Section I: Goals, Research and Planning**

The main goal of the student 1:1 computer project was to put a computer device in the hands of students in the classroom in such a way that it becomes an integral part of the individual learning experience.

Research began in the summer of 2007 on the feasibility of purchasing and maintaining equipment at the 1:1 ratio. scenarios were discussed with the administration and technology committee on how and what would be done with such equipment. At the time it was determined that it was more effective to work on replacing the outdated equipment already in place at about a 20% turnover for the foreseeable future in order to at least get more modern computers into the hands of students at least at the group and classroom level.

During the 2008-2009 school year a portable laptop cart was budgeted for use in all classrooms. The units were set up as standard network computers (wireless) and students would take them out and use them in the current classroom they were in. This program has worked very well and was recently updated with new equipment for the same purpose.

During the 2010-2011 school year, Ipads were purchased through a grant for use with the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade science and math curriculum. After a period of time when the math and science departments were not in need of them, other classrooms signed them out to use during instruction or remedial training. Based on use and success of the Ipads it was decided to invest in another set of Ipads to be used initially in the world language classroom in order to test usage of tablet devices as well as digital textbooks. The program had mixed results but after the first year it was determined that the devices were a great tool to at least add to the education experience as well as help engage students and increase technology skills.

During this time research was being done to readdress the computer 1:1 idea. Since the portable computers worked so well and offered the keyboard that the Ipads or other tablet devices did not, products were investigated to determine feasibility. Unlike in the past, the pricing of Netbooks dropped almost in half so a decision was made to request a number of netbooks that would supply the average 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade population. The decision to look at the upper middle school grades was based mostly on skill set and the possibility of having the students use the devices as a tool for homework and projects outside of the school.

Plans were made to issue the units out at the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year and require the units to be taken home to again instill ownership and remove the burden of storage of the units.

## **Section II: Updating Policies and Funding the Program**

During the 2013-2014 school year, policies were beginning to be addressed to include the netbook program being budgeted for. This process was completed in October 2015. Policies as well as forms were created and adapted to be used here in Northwood School during the first few months of the 2014-2015 school year. It was decided that a user fee be initiated to help fund the operating costs of the program. This fee would be deposited in a school account to be used for miscellaneous expenses such as parts, cases, shipping and handling fees for returns, etc... Forms and policies were approved by the board and most things seemed to be in place for issuing of the equipment.

## **Section III: Protection of Equipment (Warranties and Insurance)**

During the initial phase of the project, the question of unit integrity and responsibility of users came up. What would happen if the equipment failed for whatever reason? Who would be responsible? Initially it was thought that homeowner and rental insurance would be able to cover loss and damage to the units. However, what wasn't realized at the time was that most insurance policies had a deductible that would probably come close to the cost of the unit which would negate the benefit. During the summer and early fall of 2014, the Assistant Superintendent started looking into insurance options. A vendor was chosen that offered both a one year plan and a two year plan that the family could choose from. This plan would cover limited incidents of damage from drops, spills, cracked screens, liquid submersion, fire, flood, natural disasters, power surges (by lightning), theft and vandalism. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> info night a few concerns came up over the wording of the insurance pamphlet compared to the voluntary group form. Turns out there isn't any coverage difference just some different wording between the documents. The Electronic Device Protection form outlines in detail what is not covered while the Voluntary Group form (Yellow) outlines what is covered. What ends up not covered is negligence, cosmetic damage such as scratches and chips that do not effect operation and wear and tear which would be faded keyboard keys, blemished on screen and case etc.... In the end the yellow group form is the legal form.

The insurance policy was set to start on the first day of the external roll-out (ended up being November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014). The family would need to fill out the Voluntary Group Form in order to identify the unit by serial number as well as choose the one or two year plan. This form would be kept on file with the insurance company as well as the Northwood School to identify policy options. The family would then turn in a check for the amount of the insurance payable to the Northwood School. (1 year-\$29.00, 2 years-\$57.00) The school would then take all of the checks and deposit them in an account,

wait for the checks to clear and then pay the insurance company for the total amount. (Currently about \$2,500.00)As of the date of this report, 72 families have signed up for the insurance coverage out of the 92 that have signed up to take them out of the building. This leaves 15 families that have opted-out of the insurance plan. (5 have requested the ability to purchase the insurance at a later date from issue (subject to device inspection)). This is an approved procedure according to the insurance company. The first year policy started on November 10<sup>th</sup> 2014 and runs to November 9<sup>th</sup> 2015. On or about June 30<sup>th</sup> 2015, a decision will be made how to modify the start point for future year's insurance to coincide with the start of the school year. This will most likely be done by pro-rating the policy.

## **Section IV: Start of the Program (Summer 2014)**

After the end of the 2013-2014 school year a meeting was held by the school board and the Technology Director to choose RFPs that were turned in for new equipment requested by the Technology Department. One of the RFPs was the Student Netbooks. A vender was chosen and the equipment was ordered. Unfortunately the vender indicated that they could not fill the order. As time went by it became apparent that the netbooks were not going to arrive with enough time in the summer to have them ready for the beginning of the school year. As it turned out there were still some policy issues that still needed to be worked out before the students could sign them out of the building. The units arrived 3 days before the beginning of school. Once the units arrived the Technology Director started prepping the units for the roll-out. Within a few days of completion of the netbooks, it was decided to roll the units out in an internal capacity.

## **Section V: Implementation (Internal Roll-Out)**

After a few weeks of school it was decided that an internal roll-out would be beneficial for students. Students could use the units in school during the day and place them in a cart to charge at night. Carts and charging equipment was assembled in house to facilitate the internal usage and a new internal responsibility form was created and given to the students to read and sign. The carts were rolled into the classrooms early one morning and 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade staff handed out the units and documents the forms with machine numbers assigned to each student. In fact it must be noted that the staff did a great job coming up with a system to issue them out and collect them at the end of each day. Initially it was a bit painful and unorganized but after a few days the system was tweaked to have a relatively small effect to the total school day. A couple of these carts are still in the upper classrooms to be used for storage and to hold the 20 units that belong to students that have elected to not be involved with the take home part of the program.

## **Section VI: Implementation (External Roll-Out)**

Prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> planned roll-out issue date of November 10<sup>th</sup>, a parent info night was scheduled and hosted by the School Principal, the Assistant Superintendent, and the Technology Director. This meeting was attended by a majority of families in the 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade. The program was explained and questions were answered. This info night was a requirement before a student could take a netbook home. After this first night a website was created to post info and answer questions that have been raised since the program began. On November 10<sup>th</sup> during the day (in-service day, no classes) parents who attended the info night were invited to bring requested paperwork and at least the user fee check in order to receive the charging adapter and unit to take home. We have had 2 other info nights and issue nights in order to accommodate family schedules. As of the date of this report, 92 students now take the units home of which 72 have signed up for the insurance. (Which leaves 15 that have opted-out of the insurance option with 5 outstanding.) After the 3<sup>rd</sup> issue date, a blotter was created to track paperwork and repair issues currently being addressed. At the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of the units being used in the school, the technology office handles about 2 netbook troubleshooting issues per day. Down from about 8 at the beginning of the program.

It should also be noted that a program has been put into place that addresses concerns for families that might have some financial difficulties with the user fees. A decision was made to offer a type of scholarship program to be determined by the administration that could pay the user fee for certain families. This option does not include any payments for insurances.

Students have been using the netbooks in almost all of their classes from one point or another and seem to be using the units effectively in classes. Teachers have become very creative in finding ways to integrate the technology into many of their classes. With the first phase complete (Initial issue and program development) the next phase will begin after a staff and student survey of the program and research into curriculum integration.

## **Section VII: 3<sup>rd</sup> Party repair and insurance claim procedures**

### **Procedure for dealing with damaged Netbooks:**

1. Initial assessment by Technology Director or staff
2. If it has been determined that the failure is possibly not due to external damage, contact the netbook manufacture and schedule an RMA (Return Merchandise Authorization) if the unit is still under warranty.
3. If the unit looks like it has been damaged or is out of warranty, contact the insurance company and fill out the claim form. After dialogue with the insurance company, we will be given authorization to have the unit repaired at an approved vender location. An estimate will be provided by the vender and funds will be provided to have the unit repaired.
4. If the unit has been physically damaged and it is determined that the insurance company is not responsible (losing the unit somewhere, leaving it in an unlocked car etc...) then it will be determined by the administration with recommendations from the technology Director if the unit is to be fixed or not. In this case the family of the student assigned the netbook will either pay for the cost to fix the unit or if a total loss, will pay the current replacement cost.

As of the date of this report, we have had 1 unit sent in as an RMA for repair. That unit has just returned from the manufacture for warranty repair and now needs to be evaluated by administration. Another unit is still being evaluated and a third just came into the technology office with damage to the screen that will need to be handled by the insurance company.