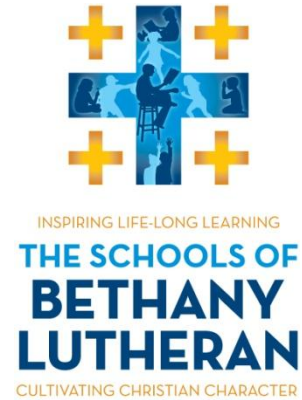


1:1 iPad Initiative

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What I Did:

First Steps-

In reality, this project took root before my Van Lunen experience began, when the Bethany Board of Schools committed to moving forward with a 1:1 technology initiative. Our school previously piloted a 1:1 laptop program in our 4th grade classroom, and surveys of the teachers, Board of Schools members, parents and students pointed to the desire/need to expand the program schoolwide. The Board and faculty then made the decision to move toward a 1:1 iPad program.

We knew it was important to prepare our teaching staff before equipping our students, so we chose to use our Title IIA-Professional Development funds to accomplish the task. (Many schools use their Title IIA funds for courses and workshops, but federal guidance regarding the use of these funds does allow for the purchase of *equipment* for training purposes. You can find more information about this here: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/guidance.pdf>). It took a bit of negotiation to convince our local public school district representative that this was a legitimate use of Title IIA, so in the end we purchased the iPads as part of a teacher professional development “package” from EdTechTeam, a local professional development company: www.edtechteam.com.

After initial training, the teachers signed an acceptable use policy agreement for the devices, then took the iPads and \$25 iTunes cards home for the summer, with instructions to start exploring ways they might use the iPad both for themselves as professional educators and with their students.

Setting the Vision-

When the teaching staff returned in August 2012, we developed a shared vision for our 1:1 program. My Van Lunen consultant, Dan Vos, was a great resource for this process. Once our vision statement was written, we took it to the Bethany Board of Schools for approval. You can read our vision statement here: <http://www.bethanylutheran.org/702261.ihtml>.

To BYOD or not to BYOD, that is the question-

Our next step was decide what our iPad program would look like. There are as many models for 1:1 initiatives as there are individual schools. The keys to success are knowing your school well and choosing the model that fits your particular constituents: students, parents, and staff. There seems to be a groundswell of support right now for bring-your-own-device or in this case, bring-your-own-iPad models, but ultimately Bethany’s Board of Schools and administration decided to have our school purchase the iPads for the following reasons:

1. Better control of content and device
2. All devices will be the same (no “mine is better than yours” syndrome)
3. Less distractions with extra apps
4. Educational pricing for apps, etc.
5. Easier for teachers and tech coordinator to administrate
6. No need to cater to the least powerful device in the room
7. Easier to hand out a “loaner” in case of issues
8. Less expense for Bethany families up front (especially those with multiple children in the school)

Whetting Appetites-

As a way to build interest and generate enthusiasm, we wanted to get iPads in the hands of our students as soon as possible, even before we would have one device for every student, so in October 2012 we purchased two iPads for each classroom and suggested that if teachers needed more than two for a particular project, they work out sharing them amongst themselves. Soon we saw students with iPads in the classrooms at centers and out and about on campus as they used them for practice, research, making movie, taking notes and more.

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

As our iPad initiative began to take shape, it was important to inform parents and communicate our vision. We did this in many different ways:

- We had an iPad “booth”, staffed by students, at Open House events. Students demonstrated apps for parents, as well as the wonderful iPad cases we discovered: <http://app.medgestore.com/shop/ipad2/supershell>
- We held a parent information night, where teachers hosted tables and demonstrated how they envisioned iPad use in their classrooms. We also shared our vision for the 1:1 iPad program that evening, as well as the news about the added technology fee. Parents were encouraged to ask questions and engage teachers in conversation about the iPad Initiative.
- We designed a “parent question form” on the Bethany website, where parents could submit questions about the iPad initiative.
- We published a series of newsletter articles in the school newsletter giving much of the same information from the parent meeting night, but also addressing parent questions as they arose in conversation or from the parent question form on the Bethany website.
- We held a QR code scavenger hunt as part of our spring curriculum fair. Families could check out a student iPad to complete the hunt or use their own wireless devices. This was a great way to show the power and flexibility of mobile technology.

Operating Expense vs. Capital Expense

A technology initiative such as Bethany’s is not a one-time expense. As one author put it, “Meeting the evolving technology needs of the 21st Century classroom requires schools to abandon the short-term budgeting mindset and adopt a process that recognizes the changing landscape of technology, demonstrates a strategic long-term commitment to maintaining high standards, and provides the

flexibility to adapt quickly to changing technology.” In the case of Bethany’s initiative, this means that once the iPads are purchased and in place (capital expense), we will need to sustain the program over time (operating expense) as the iPads become obsolete and new technology is developed. For that reason, the Board of Schools adopted an annual \$250 technology fee per student, to be charged as part of registration. We also gave families a great deal of flexibility in how they paid the fees: in full, semi-annually or monthly. These technology funds will be banked for future purchases, with the goal of refreshing the technology every three years.

Infrastructure Matters-

Bethany Lutheran School already had a wireless network in place, but coverage was spotty and the bandwidth inadequate for the number of devices we eventually wanted to connect. We contracted with a small networking firm to help us plan for our infrastructure upgrades including new, “beefier”, cloud-controlled access points and increased bandwidth from our Verizon-FiOS connection. We also re-configured our router so that it was prepared to hand out the appropriate number of IP addresses when every student had a connected device.

Funding

We chose not to do large fundraising efforts with our school families since we were instituting a technology fee. We will use a variety of other fund sources for the initial equipment purchase, including:

- Grants
- Fundraising Dinner with Bethany church members
- Annual Fund Drive
- Business Sponsorships
- Gifts
- Scrip/Giftcard program funds

Once the initial equipment is purchased, we will “bank” the annual technology fees for future equipment purchases. Our plan is to refresh the technology every three years.

Ongoing Professional Development

The Bethany teaching staff continued to participate in iPad training throughout this past school year, including:

- Three staff members attended the annual ISTE (International Society of Technology Education) conference in San Diego in July.
- Two staff members participated in year-long cooperative technology training with other Lutheran educators in Southern California.
- Teachers chose the technology strand of workshops for our district’s annual Lutheran Educators Conference in November 2012, with an eye toward iPad use in the classroom.

- All teachers attended the Computer Using Educator's Conference in March 2013 where iPad workshops were both abundant and varied.
- All staff members participated in a "Twitter as a Professional Learning Community" workshop in April 2013.
- Ongoing staff collaboration on iPad apps and use as part of regular faculty meetings.

What I Learned:

Equipping teachers first and spending time in professional development were crucial steps to the goal of preparing our staff for a 1:1 initiative. "Differentiated instruction" was important for our staff as we had varying levels of comfort and ability with iPads and needed to spend time and energy preparing teachers before they were able to envision the use of iPads in their classrooms.

It is not possible to over-communicate with parents when launching a new program. Despite our best efforts, we still had a few parents who were surprised by the addition of a technology fee and who wanted the school to change to a BYOD program. This required extra patience and time for individual discussions. (As of this writing, we know of only one family who is leaving the school because of the addition of the iPad program, and not because they disagree with students using iPads: they disagree with the fee.)

After the cost, parents are interested in what students will actually be doing with the technology, so having an answer to that question is important. Teachers at every grade level developed lists of apps they plan to use and ways they plan to have students use the iPads in their classrooms. Even with all the forethought, however, we know there will be much to learn the first year of deployment. We like the idea of "failing forward." We know we will make mistakes and learn from them.

I have also learned that infrastructure matters. If teachers ask students to do an activity with the iPads and it doesn't work immediately, they will be less likely to try the activity again in the future. It's important that we have adequate connectivity/bandwidth, and that the iPads are configured and working correctly.

Finally, I have learned that we don't know yet what we don't know. In other words, until we actually have a device in everyone's hands, we won't know what issues need addressing. Again, our plan is to "fail forward" and learn from our mistakes. It's a little bit like standing on the edge of the diving board: at some point we have to stop talking about it, make the leap and dive in.

What Difference is it Making?

Teachers are equipped with an iPad and each classroom has two devices for student use. Teachers are using Dropbox and Google Docs to access faculty documents and calendars. Students and teachers are already using iPads for research, presentations and practice, as well as piloting apps for September's implementation.

By September 2013, every K-8 student will have access to an iPad for use during the school day. The iPads will be configured with teacher-requested apps at each grade level. We will hold another parent meeting in the Fall for our middle school parents, then those students will begin taking the iPad back and forth between home and school. Our returning students are very excited about the iPad initiative and the prospect of not having to share devices. The iPad Initiative has also been a great selling point for new families touring our school. Enrollment projections for 2013-2014 show a gain in student population for the first time in many years. While correlation does not imply causation, the iPad initiative has certainly created a positive energy on the campus, which can only help with retention and recruitment.

The Van Lunen Effect

The Van Lunen Fellows program was extraordinarily helpful with many aspects of this initiative. Nearly every speaker or reading had something to teach me about seeing this project through. I am incredibly grateful to my consultant, Dan Vos, and the rest of the Van Lunen team for this wonderful experience.