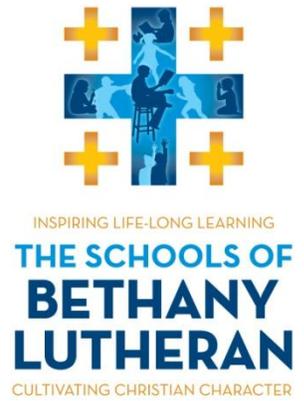


1:1 iPad Initiative

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What I Did:

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.

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.

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.

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.