K-12
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Crescent Public Schools' One-to-One Laptops   toolkits

**Crescent Schools took a broad-based, community approach
to the development of its one-to-one learning environment.**

The Crescent Public School District in central Oklahoma that serves about 600 students in a population with 60% eligible for free or reduced lunch hosts a one-to-one laptop program for its middle and high school students. A particularly innovative aspect of this one-to-one initiative is the adoption of a Web-based instructional model that reduces or replaces traditional textbooks with Web-based instruction in Crescent secondary classrooms. The program began by providing laptops to high school students in 2008 and added middle school students in 2010.with funds from an Ed Tech ARRA, Title II, Part D Grant.

One-to-One Laptops Vision

Crescent Schools took a broad-based, community approach to the development of its one-to-one learning environment. The Oklahoma Nine Essential Elements for academic performance guide their program. These elements include curriculum; classroom evaluation and assessment; instruction; school culture; student, family, and community support; professional growth, development, and evaluation; leadership; organizational structure and resources; and comprehensive and effective planning.

Their transition to a one-to-one, Web-based learning environment consists of five critical steps:

1. The School Community, including school leaders, teachers, parents, and students agree on basic assumptions about teaching and learning. These beliefs form the foundation of the design of the one-to-one learning environment.

2. The Community embeds its beliefs about teaching and learning in every aspect of school life, including physical space, employee evaluation, curriculum, and classroom organization.

3. All Community members play an active role in the design of the learning environment, all playing specific roles with real responsibilities.

4. The Community holds regular meetings to give and review feedback and ideas.

5. "The combination of shared beliefs, collaboration, and constructive feedback make it possible for the School Community to develop a specific Design for practices that define interactions between the Community members in their pursuit of learning" (How the 1-To-1 Laptop Learning Environment Will Change Teaching and Learning in the Crescent Public School Community)

6. Because the one-to-one laptop program is based on a community view of schooling, parents are an active part of the process. They are encouraged to use their children's laptops for their own use as well as to check on their students' progress.

Technology and Web-Based Instruction

The year before the first Crescent High School students received their laptops, the school's teachers began their educational journey toward effective implementation. From the beginning of the program, the emphasis in Crescent's one-to-one program has been professional development. This focus was due, in large part, to the adoption of a Web-based curriculum where teachers aim to use Internet resources as a significant, if not, total resource for student activities. Teachers spend two hours each Wednesday on professional development activities that will help them move from a text-based, memorization-focused classroom to a Web-based environment that emphasizes the application of new learning and student self-assessment.

Using the Moodle Learning Management System, teachers plan hybrid classes that include both online and face-to-face learning experiences. Teachers learn to ask themselves, "Will information technology help my students reach my goals?" and if the answer is, "Yes," they are developing the skills to make the best use of appropriate educational technologies.

Policy Considerations

Planning for Crescent's one-to-one program began in 2003. Once the idea of a one-to-one computer and Web-based instruction initiative was accepted, a decision had to be made about which grade levels would be targeted first. The leadership in Crescent decided to begin with high school students. The goal was that younger students would see high school students carrying around the computers and hear about, or even see their siblings, creating projects with the laptops. This experience will help to prepare them for the digital environment they will enter when they are older.

Technology in the 21st century means not only access to computers and relevant software. A Web-based instructional model also requires Internet access. Students, however, may not be able to access Web materials at home. To ensure equity, students are provided with the necessary resources to complete class activities when they are offline by, for example, downloading materials to work on outside of school hours. In addition, the school's wireless network extends throughout the school parking lot after school, so students can access the Internet in emergency situations.

Crescent High School asks students and their parents to sign an Acceptable Use Policy which identifies appropriate and inappropriate online behaviors. This document also describes rules and regulations about the care and use of school laptops.

Social Networks

In general, Crescent High School advises teachers not to use social networks. While recognizing that the future may bring about changes in the use of sites, such as Facebook, for educational purposes, the current point of view is that these sites should not be used as part of instruction. Teachers are specifically advised not to "friend" students or to post questionable information on their own Facebook pages.

Other sites with possible benefits and challenges are YouTube and Twitter. Both these resources are viewed as having potential educational uses. Yet, teachers are warned that they must be cautious and alert in using them. The district recognizes that participating in social networks will likely become more ubiquitous in the future, but recommends that teachers use those relevant features in the Moodle environment to ensure that interactions meet educational goals.

Filters

At Crescent High School, the issue of filtering of the Internet is viewed as an aspect of classroom management and classroom instruction. Relying on filters alone to keep students from engaging in this kind of behavior does not recognize the sophisticated technological skills of many high school students who consider a school filter a challenge to their skills. For example, if technology literate students are engaged in interesting classroom activities, they are not likely to go searching for alternate ways to pass their time. Additionally, if teachers are aware of what their students are doing, students are less likely to be using their laptops in inappropriate ways or to access inappropriate sites.

Smartphones

Although ethical and safe smartphone use outside of the school is encouraged, using smartphones as educational tools is considered unnecessary in a one-to-one computing environment and is therefore not allowed.

Conclusion

Teachers, parents, and students are enthusiastic about Crescent's one-to-one laptop initiative. The Oklahoma School board visited the school in February, 2010 to learn more about how the laptops were being used in the classroom, as well as how Web-based instruction more effectively meets students' needs.

Read more about Crescent Public Schools' one-to-one laptop program.

Crescent High School Report Card

Laptop Frequently Asked Questions

Crescent Public Schools: A Beacon for Oklahoma Education