



1:1 Laptop Learning Program

Frequently Asked Questions for Middle Schools

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Charlie Reisinger - IT Director

Why is the district issuing laptops to students?

This is not a technology program; it is about learning. Our vision is that all students will use technology to energize personal intellectual development and construct knowledge for college, careers, and beyond. Providing a school laptop democratizes computing for all students, regardless of socio-economic status, and helps them engage in the real work of math, science, writing, design and engineering.

The school board unanimously voted in favor of the Penn Manor High School laptop learning program on April 1, 2013, and the board voted to extend the program to middle school students in March 2015.

A district committee developed [guiding principles](#) to govern the laptop learning program. The core principles of the laptop learning program are:

- Equity of Access
- Engagement and Ownership
- Science, Technology, Engineering, Math
- Writing and Language Arts
- Curiosity and Agency
- Anytime, Anyplace Learning

What other local districts have 1:1 learning programs?

Conestoga Valley, Eastern Lancaster County, Pequea Valley and Cedar Crest High School have implemented 1:1 laptop programs. Neighboring districts such as Hempfield have also announced 1:1 plans. Across the country, thousands of schools have initiated 1:1 learning programs at various grade levels.

What grades are participating and who is eligible?

Students in grade 7 through 12 will receive a district issued laptop. Part-time High School Career and Technology students will also participate. Full day CTC students are offsite and not eligible.

When will laptops be issued?

Laptops will be distributed to middle school students in August 2015.

May students opt-out of the program?

Just as students are required to use classroom textbooks and print material, lab equipment, and other instructional resources, all students will need the laptop to be a successful and prepared participant in our school. Students may not opt-out of the program.



May students leave the computer at school at night?

The laptop program is a concerted effort to extend learning past the walled classroom boundaries. However, we do understand that for practical reasons, a student may need to leave the laptop in school. Students may coordinate overnight storage with their school principal. Note that students may need to make charging arrangements for laptops left in the school overnight.

May students use the laptops on school buses or in the cafeteria?

No. To prevent damage to the technology, laptops should be stored in the case while on the bus and while eating in the cafeteria.

Who owns the laptop?

The laptop is the property of Penn Manor School District and on loan to students, just like textbooks and other learning materials. Students will be expected to care for the laptop as they would other district-issued school supplies and materials.

If I withdraw my child, what must I do?

District laptops remain the property of the district. If your child is officially withdrawn from school or is absent (Unexcused) for 10 days in a row, you must return the laptop, charger and laptop bag to Penn Manor School District. If the laptop and accessories are not returned, district administration will contact appropriate law enforcement authorities to recover the device.

Are students and families responsible for the laptop?

Yes. We trust that our students and parents will act responsibly and maturely with such important personal learning devices. Students will be responsible for the care, security and safety of the laptops. Laptops are to be carried in the district issued case to and from all classes.

Schools that have implemented successful 1:1 programs typically report a deep sense of student technology ownership and stewardship. The same level of respect and ownership is difficult to develop with laptops that intermittently visit classrooms via shared laptop carts.

What if the laptop is damaged?

We ask our students to treat the laptop with care and respect. Unlike similar programs in other schools, parents and students are not required to pay a yearly fee for the use of the laptop. However, students and parents will be held accountable and billed for damage or loss of the laptop both on and off school grounds.

All physical damage to the laptop must be immediately reported to the Technology Department no later than the next school day. The Technology Department will arrange for repair and a loaner laptop, as needed. The parent/student is responsible for all accidental damages to district issued laptops and subject to a cost of repair or replacement of up to \$100, which is the amount of our deductible for first-time damage. For the second incident of damage, costs/charges will be up to but not exceed \$200. The third incident of damage will incur charges of up to \$300.

The deductible does not apply to purposeful damage. Parents/students will be financially accountable for **all** repair/replacement costs due to willful and intentional damage to district laptops and equipment. Note that these charges could be up to \$400.

What if the laptop is stolen?

Immediately contact the school principal. In cases of legitimate theft, students and parents must report the theft to the police and provide a police report. Loss and theft that occurs off-campus will be the responsibility of the student and parent.

Will the laptop be used every day?

Students should be prepared for class with a charged and ready laptop, every day. We ask students to be prepared with traditional supplies such as pencils and paper; a laptop is no different.

Will the laptop go home with students over the summer?

No. District laptops will be collected at the end of the school year for service, upgrades and maintenance. The same laptop will be reissued to your child at the start of the next school year.

May I purchase the laptop when my child graduates?

Not currently. The district is exploring the possibility of a student purchase program for PM graduates.

Will the district offer parent sessions?

We will host a Parent Forum for all middle school parents at Marticville Middle School on Wednesday, May 13th at 6:00 P.M. Parents will have the opportunity to ask questions, view the laptop and review policies. We encourage attendance from parents and students from both middle schools.

Additional evening parent information and training sessions may be offered during the 2015-16 school year. Watch your school's website for dates and topics.

Who can I contact if I have additional questions about the 1:1 laptop program?

Questions may be directed to Charlie Reisinger, Technology Director, at 717.872.9500 x2226, charlie@pennmanor.net. Questions may also be directed to your child's principal.

Laptop Questions -----

What device will students receive?

A Lenovo 11e laptop. Specifications include an 11.6" screen, Celeron processor, 4GB RAM and 120GB SSD. The 11e is a ruggedized device designed for education. Students will receive a laptop, charger and carrying case. USB ports are included for students to attach mice, cameras, and flash disks. DVD drives are not included.

What operating system will the laptop use?

Student laptops will use free the Ubuntu Linux operating system. Linux is secure and robust, is in use by millions across the globe, and powers the vast majority of Internet servers and web sites.

Why not use Chromebooks, tablets or other laptops?

Nationally, schools have implemented laptops, Chromebooks and tablets as part of 1:1 learning initiatives. Multiple devices were reviewed by the district 1:1 steering committee. Acquisition costs, as well as ongoing



replacement costs, were a key concern. To plan for a sustainable and affordable program, the student device cost was identified at less than \$400, which eliminated all Apple laptops and a number of larger PC/Windows laptops. The committee also concluded that the student device must include a keyboard to support efficient and productive student writing.

Chromebooks are suitable for general web-surfing purposes and are essentially a web browser with a keyboard. They do not provide local file storage, the option to run local programs or the ability to use alternative web browsers, such as Firefox. An Ubuntu Linux laptop provides the same capabilities as a Chromebook, plus the benefits of local software programs and file storage.

Tablets were reviewed but ultimately eliminated from consideration due to device cost, workflow complexity, programming limitations, software limitations, and the lack of an integrated keyboard.

Will the district provide home Internet access?

No. Students may connect district-issued laptops to home networks or public WiFi, provided they seek parental approval. For students who do not have Internet access, Comcast's Internet Essentials program offers broadband Internet for less than \$10 a month: <http://www.internetessentials.com> or via Comcast at 1-855-846-8376.

Note: The district does not provide technical support for Internet connectivity off school grounds.

Does the district block access to inappropriate websites?

Yes. Student laptops will be configured to use the district web-filter both in the district and when connected to home or public WiFi. Penn Manor has installed blocking software designed to protect students from obscene material, child pornography and other visual depictions deemed harmful to minors as defined by the federal Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

When off district grounds, the laptops will be blocked from offensive material just like other computers on the Penn Manor School District network. Further, removal or tampering with the filtering settings will be a violation of district policy.

Keep in mind that no blocking technology is 100% effective. *The best filter is a parent or guardian.* We encourage you to talk with your child and be aware of his or her online activities and behaviors.

May a student use their iPod, digital camera or tablet with the laptop? May students load music and photos on the computer?

Students may connect their iPod, camera, tablet or other accessories to their school laptop. Students may load music, pictures and other files they have obtained legally. Note that students are expected to adhere to all district policies regarding copyright and responsible use. Students cannot back-up their personal music, photos, video or files to district servers unless required to do so as part of an academic project. Further, district personnel will provide no tech support for personal student files on district issued laptops.

May I use my own laptop case or bag?

No. Students are required to use the district issued case at all times. *The laptop and case should not be carried inside a backpack.* Doing so may add pressure and stress to the screen.

Are students expected to bring the laptop every day?

Yes. Students are responsible for bringing their charged laptop and power adapter to school every day. Students who do not arrive prepared with a charged laptop are not properly prepared for class.

May students decorate or customize the laptop or case?

No. Laptops or carrying cases that have pencil/pen/magic marker writing on them, stickers, or any other marks will be viewed as vandalized. There will be an associated cost to restore the laptop to the original condition if marked up intentionally.

What do I do if my laptop is not working properly?

Students should report to the Technology Department or high school student help desk as soon as possible. If your laptop needs to be repaired, we will loan you a temporary computer to use until it's returned. Under no circumstances should you or anyone else take the computer to a third party for repair or assistance. District personnel are the only individuals who should attempt repair on the laptops.

Will Penn Manor provide support and maintenance for the laptops?

Yes. The Penn Manor Technology Department will provide tech support and maintenance on school-issued student laptops.

What programs will be installed?

The laptops will include a number of free, locally installed, open source applications and utilities. Here is a sample of the educational programs:

Firefox and **Chrome** – Web browsers

LibreOffice – Open source replacement for Microsoft Office

GeoGebra – Geometry and Algebra software for learning and teaching

GIMP – A Powerful 2D drawing program replacement for Adobe Photoshop

Blender – Robust 3D drawing and animation

MuseScore – Music notation program

Kazaam Screencaster – Desktop audio/video recorder for tutorials, projects, and demonstrations

OpenShot – Video creation and editing software

Audacity – Audio recorder for podcasting

Stellarium – A 3D planetarium program for Astronomy and space sciences

Scratch – Introductory programming and coding software

May students install software on the laptops?

We encourage our students to explore and install free and open source software so long as they adhere to all copyright, legal and licensing requirements. Students will have access to the Ubuntu Software Center, an online marketplace with thousands of useful free and open source programs. Students may install Software Center applications for learning purposes. Note that some Software Center programs require a fee. The district is not responsible for programs purchased by students or parents via the Software Center.

News, Press, and Policy Resources -----

More 1:1 information is available on the PM Techblog: <http://www.pennmanor.net/techblog/?cat=69>

Students may request help via the 1:1 Help Desk: <http://studentsupport.pennmanor.net/>

PMHS student tech apprentices have published helpful tips for students on their help desk blog:
<http://blogs.pennmanor.net/1to1/>

Penn Points student article on the high school laptop program launch: <http://www.pennpoints.net/?p=56423>

Lancaster Newspaper article:
<http://lancasteronline.com/eedition/pages/news/edition/CEAM/20130403/S/6/2461431>

Policy documents for the laptop learning program are available here:
http://www.pennmanor.net/techblog/?page_id=1561