

1:1 Laptop Program – Parent Frequently Asked Questions

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Why is the district issuing laptops to students?

First and foremost, this program is an instructional initiative. Sparked by strategic discussions with the School Board of Directors, the recommendation to launch a high school 1:1 student laptop program was reached after consideration by a district steering committee comprised of teachers, administrators and a school board liaison. Our vision is that all students will use technology to energize personal intellectual development and construct knowledge for college, careers, and beyond. Providing a personal device to the entire student body democratizes computing for all students regardless of socio-economic status. Students will engage in the real work of math, science, writing, design and engineering.

Continuing the success of rich instructional technology initiatives, the 1:1 laptop program will extend the reach of technology empowerment to all Penn Manor High School students. [Specific project guiding principles](#), distilled from the initial steering committee work, were developed to guide our implementation and project planning efforts.

In addition to our strategic learning objectives, the equipment replacement timing is right. The original Penn Manor High School Classrooms for the Future (CFF) grant laptops are reaching the end of their serviceable life, leaving the district faced with an upgrade option and expense. CFF grant funds were provided by the PA Department of Education and funded 400 Macbook laptops and associated equipment at a cost of \$471,000. Unfortunately, the CFF grant is no longer available; the district must cover the replacement costs. The original white Macbook is no longer manufactured by Apple, which means the district must consider other laptop options.

What other local districts are pursuing 1:1 technology programs?

Two Lancaster districts, Pequea Valley and Eastern Lancaster, have already implemented 1:1 laptop programs at the secondary level. Conestoga Valley is also planning a 1:1 initiative for the 2013-2014 school year. Across the country, thousands of schools have initiated 1:1 programs with a variety of technology devices.

What grades are participating and who is eligible?

Penn Manor High School students in grade 9 through 12 will receive a district issued laptop. Part-time Career and Technology students will also participate. Full day CTC students are offsite and not eligible.

When will laptops be issued?

The school board unanimously voted in favor of the program on April 1, 2013. The program will be implemented in two phases. The program will initiate with a Phase One pilot comprised of Open Campus and other students during the fall of 2013. Phase Two will be a full building implementation for all students in grades 9 through 12. Phase two will begin in January 2014; at that time, all students will receive the laptops and the learning program will begin in earnest.

Faculty professional development and training will begin in the fall of 2013 and continue into the future. Teachers will be learning alongside the Phase One pilot students; they will be supported by the Penn Manor IT Team and High School Technology Coach.

Will Open Campus students be required to be part of the Fall 2013 pilot?

No. While we believe that students taking one or more Open Campus online courses may benefit from a jump-start into the laptop program, students may decide to opt-out of the Fall 2013 pilot. Note that all Penn Manor High School students will receive a laptop during the January 2014 full program implementation.

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 1:1 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 leave the laptop in their locker at the end of the school day. Note that student will need to make charging arrangements; there are no power outlets in lockers.

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 computer?

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 withdrawal my child, what must I do?

If you withdraw from school officially or because you were 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, Penn Manor School District will contact the appropriate law enforcement authorities to recover the district device.

Are students and families responsible for the laptop?

Yes. Our students are competent and worthy of our trust; we trust that they 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 and secured in lockers when not in use.

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. Parents and students are not required to pay a fee for the use of the laptops. However, students and parents will be held fiscally accountable for damage or loss of the laptop both on and off school grounds.

All physical damage to the laptop must be reported immediately to the Technology Department at 717.872.9500 x1776 no later than the next school day. The Technology Department will arrange for repair and a loaner 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.

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

What if the laptop is stolen?

Immediately contact the high school administration office at 717.872.9520. In cases of legitimate theft, students and parents must report the theft to the police and provide a police report of incident. Loss and theft that occurs off-campus will be the responsibility of the student and parent.

Will the laptop be used every day?

The expectation is that our students will be prepared for class with a charged and ready laptop every day. We ask that students come 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 issued student laptops will be collected at the end of the 2013-2014 school year for summer upgrades, service and maintenance. The laptop will be reissued to your child in the fall of 2014. We are exploring option for students to keep their laptops during future summer breaks.

May I purchase the laptop when my child graduates?

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

Will the district offer a parent training session?

At the Fall Parents' Night on September 12, 2013 more information will be presented about the 1:1 program. In addition, we will have a Parent Technology Boot Camp on Wednesday, October 30, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. Parents will have the opportunity to view the laptop students will use, receive the policies that will govern this program and have questions answered. We encourage you to mark these events on your calendar.

Additional evening parent information and training sessions will be offered during 2014. Watch the Penn Manor High School website for dates and topics.

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

Technology questions may be directed to Charlie Reisinger, Technology Director, at 717.872.9500 x2226 or charlie@pennmanor.net. Classroom and educational questions may be directed to Dr. Philip Gale, Penn Manor High School, at 717.872.9520 or philip.gale@pennmanor.net.

Technology and Laptop Questions -----

What device will students receive?

The fall 2013 Open Campus pilot group will receive a customized Acer TravelMate B113 with an 11.6” screen, 4GB of RAM and a 1.6GHz Celeron processor. Students will receive a laptop, power charger and carrying case.

Final laptop selection will occur after the fall pilot. Ideal specifications will include an 11.6” screen, keyboard, 6+ hour battery, and lightweight/durable design. As of August 2013, several laptops under \$350 are still under review as possible candidates for the full 2014 program.

What operating system will the laptop use?

A free, education-focused variant of Ubuntu Linux, called [Ubermix](#), developed by Saugus Union School District in California. Ubermix is in use by over 50 districts across the country. Linux is in use by millions across the globe and powers the vast majority of Internet servers and web sites.

Why not issue Chromebooks, iPads, Android tablets or Macbooks?

Device selection was discussed during the district 1:1 steering committee meetings. Technology acquisition costs as well as ongoing replacement costs are a key concern. To keep costs down, the target price for a student device was identified as approximately \$350. Macbooks and many Windows laptops greatly exceed the price and eliminated Apple laptops and a number of larger PC laptops. The steering committee also agreed that the selected device must include a keyboard to support efficient and productive student writing.

Nationally, a significant number of schools are implementing PC laptops, Chromebooks and tablets as part of 1:1 learning initiatives. 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 Ubermix laptop provides the same capabilities as a Chromebook, plus the benefits of additional local programs and file storage. Further, iPads and Android tablets were reviewed but ultimately eliminated from consideration due to cost, file workflow complexity, programming limitations and the lack of an integrated keyboard.

Will the district provide home Internet access?

No. The 1:1 program provides Internet access in Penn Manor School buildings only. 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 provides broadband Internet for less than \$10 a month. Details are available at <http://www.internetessentials.com> or via Comcast at 1-855-846-8376.

The district does not provide technical support for Internet access or WiFi connectivity off school grounds.

Will the district prevent access to inappropriate websites? Will the laptops be filtered off school grounds?

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.

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%. The best filter continues to be a parent or guardian. We encourage you to talk with your child and be aware of his or her online activities and behaviors.

Will the laptops have USB?

Yes. USB ports will be included. Students may attach mice, cameras and flash disks.

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 issued computer. 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 issues laptop case at all times.

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 I decorate or customize the laptop or case?

No, you may not decorate either the case or laptop. 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 student help desk as soon as possible. If your laptop needs to be repaired, we will loan you a 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. A student technology help desk team will provide additional peer support, technical troubleshooting and laptop assistance.

What programs will be installed?

While web-based resources continue to dominate district classroom use, 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 alternative to Microsoft Office

GIMP – A Powerful 2D drawing program alternative to Adobe Photoshop
Blender – Robust 3D drawing and animation
MuseScore – Music notation program
Kazaam Screencaster – Desktop audio/video recorder for tutorials and projects
OpenShot – Video creation software
Audacity – Audio recorder for podcasting
Scratch – Introductory programming and coding software

May students install software on the laptops?

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 and Press

PM Techblog 1:1 announcement: <http://www.pennmanor.net/techblog/?p=1590>

Penn Points student article: <http://www.pennpoints.net/?p=56423>

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