

## Our Superintendent, Dr. Ryle Kiser, Discusses Our 1:1 Technology Initiative.....

Recently Grass Lake Community Schools received a grant that allows our school district to provide a personal computing device to each of our students who are in Kindergarten through the 12th grade. This implementation began near the end of the first semester of the 2016-2017 school year. Along with this hardware, our entire teaching staff was provided with personal computing devices with which to provide instruction with the most up-to-date methodologies.

With the implementation of this program, research indicates the positive impact will reveal itself through:

- Improved student academic achievement
- Students using the internet and computer media to communicate and work together on assignments and projects
- Improving the use of critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, and solve problems.
- Our students' better understanding of the legal and ethical behavior related to technology.
- Targeted instruction to better meet the learning style of the students

To optimize the use of this exciting opportunity, every Grass Lake instructor received direct instruction toward the use of our new computers, with extensive training occurring before the start of the 2016-2017 school year. This training was done off site and was offered by a company that has extensive experience in bringing school teachers "up to speed" to maximize the advantages of these tools. Along with off-site training, trainers have been in the school buildings after implementation had begun to work one-on-one with our teachers to answer any questions that may arise. All training has been paid for with funding received through the grant. Further, an onsite professional learning consultant was hired by the school district to be available to support our teachers as they expand their use of these new tools.

Each student's assigned device belongs to them for the entire school year. To provide hardware support for the devices, the school district has hired an IT Technician who manages the inventory and who will work to ensure that our devices remain optimally operational. Everything students and faculty need to teach, learn, grade, communicate, and share fits in the palms of their hands with these new devices.

Through extensive research of the possibilities, the personal computing devices that have been chosen for our students are a mix of vendors that provide devices that are age-appropriate, cost effective and that support our mission of improved student academic achievement that is made possible through individualized planning and collaborative networking.

- Kindergarteners and 1st Graders receive Apple iPads. These devices will remain on the school premises.
- 2nd through 8th graders receive 11" Dell Durable Chromebooks. Depending on grade levels, students will be allowed to carry these devices between home and school.
- 9th through 12th graders receive 14" Hewlett Packard Durable Chromebooks. These students will also be allowed to carry these devices between home and school.

All of these devices allow students to share lessons and online discussions with other students and their teachers through a learning management system (LMS) called "Schoology". Schoology is a software package that provides our instructors with the additional tools they need to create engaging content, design lessons, and assess student understanding, while allowing them to share ideas and resources with their students and colleagues 365 days a year. Schoology allows students to stay in touch with their teachers to continue

discussions after class, ask questions anytime they have one, and will encourage collaboration, discussion, and creativity—which is just how they like it.

The initial roll out for these new devices and software to the students began in November, 2016 and continued through January, 2017, when the deployment had been completed.

We are extremely excited about the potential for expanded learning opportunities for our students and look forward to engaging our new students in this learning environment.

*Ryle E. Kiser, Ed.D.*

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Superintendent, Grass Lake Community Schools