

Q&A for Parent Technology Overview
District Presentations Conducted at ALT and Woodland Schools
9/30/15

Will teachers put individual textbooks on the student center website?

At this time, the only resources being posted in the student center are district wide subscriptions. Teachers may have their own materials and will need to notify students and parents of information via their teacher websites.

Are updates going to be scheduled? Why do some things work better on laptop vs iPad?

Product updates are not controlled by the district and are done on the product developer's schedule. For example ThinkCentral was just updated. ThinkCentral does not work as well on the iPad.

What about student's accepting invitations or emails from accounts outside the school email domain?

Students cannot accept or share items with users outside of Warren Domain

Can students print from their Google drive accounts?

Classes are set up with printing stations. The number of printing stations will be expanded as more laptops are replaced by Chromebooks. In order to print using our current printers, students must open their document on desktop/laptop computer to print. Right now we cannot print from Chromebooks.

Do students have email/chat?

Email is only turned on in grades 6-8 at the current time. Chat features are not turned on. It is important that email skills and attitudes are addressed in such a way that helps students realize that school accounts are an educational tool.

Is there a way to see what the student viewed that day?

There is a history to view on settings. As long as the student does not clear the history. IT department would need to give more detailed explanation of the cache settings and whether these can be accessed if a situation warranted this occurring.

What are the plans for getting chromebooks for lower grades, not just 4-8?

The district is examining the possibility of expanding Chromebooks to grade 3 for next year. Budget constraints are always a consideration.

How about ipads - is there any consideration of 1:1?

iPads need to be managed via a number of onsite configurators. They are not as easy to manage as the Google platform. The district needs to evaluate whether 1:1 is appropriate or at the primary grades as we seek to maintain a balance in a blended learning approach. The touch screen is most appropriate in the primary grades and any new resources would need to include this type of interface for primary grade students. Grade 2 might have some type of combination keyboard / touchscreen. Technology changes rapidly, so the district will move carefully at this level.

What about posture issues with chromebooks?

Fairly new in this age group, evaluation may be needed to discuss ergonomics. There are PT issues on both sides. Any 1:1 environment should maintain an appropriate balance in the types of learning experiences students have.

What if teachers are not comfortable with technology?

Teacher use will be supported over time. We have instructional specialists and building tech coaches that provide teachers support and guidance as they integrate technologies. As with any new resources, we must provide support in how we use technology and provide time for teachers to develop their skill set through professional development offerings.

Are Chromebooks insured if your ten year old loses it?

As part of the Chromebook agreement, parents had the option of paying a small \$10 insurance fee. The fee covers accidental breakage for the first time. If a child loses the Chromebook, the parent would likely be responsible for replacing the device.

Do their passwords stay with them each year?

Passwords stay with students from year to year. This year passwords can be accessed through the student center. The student center password serves as the primary password. Students can access this through the district website at school and at home.

When they get access to new sites do you try to keep it similar?

Every effort is made to maintain consistent passwords. There is not a single sign on option, so the passwords may vary slightly based on the requirements of the vendor with which the district subscribes.

If my child has a laptop at home she can access Google Drive without bringing her laptop home?

Students can use a home computer to access their Google Drive account. It is not necessary for them to use the Chromebook if the computer is more convenient or a preference for the household. The Chromebook would just need to be charged.

Do they have to use the blue case it comes with?

The case the district provides is durable and designed to protect the Chromebook against impacts and possible damage. Students should use the provided case.

The fifth graders backpacks are so heavy. we are trying to figure out how to lighten the load. How do we see that feedback?

Backpacks do become an issue for upper intermediate grade students. This was an issue prior to Chromebooks. It is hoped that, over time, the use of Chromebooks in these grades may address this. At this point, we are very much in a transitional period.

You're saying off school property a student has unrestricted access to the internet?

Yes. The district Internet filters currently only function at school. Any Internet accessibility outside school is subject to the settings of the Wifi router to which the device is connected.

Are they allowed to swap chromebooks? He has to log in right?

Students should not switch Chromebooks in grades 5-8.

Are you saying students are not sharing passwords to protect Warren Twp IT department?

No. Passwords are assigned to protect access to student's accounts. The very nature of a password is to establish privacy and restrictions on an account. Students should not share their passwords and should understand that this information should be treated as private.

What kind of learning curve for teachers are we looking at? Clarify what you said before? The faculty needs a training period?

When any program or resource is introduced to staff, it is necessary to provide training and support during the initial periods of implementation. This is true of technology, just like any other program. For instance, this year a program called Foundations is being implemented in grades K&1. This program involves four days of training that takes place throughout this school year. Use of technology is constantly evolving and is supported through instructional specialists and technology coaches.

Are there one or two things that you think parents can help and support with this whole technology thing?

Parents need to speak with their children about expectations around school issued technology and provide structure for children with any at home technology use. The district is investigating options to provide off site filtering of Chromebook. This would not be full proof. Parents must still monitor technology use.

As you talk about a natural integration in many of the classes, isn't this a great opportunity for computer class to move into something new?

This is an area that is being addressed with the state standards and within a revised curriculum. Computer room instruction is also focusing on Coding. Computer teachers also have a support role within the building in that they provide on site technology support for classroom teachers.

How much time is a typical 4th grader spending with the chromebooks?

Depending on the day, potentially between an hour to two hours. Writing classes tend to involve more time on the Chromebooks. Even when they are using them, the experience is

blended. They might use it for 10-15 minutes of a period and then work through paper pencil or hands on experience. This will vary from day to day.

Is cursive writing still taught? What is the expectation?

Cursive writing is taught in grade 2 and 3. The expectation is that students develop their understanding of cursive. In past years, it was reinforced in grades 4 and 5. The expectation is that students will select or be guided to selecting the form of handwriting that enables them to best demonstrate their learning. Keyboarding instruction has become a reality and is something that must be balanced with handwriting.

How do we compare with the neighboring districts?

Watchung, Long Hill, Watchung Hills, and Green Brook all use Google and have or will be moving toward some level of 1:1 using individual devices. District like Hillsborough and Somerville also have 1:1 programs.

iPads are only K-2? So other kids don't have access to iPads?

iPads are focused in K-2. If a teacher wanted to use the iPads because there is a particular feature, they could make arrangements. However, 3-8 is Google Drive based. K-2 is generally iPad based.

Is IT monitoring remotely?

No.

How do you control the actual content... for example with youtube how do you monitor what videos they watch?

You Tube used to be on the district Blacklist. When it became evident that many teachers and students used the service for educational purposes, filters were relaxed. The district focuses a great deal on digital citizenship and appropriate Internet usage. This is an issue beyond the use of district issued devices and the district network which is why the intentional and explicit teaching of Internet norms must be addressed and certain attitudes must be promoted.

As a parent we can recommend apps?

Yes. Email them directly to teacher or to curriculum supervisors.

Will the older kids learn Microsoft Suite?

Yes. The middle school computer curriculum includes units that focus on the Microsoft Suite. The Drive platform is a simpler version of the Excel, Word, and Powerpoint and is more appropriate for elementary grades. Middle school curriculum will focus on providing explicit instruction with Microsoft Suite.

Can parents get the kids password?

Yes. An email was sent home with this information.