

Saint Eugene School Adopts One-to-One iPad Program

Interactive nature of iPad mobile devices along with user friendly apps allows Wisconsin school to bring 21st-century skills to the classroom and home

Rebecca Jones



ST. EUGENE SCHOOL PHOTOS

This fall St. Eugene School in Fox Point, Wisconsin, began providing its middle school students (grades 6 to 8) with individual iPad mobile devices for use in and out of the classroom, becoming the first Catholic K through 8 school in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee to implement such an initiative.

The school board unanimously approved this One-to-One iPad program at its March 15, 2011, meeting upon the recommendation of the technology committee, which had researched and studied the concept over a period of several months. The eight-member committee was comprised of the principal, school board president, teachers and parents.

The school's technology committee looked at several options, including eReaders and laptops, but, because

of the iPads' track record, versatility and potential, it quickly became the top choice. The committee came to appreciate the iPad as an excellent and practical 21st-century tool that has multiple educational applications across the curriculum and in all disciplines. Students use the devices to take, file and organize notes. Textbooks and literature books are downloaded on the iPads. Instant access to the Internet means that research is at the fingertips of both students and teachers. Teachers are able to use the iPads with Smart Boards for presentations.

In an age increasingly sensitive to the environment, students can email assignments to their teachers who can provide electronic feedback—a truly “green” process that saves paper and copy expenses. Teachers individualize

assignments and assessments easily using the iPads.

Starting with a Good Platform

Incorporating 21st-century skills into the curriculum has been a community held value at St. Eugene School. So when researching the feasibility of the One-to-One iPad program, St. Eugene already had a good platform for technology. The computer lab is up-to-date and used not only for technology instruction but for student projects and research. Electronic grade books and homework wikis have been in place. St. Eugene's building has been wireless for several years. Only minor upgrades were needed to allow for the increased volume of wireless iPad users.

The process in determining the feasibility of the One-to-One iPad initiative involved a parent survey, parent

meeting and test pilot. In the spring of 2011, two middle school students were chosen to use the iPad. They brought them to their classes and used them for homework. The pilot students were able to give valuable feedback to the technology coordinator, which helped to shape policies and inform teachers on possible pitfalls.

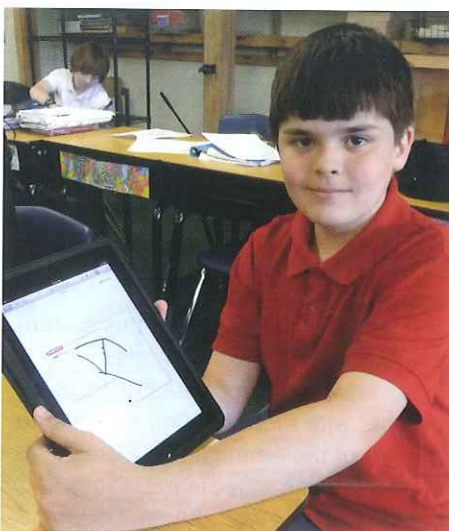
Also, members of the technology committee visited St. Catherine's High School in Racine, Wisconsin, a grade 6 through 12 school, to observe the One-to-One iPad program in action. What impressed the committee was the excitement of the teachers. A 30-year veteran teacher shared that she would never go back to teaching without this technology.

In preparation for this fall, middle school teachers received their iPads in May 2011 and attended a summer workshop to help them prepare for incorporating their use into the 2011-2012 curriculum. Teachers are excited that the program enables them to provide more project-based learning and to differentiate instruction

Funding Options

The St. Eugene School technology committee looked at several options for funding the One-to-One iPad initiative. Options included purchasing the devices outright, having parents purchase them for their students or leasing them. The committee decided to lease the devices over three years. The leasing option made it possible for the school to retain control of the devices while breaking down the cost into manageable payments, with an option to buy at the end of the lease. Families are charged a user fee of \$100 a year per middle school student. The excitement and enthusiasm of the initiative motivated several generous parishioners to make donations to help offset the cost.

Hundreds of applications are available free or for minimal cost that are used for all subjects including social studies, language arts, science, math



and religion. St. Eugene's technology coordinator downloads the applications onto the student devices. Students are not able to download their own applications because the iPads are the property of the school and are to be used for school work only. An updated acceptable use policy outlines for students and families what is permitted and what is

unacceptable use of the iPads.

Students anxiously waited for school to start in late August 2011 to receive their iPads. The program is only beginning, but it is already proving to be a success. While the program currently serves the middle school students, teachers are beginning to plan how to use iPads in grades K through 5. The interactive nature of the device, along with its user friendly applications, is allowing St. Eugene to truly bring 21st-century skills to the classroom and home.

Rebecca Jones is principal of St. Eugene School, Fox Point, Wisconsin. She has served as both a teacher and principal in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee since 1987. She received her undergraduate degree in elementary education from Loyola University of Chicago and her master's degree in educational administration and supervision from Marquette University (jonesreb@arch-mil.org).

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