



Aol Computer Checkup.
Speed up and clean up your PC — RIGHT NOW

[HOME](#) [NEWS](#) [POLICE REPORT](#) [SPORTS](#) [NEIGHBORS](#) [PHOTO/VIDEO](#) [CLASSIFIED](#) [COUPONS](#)

NEWS AND FEATURES

[Home](#) » [News and Features](#)

[Tweet](#) [1](#)

[EMAIL](#)

[PRINT](#)

iPads for all: A St. Eugene revolution



Sixth-graders John Hudak (left) and Charlie McCabe exchange iPads to proof each other's writing assignments at St. Eugene's School on March 23. Photo By C.T. Kruger

By **Mary Buckley**
March 28, 2012 | [0 comments](#)

[print](#)[e-mail](#)

Fox Point - Technology in the form of iPads is transforming both teaching and learning at St. Eugene Catholic School.

The School Board decided last spring to lease iPads for students in grades six through eighth, providing a one-on-one technology that is unique to the school. It is the only Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee to have individual iPads. There are no public schools in the North Shore that provide them for each student although several school districts are considering allowing students to bring their own devices into the classrooms.

Anticipation for the start of the school year was high.

"The kids could not wait to come to school to get their iPads," said Principal Rebecca Jones. "We decided we wanted to purchase them so everyone had one and they had the same thing. We could control what was on them."

"It's fun," was how seventh-grade student Audrey Gabler described her device. "It was hard to wait when they announced we were getting them."

Lighter on back loads

Backpacks are lighter because several textbooks are on the iPads.

"In class, the iPad makes things lots easier," said eighth-grade student Luke Richmond. "Some kids can type faster than they can write."

The iPad also connects the students to information both far and near.

"We have an app called Overdrive," said Margaret Meyer, another student in the seventh grade. "We can add our library card number and check out books from the (North Shore) library. We have to do three book reports a quarter."

Students can write reports, do homework and worksheets on their iPads and email them to teachers. They can do research and move beyond the topic at hand.

Science teacher Jim Roche said that when a student asks him a question he cannot answer, he will point to a student, tell them to search for the answer on the Internet and report to the class while he continues the class.

"It stretches you as a teacher," Roche said. "It also puts some responsibility on both teachers and students. For teachers, we are using a different tool in the classroom so we have to prepare differently."

Roche said there was about a four-week learning curve at the start of the school year as he learned what would - and would not - work as he integrated teaching with the iPad into his classroom.

"The textbook has a variety of resources we can pull in and use," he said. The school bought science textbooks that have an online version which is a valuable tool.

Finding other ways to help

Roche also spends preparation time finding other appropriate sites, such as the U.S. Geological Survey site for a unit on earthquakes. When he was teaching a unit on the Periodic Table, he was able to download photos of elements and show students how they are mined.

"We are able to provide much more depth," he said.

He still uses paper and pencil tests, particularly for problems where students need to show their work, but said that for multiple choice type tests, the iPad works well.

His classes use the iPads between half to two-thirds of the time, depending on the grade level.

"In future years, I can build from there," Roche said.

Middle School math teacher Suzanne Riesen said she is able to bring math instruction to the class in ways that were not possible before. The school has a modern computer lab, but having the iPads constantly available changes everything.

"It is far more dynamic than when we only had a book," Riesen said. "It is interactive and not just one dimensional."

She had her sixth-grade students create their own Book of Numbers, a personal reference book on what they are learning in math class.

"For instance, they might write about how to multiply fractions," Riesen said. "They have to create their explanations in their own words. If it's not correct, then I know where to step in and offer help."

Video plays role in classroom

Riesen also makes use of online videos about math and other topics at the Salman Khan Academy on the Internet. Students can find two to three minute academy lectures on topics in math that are stored on You Tube.

(At right, sixth-grader Nolan Kozinski works on a writing assignment on an iPad at St. Eugene's School on March 23. NOW Photo by C.T. Kruger.)

More applications for the iPad are coming constantly.

"The textbook companies are really working on various applications," Riesen said. Teachers can also develop their own worksheets for the iPad.

Sharon Webster, the technology teacher and also an algebra teacher at the school, did the iPad setups.

"I did a lot of research beginning last spring," she said. "I also went to a bunch of Apple workshops, which was very helpful."

Students cannot download applications or programs but they are responsible for charging their iPads each night, and for having them in class. Parents and students worked out "home rules" that establish how the iPads are to be used at home.

"If we don't have them charged, then we get out the pencil and paper," Audrey said.

Webster said the rules have been modified as the year passed.

"We originally restricted their ability to use the cameras," Webster said.

They loosened up the rule because photographs can be part of projects and papers. Then there was another change.

"The younger kids were using the camera to take all kind of photos so now we restrict the sixth-grade use of the cameras," Webster said.

Students need monitoring

Teachers have to monitor students in class to make sure they don't wander away using the Internet.

"There are kids who will be on the Internet during class time, so we took the iPads away (for a period of time)," she said.

The school has purchased new iPads for next year, allowing those now in use by the eighth grade to go to elementary classrooms in groups of three or four.

Webster sees a vast potential for the individual devices in coming years.

"I think we have just begun this overture into what the iPad can do," she said.

Programs such as Espark take students math scores and recommends applications and activities to help in the areas where they are weak, for instance.

"We had one student in the program whose math ability jumped a year and half," Webster said.

The iPad also helped connect a student with the classroom using Face Time while having daylong treatments at a local hospital.

iPads don't do everything, Webster noted, saying there is still a place for the desktop computers in the school's computer laboratory.

"They do multimedia better than the iPad for instance," she said.



iPads for all: A St. Eugene revolution - FoxPointNOW

Bernadette Gauss is the parent of a seventh-grade student.

She has been a volunteer in the computer lab since her oldest child, now a sophomore at Nicolet High School. When she started, the lab had three different types of computers and some didn't work. The lab has been upgraded over the years to state-of-the-art Macs, but the individual iPads has been most remarkable.

"We were fortunate to have a group of teachers who were open to and embraced this," she said.
