Questions and answers about One to One Deployment of laptop computers at Sugar Salem High School

August 21, 2013

Q: What is the One to One Deployment of Laptops at Sugar Salem High School?

A: Last spring the Idaho State Legislature earmarked 3 million dollars for technology integration into public schools. This money was going out to schools that submitted well-written grant applications. Schools from all over the state applied and there were many applications that were rejected. Sugar Salem High School was fortunate that their application for approximately 460,000.00, which included an HP laptop for every student and teacher, was accepted. None of this grant funding is for any other school in the district. Also included in the grant is funding for training and professional development so that our teachers will be able to fully integrate technology into their curriculum.

Q: Why didn’t I hear about the grant before coming to school to register?

A: We did get information into the local newspapers and on television and did send out an email to those who are signed up for email notification. We admit we could have done a better job of advertising.

Q: I am worried about students using computers to access inappropriate information. What is the school doing to keep that from happening?

A: We have sophisticated filtering software on our network to help keep students from inappropriate sites. Also, from their computer, our teachers will be able to see the screen on every computer in the room. We also have network software that logs every site visited. We are also working on providing filtering when students are not at school. We also recommend, that when at home, your child only be allowed to access the computer when in a place with other family members such as the kitchen or living room.

Q: What kind of guarantees do you have against breakage?

A: Each computer is warrantied by HP for two years. This covers all breakage or software issues that are factory related. If a hard drive malfunctions through regular use there will be no cost to the student or parent(s). However, if there is accidental or intentional damage, we are providing insurance at a cost of 35.00 annually and 50.00 per incident.

Q: Shouldn’t the school be responsible for the cost of intentional or accidental damage?

A: We consider these laptops as similar to student textbooks; and, in fact, when the total cost of all textbooks for each student is considered, the cost is about the same. We have always asked students to pay for accidental or intentional damage to textbooks, or other school materials, and think that this is a good opportunity for students to learn responsibility. Although we have never offered insurance for textbooks, we are offering it for the laptops.

Q: What if I don’t want my child to receive one of these computers? Can he or she still go to school here?

A: We want to work with every family to maximize their child’s education and are willing to consider your suggestions for how best to do that. However, in the case of laptop computers, it seems problematic to have 30 students in a class and for all but your child, to have a computer especially when the technology is so integrated into instruction. It is our recommendation that every student at Sugar Salem High School have a one to one device.

Q: Why can’t I just bring a laptop from home and use it instead of using one of the school computers?

A: HP is providing all the software for our use, and some of it is proprietary to this program. It would cost you an exorbitant amount to replicate that software on a home computer and without it your child would not be able to participate in each of the classroom learning experiences.

Q: What software will be on these computers?

A: Windows 7, licensed for Windows 9, Microsoft Office 2013/Office365, the entire Microsoft Learning Suite, ClassLink Launchpad which delivers a personal cloud desktop and single sign-on to all web-enabled apps, tools, and content and provides a Learning Management System, Cloud Storage and Classroom Management capabilities, Internet Explorer, filtering software against negative sites.

Q: Why are we giving out computers when this idea was voted out when the propositions went down last year?

A: It was our impression that the reason most Idahoans voted against Proposition 3 was because it withheld money from each district. We believed that most of our patrons were supportive of having computers in our schools. Before applying for the grant, we asked our Parent Advisory Chairman as well as our school board their opinion. Both of these entities signed off on the grant and provided a letter of support. We also communicated with patrons, very informally, whose input was all supportive of us pursuing the grant. However, it may be that none of us foresaw the concerns we have heard voiced by some parents, at this time. We certainly apologize for not getting more complete input.

Q: Can the high school discontinue the contract with HP and send all the computers back?

A: No. We have a signed contract with HP and Education Networks of America (ENA) to provide this hardware, software, and staff development. We are not able to break this contract without extended legal issues.

Q: How can we provide more input on the One to One deployment and get our questions answered?

A: You may call Mr. Dunn at 419-8618 or Mr. Jenks at 317-3177

Q: Can parents use the student’s laptop?

A: YES! We want the laptop experience to include parents and guardians of our students. The laptop is an opportunity for all to get involved and to be part of the education experience. We want everyone to benefit. If you are experiencing difficulty acquiring a login from your student please contact the technology director, Spencer Cook at the school and he will assist you with the information you need.

Q: Can parents use the computer to check their student's grades?

A: YES! SSSD uses an online grade reporting system called PowerSchool. There is a link

to this system on all major district webpages. Each student is given a personal "login" to the system so they can stay abreast of their progress. Parents should use the same login to regularly check their student's progress. This may be done from ANY computer connected to the Internet!

Q: Can the student take the laptop home?

A: Yes but it is highly recommended that he or she purchase district insurance.

Q: Is the student required to have Internet access at home?

A: The student is not required to have Internet access at home. This is entirely optional and that decision is to be made by each home. However, the school district believes that having Internet access at home does provide a valuable and educational opportunity.

Q: How will students get their work done if they do not have Internet access at home?

A: Students are given the traditional amount of time to do required work in class. In the situation to where a student needs Internet resources in order to complete an assignment, it will be the responsibility of the student to work with the instructor to gather those resources and download them to the student’s laptop before leaving campus for the day. Students may access the school wireless network from school campus grounds after school hours in those situations when Internet connection is

urgent.

Q: How do I get Internet access at home?

A: Internet access is all about availability in your area. The District highly recommends high speed access instead of dial-up. Dialup is adequate for basic functions, like checking email, but in order to access the interactivity of the Internet and media resources, a high speed or broad band connection is recommended.