

# EN's new technology requires policies, responsibilities

**E**ast Noble students failing to comply with terms of a Student Technology Responsible Use Policy for Internet Access face loss of privileges, disciplinary action and appropriate legal action.

The warning is spelled out in the policy approved last week by the East Noble school board. The school district plans to distribute computing devices to all students beginning with the 2011-2012 school year. K-2 students will receive iPod Touches. Students in grades 3 and 4 will get iPads, and students in grades 5-12 will receive laptops. Teachers also will receive the devices.

Trustees also approved an Employee Technology Responsible Use Policy with a warning of a possible termination of employment for failing to follow the policy's terms.

Both policies come with legally binding forms the users sign. A student-parent laptop agreement form that details proper care of the computers and insurance and maintenance programs also must be signed by the users.

The new policies and paperwork are necessary as the school district introduces its 1 to 1 computer technology program, according to East Noble Superintendent Ann Linson. At a gathering with parents in Cole Auditorium, she explained the program and responded to questions.

For years East Noble has developed policies, determined consequences, eliminated or reduced opportunities for students based on those few students who challenge the system and choose to make poor decisions, said Linson. Teachers and administrators often spend 90 percent of their efforts on 5 percent of the students.

"It's time we focus on the 95 percent and provide them with an outstanding education

filled with challenges, relevance, preparation for rewarding futures and respect for their abilities and dreams," Linson said.

"What happens in cases of lost or stolen devices? Will students who have no Internet access at home be at a disadvantage?" asked parents at last week's gathering.

Parents will be charged a \$45 maintenance fee. There will be no insurance for lost or stolen devices. Other schools have said students enjoy having the devices, and they take care of them. They have very few, if any, that are lost or stolen, Linson said, noting that theft or loss insurance would be costly to families.

If theft or loss insurance were provided, Linson believes students would be less motivated to take care of the devices, knowing they would be replaced. The school district has no insurance for lost or stolen textbooks.

In cases of negligence, such as students failing to lock their lockers, giving their locker combination to others or carelessness, parents will be responsible for replacement costs of about \$550 if the device is new. A one-year-old device would be less. Linson recommended parents add the devices to their homeowners' or renters' insurance. "We would work out a payment plan when needed," she said.

A GPS on the student computers is not what parents want for tracking the devices, according to Linson. Some school districts have a labeling system on the devices with a serial number for tracking when stolen.



## INSIDE COMMENT

Dennis Nartker

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East Noble will look into that if many computers are being stolen.

When asked about homes without Internet access, Linson said students will be taught how to download Internet information to their computer or flash drive to take their work home without the need for Internet access.

"This tool is not an Internet-exclusive tool," Linson said. "The Internet is one way to access information, but not the only way. Our students will not be on the computer all day, every day."

Textbooks, paper and pens still will be used, but no new sets of textbooks will be purchased.

Barb Babcock, school board president, said the policies are "living documents" and subject to change.

Within the next five years, we may see student backpacks no longer weighed down with 15 to 20 pounds of textbooks. Instead, backpacks will carry devices weighing less than two pounds.

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