

EN technology effort requires careful groundwork

BY DEB EDWARDS

East Noble schools are moving forward to get materials and training for teachers to be ready to use portable technology devices in classrooms for the 2011-2012 school year. These devices and the educational applications apps, currently available are quickly becoming popular.

This initiative is referred to as Maximizing Potential with 1:1 Technology.

In January the East Noble school board voted to go ahead with an initiative to provide a technology device to each student to align with the mission to maximize potential in all learners. East Noble is developing the distribution plans and policies to accompany laptop use in grades five through 12, iPad use in grades three and four, and iPod Touch use in kindergarten through second grade. Nearby school districts such as Central Noble and Lakewood Park are also adopting this technology in some form. Educational applications for technology are essential for 21st century learners.

For many years families have used technology in the form of gaming devices and children have come to love the digital games. However, technology also is exploding for children to engage in educational opportunities for improved literacy. Literacy is more than just reading and writing with pencil and paper. In the 21st century it involves a continuum of learning and communication across media platforms in such a way to develop higher level analytical, critical thinking and problem solving skills.

For many years families have used technology in the form of gaming devices and children have come to love the digital games.

East Noble is developing a framework for including a portable technological device in the hands of all students. The devices are expected to be leased using a combination of textbook rental, capital projects funds and technology funds to support the initiative along with using part of the book rental fee. The long term outlook shows that the initiative can continue to be funded in future budgets.

Because of the school board approval last year for wireless upgrades in all buildings, devices will function well. School principals and teams in each building will decide on the apps for that particular building, based on how teachers in that building anticipate using the devices to have students complete their assignments.

The district administration, principals and teachers have invested time on preparing a plan for teacher training on devices. Specific uses in classrooms for educational applications are many times up to the teacher's experience with grade level uses of a device. An advisory team is focusing on enhancing the curriculum by

embedding communication and collaboration and critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making. Students will also benefit as they provide for opportunities for creativity and innovation and research and fluency with activities on the devices.

Other advisory teams are diligently working on developing acceptable use policies for distribution and care of equipment which will likely include a parent and student orientation meeting. Another team is investigating peripheral needs such as porting devices for charging, bulk purchasing for apps for school buildings and insurance. Teams also are coordinating opportunities for community awareness that literacy continues to be paramount in the educational goal for East Noble students.

Students will enjoy enriched life skills and employability after high school with educational applications of technology. Educational applications under the guidance of trained teachers and parents will enable East Noble students to excel. Every generation experiences challenges; the goal for East Noble is to equip students with critical thinking skills and confidence to respectfully discuss and argue differences. By learning research skills with this technology, students can learn new ways to solve problems in a global community.

THIS GUEST COLUMN was written by Deb Edwards, an occupational therapist with East Noble School Corp. Comments may be directed to Ann Linson, East Noble superintendent, at alinson@eastnoble.net.