

Questions and Answers regarding the Bring Your Own Device Initiative at Grassi

What is the Bring Your Own Device Initiative?

The BYOD program encourages students to bring their own laptop to school in order to facilitate easy access to their learning tool on a needs basis. Having their own devices also makes students more accountable in taking care of the device.

Do you recommend specific devices?

Please refer to the table of comparison regarding different devices, along with prices and pros and cons, on our school website.

What is the history and rationale in adopting this program?

A hundred years ago public education was designed using the factory model, the goal being to prepare youth for the industrial world that they would be entering. This model has not changed much since. Over the past 10 years there have been more changes in technology, and education than there have been in the last 100 years. We now need to shift our focus to the competencies that they will need to navigate a complex world.

In consultation with many stakeholders, Alberta Learning has implemented a new Ministerial Order that reflects the competencies that our youth will need for success in their complex world. The use of technology as a learning tool aligns with Alberta Learning's new Ministerial Order.

Two years ago, in response to these changes, LGMS embarked on a journey to explore ways to provide more access to technology for all students. After much reading and discussion, it was decided at LGMS that we would propose a BYOD Program for all grade 8 students starting the 2013 school year.

We used models from other schools and the Alberta Education document to guide our move towards implementing a BYOB program.

According to Alberta Education, in 'Bring Your Own Device: A Guide For Schools' (2012):

Combined with the right pedagogy and used responsibly, technologies in learning can serve as:

1. The means for students to pursue lines of inquiry and interest in the academic disciplines and beyond.
2. The opportunity for learners to collaborate with teachers and peers and to express themselves and their ideas most effectively.
3. A vehicle for personalizing learning in ways that ensure each student is fully engaged in learning and is successful in attaining established learning standards.
4. Opportunities for student choice in the use of multimedia to explore, research, think, synthesize, analyze, evaluate, communicate and express ideas in high quality products.
5. A platform and forum for students' voices.
6. Access to digital content and digital learning environments that provide multiple pathways to learning.
7. Connections locally and globally that add authenticity to school work. This enables students to learn while pursuing real-world issues and topics of deep interest to them, both individually and collectively, within their communities of interest and beyond.
8. Platforms from which to learn about and attain high standards in digital citizenship.
9. Opportunities for students to construct ideas, opinions, arguments and evidence-based reasoning collaboratively.

After we completed our research, we also held a information/discussion evening and sent out a survey to parents in order to include the input of all stakeholders as we moved forward. The majority of parents were supportive.

It has been two years since we started the BYOD Program and given that it went well and that teachers have witnessed and embraced how technology supports student learning, we decided to extend the initiative to grade seven students to be implemented in September of the 2015 school year.

Within Canadian Rockies Public Schools the infusion of technology in learning continues to be embedded and developed at the district and school level. Our partnership with the Galileo Network from the University of

Calgary focuses on collaboration with teaching staff and administration in furthering the pedagogy and use of technology in learning. At Lawrence Grassi Middle School we are excited and committed to offering students learning experiences that reflect the world around them and the world they will lead in the future.

Are there studies to support the use of technology in schools and the BYOD initiative?

A detailed researched-based report conducted in Alberta, called the Emerge Final Report explains the benefits of the BYOD initiative. You can find this document on our school website. Although we are aware of other School Boards across Canada who have also adopted this initiative, we are referring to a research conducted in Alberta as it adheres to our Alberta Education standards. The monthly Principal Message in our Grassi School Newsletter will also feature some tips regarding balanced technology and recommend articles for parents and teachers.

If we choose not to buy a device, what other options will be offered to families?

We will have Chromebooks available for rental. Please see the rental form on our school website.

Do we need to purchase any other programs for the device?

No, teachers will only use free APPS.

By having access to the device, does this mean that my child will always be using technology as a learning tool?

No, textbooks, paper and pencils, hands-on experiences are still used in our classrooms. The use of the device will vary day to day and week to week depending on the learning task.

What are some specific examples that highlight how the device will be used as a learning tool?

Students will be asked to retrieve some information for inquiry-based projects, present their learning in different formats (movies, google slides, etc), use education applications, create quizzes for formative assessment such as Kahoot, self-reflect on their work through learning blogs, give peer feedback to seek improvement, receive teacher feedback from home with

google drive, practice keyboarding skills. This is only a quick snapshot. Grade 7 and 8 teachers have created a common google site for parents to have easy access to each teacher's website, which will describe the weekly happenings.

As a parent, I am concerned that the device will be a distraction to learning as opposed to a learning tool. What are the school's guidelines around technology?

We do have a contract that students must sign to acknowledge proper use of technology and it will be sent home with your child in September. We will encourage parents to have discussions around expectations at home too in terms of laptop time and making healthy choices.

Restrictions and learning accommodations will be put in place for students who are not reliable with the device. Before banning the device, we find it is in the students' best interest to be given logical consequences (see below) and we want to empower them by including their voice into discussions around being distracted by technology as opposed to using it as a learning tool. As part of the LGMS and CRPS school code of conduct, students are expected to respect themselves, others, property and environment. As we recognize that 100% monitoring is impossible, we will have lessons on digital citizenship to assist students in making the right choices.

Here are examples of suggestions for consequences:

- less freedom to leave the class or work with others and work closer to teacher (if teacher at desk)
- meet with admin or Carol or LST etc and discuss why? What is going on that interferes with the students ability to focus. As a follow-up, meet with the parents and set up a goal for greater success.

In terms of digital citizenship, will you be using specific programs that parents could also have access to?

Yes, after conducting a pilot project last year, the Principal has recommended that grade 6 students subscribe to a program called Everfi, which will be conducted during class time. The lessons learned in grade 6 will empower students to continue making good choices in future grades. Grade 7 and 8 students will refer to the commonsense.com, website also accessible from home and taught in class. Teachers will also embed self-

regulating strategies into their Health lessons to connect with the use of technology.

Will there be opportunities for parents to learn about the different programs such as google drive in order for us to assist our children at home?

During the Open-house, some teachers will invite students to take their parents through some examples of activities done in class. Upon request, we will also organize sessions for parents after school, and focus on specific needs or skills that parents wish to learn more about.

Will students have access to their device at lunchtime during their free time?

Only those who bring their own devices. We have many opportunities for our students to take part in lunch clubs and we will continue to encourage students to be active at lunchtime. Restricting wifi access at school during this time would only encourage students to go downtown for access. We prefer providing them with a safer environment in which supervisors can monitor the sites. If you prefer your child does not use his-her device during lunchtime, please let us know and we will certainly accommodate your request.

As stated before, as part of health and digital citizenship, we will continue having discussions with students around a balanced life and personal well being, which includes screen time.