

New iPads move Fraser Public Schools into the 21st century

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FRASER — On the first day of school Sept. 6, Eisenhower Elementary School fifth-graders Amanda Sukiennik, Jacob Cosart and Brooke Arnold reviewed — with help from 21st Century Literacy teacher Kelly Zombo — the new iPads each Fraser Public Schools student will receive this year.

As part of the district's \$19.9 million bond issue that passed in February 2011, educators will distribute the new mobile devices to all their students over the course of the year.

An iPad is a tablet computer that is smaller than a laptop computer and can be used for learning, reading, taking photos, conducting research on the Internet, games, music education, and much, much more. The goal is to offer a personalized learning experience for every Fraser student with the new technology.

"There are a lot of cool apps," Cosart said. "It helps with math and stuff."

"It's interesting," Arnold said. "It's different."

"It's going to be another tool to help all the teachers meet the students' needs," Zombo said.

So students learn the proper way to use the iPads, each elementary school will have a 21st Century Literacy teacher while Richards Middle School and Fraser High School will have several in their buildings. The teachers will instruct a new 21st Century Literacy class.

"We will see each class for 40 minutes a week to focus on digital literacy, Internet safety and basic literacy skills with the new iPads. There are endless possibilities (to) do throughout the school year," Zombo said. "Students will learn how to use the iPads and how to take care of the iPads."

The teachers of the new curriculum will be leaders in each building to assist teaching staff



Fraser Public Schools 21st Century Literacy teacher Kelly Zombo gives instruction on the new iPads to a group of Eisenhower Elementary School students Sept. 6.

Photo by
Deb Jacques

and students to better understand the new iPads. They also will work with staff to integrate them into the curriculum. On the first day of school last Thursday, teachers were already using the computer devices to take pictures of their new classes.

After the passing of the bond, a committee of teachers from all grade levels and various disciplines, building administrators central office administrators and instructional technology consultants met for one year to redesign the district's learning environment. Aligning instructional strategies and selecting the best instructional technology tool for students and staff were included in the redesigning process.

"Teachers will be able to leverage technology at the point of instruction rather than only having access to computers during the

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assigned computer lab time,” FPS Superintendent David Richards said in a prepared statement. “Our teachers will be able to customize each child’s educational plan to better meet the student’s learning needs in each content area.

“Our drive in Fraser to redesign our school district comes from a realization that we must provide our students with customized educational experiences that will prepare them to be successful in today’s college and work environment,” Richards stated. “Though you will recognize the blending of our traditional offerings with the infusion of new digital offerings, our focus is not on the technology. Rather, we have a laser focus on student learning and increasing student achievement.”

Student iPad deployment is scheduled to begin in the fall. School officials will work off a timeline that will issue classroom sets of iPads for grades kindergarten through second, and individual iPads for each student in third- through 12th-grade over the next several months. Teachers and administrators also received new devices, including MacBook Pro laptops and iPads, at the end of last school year and over the summer to prepare for the 2012-13 school year.

Technology support models have been installed districtwide to ensure that Fraser staff has the



Photo by Deb Jacques

Eisenhower Elementary School fifth-grader Brooke Arnold checks out the iPad. Each Fraser Public Schools student will receive one to use this school year.

support they need. Support will be available at both a building and district level. Additionally, Apple trainers are working with the district, and 16 days of professional development will be available through the 2012-13 school year.

School officials have designed a special FAQ section about the new iPads on Fraser’s website at www.fraser.k12.mi.us. Parent meetings, a special 21st Century Learning newsletter and email communications with parents will be available, too.

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