

NETBOOK FACT SHEET

The Eastern Howard School Corporation approved the pilot of a 1 to 1 computing initiative through small laptop computers for some selected students at Eastern Schools for the 2010-2011 school year.

What is the purpose of using netbooks: The purpose is to ignite a passion for learning, inspiring all students to become self-motivated, enthusiastic participants in their education. This One-To-One laptop initiative supports the district's tradition as an innovative leader by moving forward with an integrated approach to technology use. Furthermore, it reinforces technology as one of the core focus areas of the district's Strategic Plan for equity and excellence for all students.

Our ultimate goal is for all students, regardless of income or family background, to have access to a laptop computer for use at both school and home. We believe that individual ownership will help promote concepts of self-motivation and enthusiastic participation by providing all with access to a powerful technological tool to enhance learning.

What is a netbook: A netbook is a small laptop computer primarily designed for web computing. It is about the size of a small textbook, and weighs significantly less than a full-sized laptop computer. The EHSC netbooks will feature a 10.1" screen, webcam, Open Office software -- a free application that includes word processing, spread sheet, design and presentation offerings similar and compatible with Microsoft Office programs. It will also be configured with wireless access to the Internet and have virus protection software.

How will the netbooks be used: The netbooks will be used as personal computers for each pilot student selected in the EHSC. The computers will be used in the classroom for note taking, in projects, to research information in and outside the classroom, and in general be an integral part of everyday activity in most classes and for homework purposes. Other software at EHSC will allow virtual lockers for students, where assignments and information can be stored.

How will students be protected from offensive materials: The EHSC will install blocking mechanisms on each netbook, which will prevent certain Internet sites that the school corporation has determined should not be accessible from being seen. This block will also work from locations outside the school building.

What if you do not have Internet at home: Students will be instructed how they can download materials during the school day that they will need for homework in the evening. For those times that the Internet may be necessary, the EHSC has worked closely with Greentown Public Libraries so that students will be able to work at any of our libraries, where wireless Internet will be provided.

What is the battery life of the computer: Approximately six –eight hours. Students will be asked to fully charge their laptops at home each night and bring the systems fully prepared for the day. Battery life should be adequate for all day school use. If a student's battery no longer holds a charge, the EHSC will replace it at no cost to the student.

What is the rental fee: There will be no fee for students participating in the pilot project. Be aware, however, that the true cost of the netbook is approximately \$600 per computer. The netbook cost includes asset tagging, imaging, case and professional development. No software other than the Windows XP Professional Operating system is included in the cost. Open Office (compatible with Microsoft Office) a free word processing, presentation, and spreadsheet software will be available on the computer, as well. Other programs might be added later as the program develops.

What if a family cannot afford the rental: Since the pilot program will not assess fees for use of the netbooks, there should be no concern with affordability of participation. The concern for parents should be expenses associated with the potential charges for netbook loss/damage or optional insurance plan costs.

Who is responsible for repair fees or replacement: The EHSC will be responsible for repair or replacement, though the cost may revert to the student/parent if the reason is negligence, theft, etc. There will be a location in each school to take damaged netbooks.

Optional insurance will be made available to families to provide replacement cost coverage and protect the laptop worldwide. Many homeowners policies may already cover some costs associated with theft or accidental damage from electrical storms – however, these policies may have deductibles that will render them useless for this program. Please check the technology section of the Eastern website for information on the optional insurance.

Will students/parents be faced with costs for computers associated with normal wear and tear repair: Normal functionality issues will not be a cost parents will incur. Those costs will only be associated with damages to the computer through negligence. The cost of replacing a computer that malfunctions due to no fault of a student will be borne by the EHSC. If a computer needs to be replaced due to negligent behavior, the cost would be borne by the student/parent, just as it would be if it was a textbook that needed to be replaced. The replacement cost would never be more than the original purchase price of the computer.

If the netbook is being repaired, will a replacement be provided for the student: Yes, the EHSC will have spare netbooks for students to use while their netbook is submitted for repair.

Do students have to lease a netbook? Can they use one that they have from home: The netbook will become an integral part of the educational process, and all pilot students must have one to participate in classroom activities that require it. The netbook will be a tool that students will be expected to use and incorporate into their daily learning experiences. Students cannot use their own laptops in school because of the extensive work that would be required for each computer to block sites that should not be accessed – both in school, and at home; prevent viruses from getting onto the EHSC network; and to configure the computer for safe use with the EHSC’s software programs.

The netbooks the students receive will be ready to use and configured with everything needed. In addition, EHSC personnel will be trained to work on these computers and it would be very costly to have to deal with issues on a variety of different computers and platforms.

Will the students be required to take the netbooks home each night: The netbooks are a tool for students to help students with their homework – just as you might take home a protractor or compass for a geometry class. Will they be “required” to take the computer home – no. But as technology is a core component of how people learn and access information today, and since EHSC students have homework as a basic part of their learning activities, it is important to allow them to take the netbooks home with them.

Will the netbooks be traceable? Are they specifically assigned to a student: Each student’s netbook will have both an EHSC asset tag and vendor serial number, both of which will be assigned to that student and be part of the textbook system and the fixed assets system.

Will parents/students be allowed to install tracking software or other software: No. No one besides authorized EHSC personnel will be allowed to install any devices or software on these computers.

Who is funding the cost of computers for students participating in the pilot program: Funding for the program is provided through grants and technology funds generated through the Capital Projects and Commons School Funds.

For this fall, will the pilot program eliminate other textbook rental costs: For the first year, there will be no change in textbook fees. For subsequent years, the EHSC will look closely at each subject area that is up for adoption and determine which do and do not need a textbook for each student. There is also a plethora of other digital curriculum that the EHSC will be reviewing.

Will digital versions of textbooks be added to the netbooks at some point in the future: The idea is not to replace a print textbook with a digital version of that same textbook. The cost to do this, in most cases, is identical to the cost of a printed text, and, textbooks are static and the information is outdated quickly, sometimes as soon as they go to print. The EHSC will provide teachers and students with access to digital resources, those that are freely available, those that can be purchased, and also those we will develop ourselves.

If these digital resources are online, how can students access them if they don't have the Internet: if there are resources that are on specific Internet sites that a teacher wants a student to use, students will be informed of ways to "cache" (or save) that information on their computer for future use when Internet use is not available to them.

Are teachers required to use the netbooks in their class curriculum: The EHSC is providing professional development (PD) ongoing each year for teachers and building administrators so more can be learned about how to incorporate this and other technologies into classroom instruction. Technology PD has been an ongoing part of the EHSC for many years. There is also a technology coach who will work to develop digital curriculum and to help teachers with ways to integrate the use of the netbook in engaging students in their classes.

In order to assure safety of the netbooks, will there be limits on the number of books a student must carry from class to class: This will be a school-based decision and may vary at each school.

What procedures or precautions will be taken to assure the safety of netbooks when students must attend after-school functions: The netbook policy which all students will receive and have available to them online expects students to either have their computer with them, or locked in their locker. At no time is it to be left unattended.