

Laptops in the Upper School 2007-2008

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Agenda

- Middle School Vs. Upper School Goals
- The Best Uses of Student Laptops We've Seen
- Managing Laptops: What Works Best
- Summer Stipend Days for Discussing and Learning about Student Laptops

Possible Changes Next Year

- The presence of family-owned laptops in the US has been increasing by 10-15% a year for several years.
- During the last finals week, we had students using more family-owned laptops brought to school than we had using OES computers.
- Next year, we expect an additional increase in US family-owned laptops as the eighth graders move to ninth grade after having OES-provided iBooks in the Middle School for two years.

Possible Changes Next Year

1. It's likely that you'll see more laptops in the classroom for note-taking, drafting, writing, communications and other routine uses.
2. It's also likely that we'll see more laptops in the Great Hall and common areas on campus.
3. Finally, some students may request to do different types of research and project work with their laptops.

Middle School Vs. Upper School Goals

- Some parents have asked us why the Middle School laptop program isn't continuing in the Upper School.
- The main reason is that the academic objectives of the MS and US are significantly different.
- As a result, the students' use of technology is very different.

Middle School Goals

1. The MS laptop program creates a positive and academically sound culture of laptop use.
2. All MS students use the same type of computer (per grade level).
3. This enables MS grade teams to achieve uniform goals with all students.
4. The laptops are locked down and closely monitored, and students can't install their own software.

Upper School Goals

1. Learning goals in the US become increasingly individualized and vertical (instead of uniform and synchronized).
2. We expect US students to develop academic independence.

Upper School Goals

3. The best uses of laptops we've observed in the US have involved students choosing their own systems and software, and doing independent project work that supports their interests and passions.
4. We want US students to be able to install their own software and decide what type of laptop best serves their needs.

Advanced Uses

- We could show you examples from
 - Literary Journalism Projects
 - Age of Exploration
 - Music Trek
 - US Science Projects
 - Digital Simulations
 - Computer Science Courses
 - Art Classes
 - The Blophish
 - The Yearbook
 - Film and Video

Routine Uses of Laptops

- In both the MS and US, the best routine use of laptops involves **organization**.
- Research, writing and revision are the core **productivity** benefits, but the overall benefit of “having your work in one place” is a major benefit.

Routine Uses of Laptops

- Before the MS laptop program, maybe 30% of students had decent skills in managing their work on a computer. As we review the 7th and 8th grade laptops this year, we find that over 80% of students are doing a great job of organizing their work.
- We also see increasingly productive use of online **communications**.

Routine Uses of Laptops

- In the US, we would like to shape student laptop use so that students continue to gain benefits from improved
 - Organization
 - Productivity
 - Communications

Managing Laptops

- Laptop management in the Middle School is aided by:
 - Apple Remote Desktop and other monitoring tools
 - Locked-down Operating Systems
 - Regular reviews of the laptops by tech personnel
 - No free period
 - Unified classes (by grade level)
 - Unified hardware and software

Managing Laptops

- In the Upper School, students are given many more freedoms in terms of how they can choose to spend their time.
- In terms of laptops and media content, this can lead to problems as students become accustomed to more opportunities to make choices.

Managing Laptops

- Laptops can be used for entertainment, but we've noticed an increasing amount of inappropriate media being shared at school.

Managing Laptops

- It would be better if we had a stronger culture of laptop use in the Upper School that was academic in nature and influenced by faculty instead of student-created and guided.
- Overall, the more we can influence and improve students' actual use of computers, the more we shape a major part of their lives.

Managing Laptops

- Students caught doing distracting things during class with a laptop (games, recreational IM, or inappropriate videos) should be held accountable.
- We also need to discuss the US expectations of laptop use in common areas— how do we manage or react to inappropriate uses of technology outside of the classroom?

Managing Laptops

- In the end, nearly all students will realize that computers can be “time sinks” that have to be used carefully at school.
- Nearly all students use computers at home for recreation, as do their parents, but it isn’t difficult to emphasize that the school day is “working time” and needs to be academically focused.

Summer Meetings

- We want to meet with groups of faculty over the summer (one stipend day per group).
- During those days, we'll discuss examples from the Middle school, review student expectations about laptop use in the US, and collaboratively create recommended best practices and guidelines for overall use of laptops in the US.

Summer Meetings

- The results of these meetings will be presented to all US faculty at the end of August during the technology meeting the Friday before school starts.
- We'll email all US Faculty about possible dates for these meetings, and invite you to sign up.
- These meetings would be of particular interest to faculty who teach ninth grade students.