

1 to 1 Laptop Initiative Questions and Answers:

Below are some basic responses to questions I have heard with regard to the expansion of the 1:1 laptop initiative, which is included as a \$125,000 line item in the 2010-2011 proposed budget.

Why is it necessary to provide students with a laptop for learning?

Integrating technology with instruction improves student engagement and develops an enthusiasm for learning. Having a wireless laptop in the hands of each student produces fundamental changes in the educational process that supports student centered learning focused on information management and acquisition rather than memorization.

Does the cost of the program outweigh the merits of the program?

All initiatives have a cost associated with them. It is the collective responsibility of the school community to recommend those that have merit to the school board in order to help keep our District moving forward. The laptop initiative is one, which has merit and is essential in helping to keep our District moving forward. It is widely recognized that the success of our students is dependent upon their ability to function effectively in the 21st Century. Certain skills have been defined by experts in the educational field as being essential skills for students to gain in order to prepare them to be productive in the 21st Century. Those skills include technology literacy, the ability to collaborate effectively, communicate effectively, innovate, adapt and think critically. The laptop program helps to promote all of these skills.

What is the largest most notable impact of the Point Pleasant Beach laptop program?

The largest most notable change is student engagement. Students who have been involved with the program at the middle school level are notably more involved and engaged with daily instruction. In addition the change in the delivery of daily instruction because of the laptop program has put more responsibility for learning on the student. This shift in paradigm has promoted retention of knowledge and has helped students to apply the knowledge gained across disciplines.

Why is it necessary to expand the program in 2010-2011?

It is important to keep the program moving forward. Part of our District mission statement reads “.... empower our students with the skills necessary to think critically and succeed in a competitive global society.” The students currently in eighth grade have been involved with the program for two full years. The laptop for them has become a valuable tool for learning giving them instant access to relevant information that has brought depth to their learning experience. We have created a learning environment during their middle school experience that is more “real world” and connected to their media rich lifestyles. They will fully expect and they along with their older peers fully deserve that same type of experience in high school so that they are all prepared for success in a “competitive global economy”.

Why is it necessary to “roll out” in all four high school grade levels at once?

It is important to roll out in all four high school grade levels at once because in the high school students are often mixed when taking most courses. It is likely that a ninth grade student will be mixed with upper class students throughout the day.

If the 1:1 laptop program expansion was postponed how much of the expense would be eliminated from the 2010-2011 proposed school budget?

It is important to note that even if the laptop program expansion were postponed there would still be necessary technology expense at the Beach High School. The high school servers are aged and need to be upgraded in order to eliminate downtime. Many of the desktop computers are aged well beyond useful life and need to be upgraded in order to meet the needs of students. The estimated cost of doing this minimal work at the high school is at least \$50,000. This means at best the overall the savings would \$75,000 for a watered down version of what is truly needed.