

NASHVILLE C.C.S.D. #49 DIGITAL CONVERSION QUESTION AND ANSWER DOCUMENT

1. What is a digital conversion?

Nashville #49 is considering making a major change in how teaching and learning looks in the district. We are considering transitioning to a digital conversion or 1:1 program. Simply put, all students would have access to a personal technology device that they would use as a resource for learning.

2. Why is the district considering this option?

The possibility of a digital conversion is a portion of our district's three-year Strategic Plan that was adopted earlier this year. Nashville #49 is considering this option because we feel that this will transform and improve on teaching and learning within the district. Currently, our eighth grade students have access to a device every day here at school. The feedback from them has been very positive and has given them the ability to learn beyond what a traditional textbook can offer. We currently offer many opportunities for students to utilize technology here at school and this is the next step in that process.

In addition to these reasons, our current curriculum and textbooks are in desperate need of an upgrade. A digital curriculum would allow us to stay up-to-date with what we offer our students.

Additionally, this initiative would allow us to utilize professional development opportunities to assist teachers with the transition as well as non-traditional methods of teaching. For example, we are very interested in possibly implementing the "flipped classroom" model of teaching in selected classrooms and/or subjects here at school.

3. Will this initiative replace traditional textbooks?

Yes, traditional textbooks would eventually be phased out. Novels, accelerated reader books, library books, etc would still be utilized within the district. The main textbook for curriculum, however, would eventually be used on the devices. This does not mean, however, that skills such as handwriting would be disbanded. Paper/pencil activities and assessments would still be utilized throughout the school.

4. What curriculum materials would be used?

The digital curriculum for English/Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science would be adopted from Pearson. Pearson, as many of you know, has been the provider of the state testing system in Illinois for many years and currently has the contract for the new PARCC assessments next year. They have also been a part of the team that helped design the new Common Core State Standards that will be implemented next year.

5. What steps towards implementation did the district take up to this point?

1:1 implementation has been discussed for several years in the district. It has been a source of conversation and interest and we are now taking the steps necessary to possibly adopt the concept. Here are some of the steps that the district has taken over the past year to get to where we are now:

a) Over the past few years, the district has systematically increased the number of computers and 1:1 devices that we currently have here at school. We currently have two computer labs, three mobile Chromebook carts, one mobile Netbook cart, iPads and/or Chromebooks in our K-4 classrooms, computers in each classroom, and our eighth grade students have a Chromebook assigned to them each day.

b) As a part of the district's three year Strategic Plan that was developed this summer, it was determined that technology and 1:1 would be a major discussion within the district.

c) Strategic Planning Team #2 developed a district-wide technology vision and decided to dive into researching a digital conversion

d) The district's technology company performed an in-depth evaluation of our current network and gave feedback pertaining to needed improvements

e) Strategic Planning Team #2 did a site visit at Schuyler Industry C.U.S.D. #5. They have had a 1:1 program in place as well as the Pearson digital curriculum. The visit gave us the opportunity to get many questions answered and to observe in their classrooms.

f) Parent and community meetings are currently being planned to discuss the issue and to answer questions. Information will be posted on our website and in the Nashville News.

g) We anticipate a recommendation and possibly a decision to be made at the school board meeting to be held on February 27, 2014

6. How would this initially be implemented throughout the district?

Spring/Summer 2014:	Initial professional development for faculty
August 2014:	Digital conversion for middle school (all core subjects) Digital conversion for primary school (Math only)
August 2015:	Digital conversion for primary school (Math, Science, Social Studies)
August 2016:	District-wide digital conversion completed

7. What will this program cost the district?

There will be some substantial initial one-time costs to improve the school's infrastructure, wireless capabilities, and faculty professional development. To assist with budgeting, those costs will be spread over the next three-four years and are costs that the district needs to invest in regardless of the digital conversion.

The projected five-year implementation total cost to the district is \$563,194. The projected five-year implementation total off-setting cost to the district is \$517,000. The projected total “new” cost to the district is \$46,194, which equates out to a five-year average spending increase of \$18.11 per student.

A detailed cost analysis projection sheet is attached to this Q and A document.

8. How can the district justify these additional costs?

Nashville #49 is in the first year of a systematic five-year cost reduction phase. At the conclusion of the 2017-2018 school year, I anticipate that our district will have cut over \$400,000 out of our operating budget by:

- a) Making changes to our pre-school program (completed)
- b) Making changes to our early childhood special education program (completed)
- c) Making changes to our KSED special services program (completed)
- d) Attrition (partially completed but ongoing)
- e) Retirements (anticipated)

In addition to the cost reduction plan, it is obvious that our district needs to upgrade our current textbooks and curriculum materials. The cost of purchasing new textbooks for the core subjects is extremely expensive compared to the digital textbooks. In addition, we have concerns that our current math program (Saxon Math) will not align very well to the new Common Core State Standards.

Our district also has one of the lowest elementary school operating expenditure per pupil costs in the state. With the needed upgrades to our textbooks and the impending state standards change, it is very relevant for us to take a hard look at this program.

9. Will the program cost parents additional money?

Our district has historically charged a \$50 registration fee and has not increased that fee in quite a while. In addition, we do not charge for participation in activities such as sports or band. Our recommendation would be to charge a yearly fee of \$75 per student, which would help cover the digital curriculum cost and a small portion of the lease payment.

10. What type of device will be used?

Although this may change, we are considering the Lenovo X131e ThinkPad as the main 1:1 device for the district.

11. Will the students be permitted to take the device home at night?

Yes. Students in grades 5-8 will take their device home with them each night. Students in grades K-4 will occasionally take their device home.

12. What happens if a family does not have Internet capability at home?

We realize that Internet and wireless capabilities may be an issue with some families. There are several ways that we can address this issue. The digital textbooks can be downloaded and saved to the student's device if needed. In addition, the digital textbooks can be downloaded and saved on a personal junk drive. This would enable a student to work offline on the same materials as everyone else.

There are also establishments throughout the town that have free wireless capabilities. Additionally, the school building will be made accessible beginning at 6:30 AM for students who need to utilize the school's wireless system.

If absolutely needed, traditional Pearson textbooks can be purchased for \$15 per book. This would be done on a case-by-case basis and could only be done for a limited time.

13. How would substitute teachers be able to use the program?

We are fortunate in that we have several substitute teachers who are here on a regular basis. Those substitute teachers would be invited to participate in the professional development training with our staff.

Most teachers currently prepare detailed notes for a requested absence and have substitute binders that can be updated with new technology information.

The teacher would also have the ability to email or otherwise communicate assignments directly to the students. Therefore, the substitute teacher would serve as a facilitator during class sessions. The students would be much more independent in their learning while the substitute teacher monitors what they are doing.

14. Would students be able to bring their own personal device to use at school?

No. The students would be using the school-issued devices while at school.

15. What happens if a student loses his/her technology privileges due to a disciplinary infraction?

The Pearson curriculum would be made available to the student in a different form so that the student could continue learning until the punishment is completed.

16. What about constant changes and improvements to technology?

We have decided to lease the devices rather than purchase. This will allow us to stay current with technology and make changes if we are not happy with the current devices.

17. What happens if a student forgets his/her device at home?

It will be the student's responsibility to bring the device back and forth. The device will be viewed as a part of the curriculum material and textbook. In addition, the student is responsible for charging their device prior to coming to school.

18. How will this program correlate with what the high school is doing?

We have communicated with the leadership of District #99 regarding our intent to make this transition.

19. How will the district handle broken or lost devices?

It is the student's responsibility to care for the school-owned devices. When being transported, the device needs to always be secured in the student's carrying case. Accidental issues will be covered by warranty or paid for by the school district. Issues that occur due to purposeful actions or irresponsibility on the part of the student will be paid for by the family. Appropriate district forms would need to be completed prior to using the device.

20. Will there be time limits for the devices established by the district?

We are fully aware of concerns about time spent on technology devices and the effect it could have on a student. While the district will not establish a set time limit, there would be a substantial amount of time throughout the school day when students were not actively using their device. Students would generally not use the device while on the bus, waiting for school to start, lunch, recess, physical education, music, art, library, etc.

Additionally, students would not be on the device at all times during their core subjects. The teachers will still utilize paper/pencil activities and lessons that do not require the use of the device. While time spent with technology will certainly increase, the district will closely monitor the time spent on the devices.

21. How will the district handle Internet safety concerns?

The district's technology company plans to install the district's filtering system on the student's devices. Therefore, content that the student is trying to access outside of school will be filtered as if the student was in school. There may still be issues, but this should help alleviate most of the potential problems that could occur with this type of program.

22. How can I obtain additional information regarding this type of program?

Here are some sites that you can visit to assist you in gathering additional information regarding this type of program:

www.ProjectRED.org This site addresses 1:1 learning

www.pearsonschool.com This site will enable visitors to learn more about Pearson

www.lenovo.com

This site provides information regarding the 1:1 devices

If you have any specific questions, please contact Mr. Brink at 618-327-3055 or mbrink@nashville49.org.