

The Stoughton Public School system is very close to going to one to one computing – one student, one computing device - using mobile technology. Whether that will be using iPads, Chromebooks, Nexus, or some other version of a tablet/netbook remains to be seen.

There is a one to one computing subcommittee working on the possible configurations and rollout. The effort to date has been on building a wireless infrastructure to support this and the Stoughton Public School District is one of the very few towns where all buildings are already completely wireless, according to the Boston Globe.

All student grade 6 and above have FirstClass email accounts. They also have Google Docs accounts available for middle and high school students. This is the second year with the Google Docs accounts which were set up after a very successful pilot program in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade last year. The School Committee has an article in for this year's Town Meeting to increase the bandwidth at school and town buildings. The schools currently have 100% wireless coverage.

We would need to check with Dr. Gray on the numbers but there are many iPads already in use throughout all schools and at all grade levels. A little over a year ago a number of iPads were given to teachers who competed for them by submitting proposals for how they would use them in their classroom setting. The initial group consisted of a few dozen iPads. Since then there have been additional purchases of iPad carts so that teachers could wheel the cart to their room to use in a lesson. Prior to this there were a number of iPads secured through a grant in the Pre-School program. There have been netbook carts in every school for several years as well. The wireless infrastructure, the mobile technology, and the SMART Boards all work together to build the foundation for delivery of curriculum that is not tied to a printed textbook. This infrastructure has been built incrementally and the District is in great shape for the move to one to one computing. Moving in this direction is part of creating a World Class Educational system.

It is unlikely that the schools would abandon printed textbooks altogether. Rather it will be a shift in the direction of electronic media. Using the internet and the developing curriculum resource library of the Stoughton Schools, the lessons teachers create on a daily basis could include material of all sorts from all over the world. Imagine the unlimited access to primary sources for history classes, as an example. Many schools are exploring the use of Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) where students that already have access to the technology use their own device and the school system provides for those who don't. Currently an overwhelming majority of students in High School access the school's wireless every morning via smartphones, iPods, tablets and laptops.

All of this is being studied by the One-to-One sub-committee of the School Committee consisting of Joyce Hussein and George Dolinsky. The School Committee has access through our First Class accounts to email, documents, notices and curricula. Four of the five members use our school accounts to:

- monitor and familiarize ourselves with the curriculum on all subjects and grade levels;
- access the Professional Development schedule and programs;
- share on the daily news board sub-committee information for the School Committee and staff and see what is going on in the schools;

- access the school calendar, Freecycle and Charity fundraisers;
- check the Jobs board with all of the postings for open positions or stipends being advertised.

To refuse access to such a wealth of information is a disservice to the citizens who elected us to do the job on School Committee.

To serve as a “Beta” group the SC was loaned iPads for the duration of our terms in a pilot project. This is the first step towards going completely paperless and modeling the work environment we would expect of the staff when the day comes for the District to go to one to one computing. There are many Stoughton town boards, if not most, where town documents are stored on personal computers and communication is done through personal email accounts. For the sake of transparency, efficiency and educating ourselves about one to one computing devices the School Committee received a presentation from teachers at the middle school, and training on accessing documents and other information on school-owned devices.

There is concern over using non-school owned devices for school business, particularly in the case of sensitive data such as executive session minutes that have not been released to the public. It is the policy of the district for people who have access to this type of data to have school owned iPads, including all building principals, and assistant principals at the middle and high school. If any school owned device were to be stolen, the hard drives could be remotely wiped. This is similar to the policies in place at many firms in the business world.

This past winter there were two instances where the school was closed due to snow on days when the packets would normally have been prepared. Packets are prepared and ready the Friday before a regular School Committee meeting and either picked up by the SC member or mailed to their home. On these snow days Mrs. Shea had the ability to prepare much of the packet remotely. In these two cases she emailed the members PDF copies of the material. Email is not a particularly secure method of transmitting sensitive documents. Using the school First Class system is a much safer means. Not only must the School Committee be conversant with the rapidly changing technology that the district is going to be adopting, there will also be a savings in staff time, in paper, and ink.

In the very near future, The School Committee will begin to use iPads at our meetings and to review documents, a move that will be more efficient and above all, improve communication. Many School Committees across the state have already moved in this direction.

-Deborah Sovinee  
Chair, Stoughton School Committee  
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