



Horry County Schools

Parent Update: iPads



Middle School Students to get iPads in January

When middle school students return after winter break, they'll begin the first phase of an initiative that will create new possibilities for learning. Students in grades 6-8 will be issued iPads for their personal use during school. The iPads are one of many technology tools that are helping students prepare to be successful in a digital world.

Horry County Schools' calls this new initiative Personalized Digital Learning, or PDL, for short. We are beginning the initiative in middle schools and will expand it to include students in grades 3-12 within three years. While the roll-out for students begins in January, middle school teachers rolled-up their sleeves earlier first semester to begin learning how to use the iPads, how to integrate digital content, and how to help students develop personal platforms for learning. Our teachers are being supported by the HCS Digital Integration Team. They are growing and learning together through local and online learning communities.

There will be lots of excitement among students during the distribution of iPads, yet the real excitement will come when you begin to see how classrooms change with the use of new technologies. You may hear your child's teachers talk about "blended learning." This new term has a simple meaning. "Blended learning" describes a classroom dynamic where teachers apply their best practices, utilize their best resources and expand the possibilities for learning by incorporating the most up-to-date technology tools available.

iPad distribution

Students will receive their iPads on the following schedule:

- ◆ Aynor Middle:
Wednesday, Jan 22
- ◆ Black Water Middle:
Tuesday, Jan. 21
- ◆ Conway Middle:
Thursday, Jan. 9
- ◆ Forestbrook Middle:
Mon-Tues Jan. 13-14
- ◆ Green Sea Floyds:
Monday, Jan. 27
- ◆ Loris Middle
Tuesday, Jan. 7
- ◆ Myrtle Beach Middle
Monday, Jan. 6
- ◆ N. Myrtle Beach Middle
Wednesday, Jan. 15
- ◆ Ocean Bay Middle
Thursday, Jan. 23
- ◆ St. James Middle
Friday, Jan. 10
- ◆ Whittemore Park Middle
Late December

Parents/Guardians' Permission Required

Attached to this newsletter are two forms that require signatures!

In order for your child to be assigned an iPad, parents/guardians must sign the two attached agreements; one which gives parent permission for your child to receive an iPad and a second form which authorizes your child to be assigned online accounts. Students will need online accounts for email, educational websites, instructional applications and iTunes. By your signature, you are only authorizing your child to access applications approved by Horry County Schools. Neither parents nor students will be asked to make purchases for any applications. It is important to remember that these two forms go together. One serves no purpose without the other.

Signed permission forms are due by Wednesday, December 18.

Failure to return signed permission forms from a parent means that a student WILL NOT be issued an iPad nor online accounts for learning applications.

We encourage you to visit the Horry County Schools website to get more information about the details of this exciting initiative at

pdl.horrycountyschools.net

iPad Points:

- Students in grades 6-8, who have obtained parent permission, will be assigned an iPad for use at school. Students are expected to take care of the devices issued to them and to practice proper handling techniques.
- Initially, students will only be allowed to use the devices while at school and will pick them up each morning and drop them off each afternoon for recharging. HCS is exploring a management plan that will enable students to take iPads home to maximize use of the device.
- Management software will be installed on iPads to ensure that students only access approved educational applications and Internet sites.
- Protective iPad cases will be provided. HCS will be responsible for accidental damages and equipment repair. Students and their parents/guardians will be responsible for repairs or replacement of devices that have been maliciously damaged.
- iPads will have digital textbooks for some classes, while other classes may use a combination of digital content and applications.
- HCS expects that iPads will be used in all classes, yet classroom teachers will have discretion to determine when and how the iPads will be used during instructional time.
- The school-owned iPad provides a consistent learning platform for all students and teachers. Each device will be installed with the applications and instructional materials required for students.
- HCS has upgraded its wireless network to increase speed and capacity for the use of additional devices in January. The wireless network has the same safety filters as the student computer network.
- Students may use other personal computing devices and access the wireless network as allowed by the HCS Acceptable Use Policy and other rules or policies determined by their school's administration.

All Students to Take Digital Citizenship Course

Safety comes first. To help students understand the responsibilities that come with the privilege of having iPads, all students will be required to take a Digital Citizenship course to help them understand their personal responsibilities as digital learners and how to make ethical, safe, and responsible decisions in a digital learning community.



The Digital Citizenship course includes eight modules that address the impact of technology on how we learn, work, and live; online safety and security; protecting personal information; the impact of words, actions, choices and behaviors; ethics; cyberbullying; and, of course, how to care for the device. The course will also be available in HCS iTunesU, so parents can review all the training modules that are being provided to students.

PARENT SURVEY

In December, parents will receive instructions from their child's school about taking a survey to help HCS gather information prior to the distribution of the iPads. The information you share will help to evaluate the success of the program, help to address parents' questions, and will help to improve our developing digital program. Parent involvement and support is vital to the success of the digital learning initiative. We want to hear from you!

We encourage you to visit
pdl.horrycountyschools.net
on the Horry County Schools website
for more exciting details!

