



SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 23

(CENTRAL OKANAGAN)

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"Together We Learn"

June 9, 2008

RE: iLearn Program Reconfigured

The one-to-one laptop program, known as "iLearn", was introduced in School District No. 23, Central Okanagan, in 2005. The initial plan was to gradually provide all students from Grades 7 to 12 with a personal laptop which they could use at school and at home.

The program was reviewed in November 2007, with the Board determining that changes should be made in the way the computers would be introduced to and used by Grade 10 – 12 students. At that time, it was decided that while the senior secondary students would have access to laptop computers on an as-needed basis, the program would continue as a one-to-one program for Grades 7 – 9.

The decision to continue to provide one-to-one laptops in the middle grades was revisited by the Board at its April 23rd 2008 meeting. Unexpected budget constraints have forced us to reconsider the high cost of continuing the program, in its original format, for our grade 7 – 9 students. Taking into account all the positive feedback we have received on our exceptional program, the decision to change it was quite difficult. However, the one-to-one program was not without its detractors and some negative issues had been identified, so the final resolution was, in a way, a compromise.

The iLearn program will be reconfigured to a cart-based model focused on core curricular areas (language arts, social studies, mathematics and science). Teachers can construct specific course units that utilize laptop computers as a key component. This will provide significant learning opportunities for students.

With 93% of our students having access to a computer at home, schools must ensure that the 7% who may not have access to a computer outside of school are not placed at a disadvantage. School libraries will have an allocation of laptops to support online research and allow students to "sign them out" for a period of time, as they would a library book, to support their educational program. The Board will monitor this, as we want to ensure that all grade 7 – 12 students will have access to computers when they need them.

This new way of providing an important educational tool, in the classroom, and on an "as-needed" basis, means that many of the successes we have seen with the implementation of the iLearn program will continue. The Board has allocated \$2.38 million annually for the iLearn budget. The projected annual cost of the original vision was \$4.5 to \$5 million a year.

While the reconfiguration of the iLearn program may not realize our full original vision, the program will still provide an outstanding opportunity for School District 23 students. Our iLearn program will continue to be one of the most advanced programs of its kind in Canada.

If parents have any questions regarding the Board decisions regarding School District No. 23's iLearn Program, please do not hesitate to call any trustee, through the Board Office at 860-8888.

Have a great summer.

Moyra Baxter,

Chairperson, Board of Education