Frequently Asked Questions
FACS One-to-One Laptop Initiative

In planning for our one-to-one laptop initiative, we have researched the experiences of similar schools and adapted their findings and practices to fit the needs of our school. We are grateful to a large community of educators who have helped to formulate the most often asked questions. While we appreciate their help and suggestions, our answers are particular to FACS and may be different from the practices of other schools.

Why is the FACS moving to a one-to-one laptop school?

We understand that the use of technology plays an important role in improving the quality of instruction and is a tool for the entire learning community. More than this, though, students require a fluency in technologies which were not even part of the landscape just a few years ago.

We recognize that in order to advance the level of technology instruction at FACS we need to establish a common platform throughout the school, one which will best facilitate the aspects of technology which are critical for students to understand and master.

A common platform enables students and teachers to easily get support from one another, allowing teachers to quickly move beyond instruction in the technical aspects of technology use to the actual content and creative areas of instruction. Unifying the platform will allow teachers to better leverage the use of instructional technology in the classroom.

What other schools in our area are one-to-one laptop schools?

Below is a list of some of the one-to-one schools in the Memphis area.

1. Christian Brothers

2. Briarcrest

3. Harding Academy

4. Hutchison

Research related to this initiative

Is there any evidence that this style of learning is better than traditional teaching methods?

There are two sides to every story, and research will point to different results depending on a multitude of contributing factors. However, there is qualitative and quantitative research showing considerable improvement in classroom practice for students using laptop computers. There also is significant evidence that computer-mediated, and media-rich, learning environments enrich the learning experience and deepen understanding.

Research from a long-term study of laptop initiatives shows a number of results, including:

- Increased independent inquiry-based learning

- Higher level instructional feedback

- Greater integration of subject areas

- Higher level of sustained writing

- More student discussion

- More performance assessment

- Increased hands-on learning

- Students develop and practice unique meta-cognitive processes (the ability to understand HOW they are learning) within a laptop environment.

- quality of writing improves

- classroom discussion increases

- quality of submitted work improves

- collaborative expertise improves

- organization improves

- motivation and commitment to work improves

- responses to learning situations improve

Are there any negatives to learning in this way?

Research indicates that there can be negatives to the use of technology, including either underutilization and overutilization. Our teachers are being trained to manage the laptop resources effectively and optimally. For example, in a school where technology is overused, the time allotted to sustained reading could be reduced. Our teachers are being made aware of this, and other, issues.
In addition, the transportation of laptops is an area of potential concern. With proper procedures and expectations in place, we can reduce loss and/or damage. In all aspects of the program, teachers and parents will need to understand potential issues and be able to respond appropriately.

Does this style of learning suit all children?

No one style of learning can suit all children. However, research indicates that classrooms that incorporate computer-based inquiries demonstrate an overall improvement in student performance.
A 1:1 laptop programs help create a standard learning environment, a sense of ownership of learning, and more room for differentiation in the classroom.

How will my child ever learn good penmanship if all the work is done on computers?

The explicit teaching of handwriting, and the requirement of handwritten work, will remain an important component of our program. This is important because not only do students need to practice penmanship, students exercise different parts of their brains when they write by hand. Fine motor skills, which come with writing and drawing, are important for many future careers from engineering to art.

What have schools with laptop programs learned from their experiences?

Schools have learned that students take more ownership of their learning when they are engaged by notebooks and meaningful application of technology resources. In addition, research shows that laptop computers provide significant improvement in learning and teaching. However, in order to realize those results, it is important that students in laptop programs have sufficient and timely technical support.

Laptop initiatives are not a panacea for all of the intricate problems of the education process. Some surprising and not so surprising results include finding that laptops are more resilient than one might expect, and middle school students are toughest on their laptops. Importantly, students need to be taught how to use laptops effectively, and parents can and should be more connected to the learning process.

FACS has taken all these factors into account when developing its own laptop program, and modeled much of the program on the successful laptop programs already in place.

How will my child's social skills be affected by the constant interaction with a computer versus face-to-face contact?

We are constantly striving for a healthy balance between technology use and the 'offline' skills and activities. Laptops should not replace, nor interfere with, critical and fundamental human contact. Research shows that in laptop classrooms, students actually engaged in more class discussions. FACS students will continue to participate in face-to-face group activities both in class as well as in extra-curricular activities.

Implementation at FACS

How often will the laptops be used in FACS classrooms?

The laptops are a tool to support learning. Teachers will determine when using the laptop is appropriate. We anticipate increased usage as students and faculty become more familiar with the computers. However, technology will not be used simply for the sake of using technology. It will only be used when and where appropriate – in situations where it enhances and extends the learning process.

Will the laptop be used in all classes?

The laptops will not necessarily be used in every class that your child attends every day, but they will be used within all core academic subjects. The success of a laptop program is not the computer being used "a lot" but, rather, the laptop being used where appropriate to improve learning.
Here are some examples of how laptops might be used in class:

- Access to a wider array of interactive resources and information other than that which a teacher and a book provide in a traditional classroom.
- The ability to quickly download digital materials thereby saving the time, expense and wastage of paper.
- The ability for students to expand the walls of their classroom and include other students and experts in the field through online educational discourse.
- Ready access to powerful communication tools (video and podcasting, for example) through which students can demonstrate their understanding.
- The ability to simultaneously write documents with students through the use of online tools providing the ability for peer-editing of written work.

Will all FACS teachers be expected to use the laptops with students?

Teachers will use laptops with students where appropriate. Teachers will receive thorough training before they are expected to work with students, and they will receive ongoing professional development (PD) as we seek meaningful implementation of technology resources. We have already begun this process with our teachers who have attended a variety of technology related conferences over the past two years.

Will children be taught proper research skills using the computer?

Absolutely. Research skills are already being taught at FACS, and we will continue to teach proper information skills and the use of internet search engines as well as the accessing of online databases.

Who controls the level of plagiarism and copyright issues?

Plagiarism is not a new issue in schools, nor is plagiarism unique to the digital realm. Education in its entirety has to face and deal with the impact of what in simple terms is 'cutting and pasting'. Rules and expectations applied to student work prior to the use of computers remain in effect.

The more complex issues are, of course: breach of copyright, plagiarism, and the passing off others' work as one's own. FACS will continue to enforce its expectation of the originality of all student work and required that all copyrighted work to be acknowledged and references cited. The school, if necessary, can use software (such as Turnitin.com) to check student work against content available on the Internet. Parents with questions regarding our policies should refer to the [FACS Responsible Use of Technology Agreement](#), available through our website.

Will the computers be checked for inappropriate material?

FACS reserves the right to confirm that students remain within the expectations, rules, policies, and procedures of the school community and that student use of technology conforms to local law. Random checks will be made on the network activity of student machines. Additionally, teachers will employ software that keeps a log of all classroom technology activity.

Will textbooks be online?

Where the teacher deems an online resource to be superior to the print version, the online resource may be used. If cost savings are available with online texts, and the online texts are equal to available print resources, FACS will consider the use of digital texts.

Usage of computer

Will students be able to email, chat, and play games on their laptops at any time?

The laptops' primary purpose is to serve as a learning tool; they are not to be used as toys during the academic day. Student activities will be guided by the environment in which they are currently working; teaching children to communicate properly and appropriately with these tools is part of our mandate.

Will the school monitor the hours the student is allowed on the computer?

Laptops will be only one part of a rich and diverse learning environment at FACS. Our teachers will monitor laptop use in class, and the IT Department will work with teachers to ensure a balanced learning environment in the school. We encourage parents to set expectations for home which limit the use of technology.

Will students be allowed to use the computer in the cafeteria and playground?

Drinks and food can cause damage to laptops. Students will be expected to protect their laptops at all times. Students will be trained, and encouraged, to work safely with respect to their environment and within the policies and procedures established by FACS. We discourage the use of computers in the cafeteria or outside areas of campus except for a class activity.

Will my child only have access to school-provided software?

FACS will provide access to all necessary curriculum software.

Will students be able to install software on the laptop?
No.

Can a student use their laptop computer over the summer?
No.

What will be the consequences of improper use of the computer?
There are policies and procedures established by FACS to deal with inappropriate behavior. Specific consequences will be determined by the nature of the infraction. Students are reminded they are subject to the [Responsible Use of Technology Agreement](#) when using FACS network resources.

How will FACS police cyber bullying in the school?
FACS has established policies and procedures to deal with inappropriate behavior. Specific consequences will be determined by the nature of the infraction and dealt with accordingly. Similarly, students will be guided through appropriate digital citizenship through all areas of the curriculum.

How will we protect people's privacy, given that the computers will likely have built-in cameras and video recorders?
FACS treats the issue of privacy rights seriously. No one has the right to record (using audio or video) another person without clear and direct permission. Students cannot record each other, teachers, or anyone else at FACS without the permission of the persons involved.

How will children print documents at school?
Students will not be able to print from their laptops. They will need to use a flash drive to print in the school Library, or print documents at home from their home computers.

Can students use their own accessories with the laptop?
Yes, but given the policies and procedures that are in place to protect students, parents and the school, any accessories must fall within prescribed guidelines as set by FACS.

Do students need to have access to a printer at home?
This is not a specific requirement of the program, but in order to minimize printing at school, students may wish to have access to their own printer at home.

Usage of Internet

How can we limit students' access to inappropriate material on the Internet? What will the school do to help prevent students from going to inappropriate sites?

FACS has an [Responsible Use of Technology Agreement](#) in place. This policy is strictly enforced and the consequences of breaching the guidelines are clear. In addition, the school uses a filter system (Firewall) to guard against inappropriate material.

Will the Internet be filtered to protect the children from inappropriate sites?

Yes. The school uses Sonic Wall to filter internet searches. This filter is reviewed on an ongoing basis to provide necessary academic access to sites while preventing, as far as possible, the accessing of inappropriate material.

Will the children have constant access to the Internet or will this be at specific controlled times?

Because of the wireless network, the laptops will always be able to access the Internet; however, the school's Internet access will be filtered for inappropriate content, and computer use time will be managed by teachers and administrators.

Will students be able to use the laptops for Internet access at home?

If the Internet is available at home, the laptop will be able to access it. If there is a problem connecting at home, students can email Kathy Petermann at kpetermann@facsmemphis.org for advice, or parents can contact their Internet Service Provider (ISP) for technical support. FACS does not control internet access on any network other than our own. We highly recommend Circle with Disney for family internet control. We also recommend commonsensemedia.org as a resource for parents who wish to know more about internet safety and appropriate internet sites for their children.

If I have more questions or need clarification, who can I contact for more information?

Contact Kathy Petermann at kpetermann@facsmemphis.org.

Security

How will students keep their laptops safe when they are not using them?

We fully expect there to be many times in the day when the laptops are not being used (e.g. during physical education class, during lunchtime, etc.) and we appreciate students will need to store their laptops somewhere secure. Students will store them in their lockers, which should be securely locked. FACS has also installed CCTV cameras that are directed towards the lockers, hallways and other areas of concern.

Will students be allowed to take their laptops home?

Yes. Once the parents and student have signed the technology agreement and the student has purchased an *approved laptop backpack*, we fully expect students will take their laptops home to continue their learning. Students will also need to charge them at home before the next day of school.

Professional Development of Teachers

Is FACS providing professional development for the teachers?

FACS recognizes the need for ongoing professional development for all staff members. The training needs to include the integration of technology into learning, teaching, and assessment for understanding.

Professional Development is a top priority for the success of all learners. Professional development must be integrated within all content areas and grade levels. Also, professional development must be ongoing due to the simultaneous needs to learn how to use technology, how to integrate technology into instruction, and the continual emergence of new and improved technologies and practices. Professional development must be differentiated to address the needs and aptitudes of adult learners.

Continuing Access during repair, missing computer, etc.

What if my child forgets to bring his/her laptop to school, loses power, or it is being repaired?

Spare laptops, in limited numbers, will be available for borrowing from the IT office on a case-by-case basis. We encourage students to be vigilant in charging their laptops at home and treat their

laptop as an essential part of our FACS learning environment, just as they would their notebooks, calculator, pencils, or other school supplies.

If I need to get a repair, can the school help?
Yes. FACS will work with Dell to repair laptops. Our goal is to minimize the inconvenience experienced if the need arises.

What if my child's laptop crashes during the school day?
Students will have access to the on-site service through our IT Department and will, if necessary, be provided with a loaner laptop so that classroom learning is uninterrupted.

Will a student be given a new laptop if hers or his goes bad?
Laptops will be replaced or repaired through Dell and covered under Dell's warranty. The large number of Dell computers in use by FACS, its teachers, and students, actually works to decrease the time required for repairs by encouraging our vendors to stock common parts.

Finances

What is the rental cost of the laptop program for parents?
The cost of the Dell Latitude 3380 laptop is $240/year. This fee is nonrefundable, and is due on July 1st. At the end of 4 years, the laptop may be purchased for $1.

Are there any additional costs associated with the Dell Latitude rental?
Yes. Students are expected to purchase and use a sturdy laptop bag with a padded laptop sleeve. *Parents are also highly encouraged to purchase theft insurance.* Additionally, parents may purchase a more comprehensive accidental damage policy than the Dell policy which provides only one claim per year. Information about additional insurance options will be emailed to parents in August or September.

If I have more than one child, do I have to rent multiple computers? If so, is there a discount for the additional rental?

There is no discount for multiple rentals. If you have more than one student in the laptop program, you will need to rent a laptop for each of your students. While a computer might be shared in the evening at home, it is not possible for students to share a computer during the academic day.

Technical

How will laptops be configured?

As the laptops will be purchased and owned by FACS, the school will retain complete administrative control over the laptops (e.g. the ability to install software, configure network access, install extensions to browsers, etc.).

Will there be wireless internet access throughout the entire school?

Wireless internet will be available throughout the school for FACS laptop students and teachers. Guests to the school are allowed internet access on a separate network. Students who do not have FACS laptops are *not* required to use personal technology in the classroom. A laptop cart is provided for classroom use. Students who bring their own devices have internet access before 8:00 a.m. and after 3:00 p.m.