



1 to 1 Initiative: A Continuing Journey

By Matt Anderson, Instructional Technology Coordinator
Ashwaubenon School District

Mr. Anderson has instructional certifications in Business Education and Elementary Keyboarding and classroom teaching experience gained in Green Bay Area Public Schools. Education is a second career as Matt also has 17 years of “private” industry experience in sales, marketing, and public relations.

Two years ago the Ashwaubenon School District, a suburban district located in northeast Wisconsin abutting Green Bay, embarked on a journey to transform how teaching and learning happens in classrooms.

Today that journey is leading to students bringing their own personal digital devices into our buildings. We currently have a blended “1 to 1 Initiative” which includes half of our high school with district issued netbooks and a **Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)** program that began with selected seniors. The power of students having a device in class to use to access information is sometimes difficult to measure through traditional quantitative assessment. However, the change in engagement of students is amazing!

As we began our journey and held discussions about what our goals should look like, we regularly reminded ourselves, “It’s not about the stuff”. Rather, we asked ourselves and we asked our stakeholders (students, staff, administrators, community), “What should teaching and learning look like in the classrooms of Ashwaubenon in 2012?” And, “What should teaching and learning look like in 2020?”

The primary goals of what became the *Ashwaubenon 1 to 1 Initiative* centered around three main ideas:

- “Transform Student Learning Potential to 21st Century Skills” by providing immediate access to research and information and creating an atmosphere of collaborative learning.
- “Transform Instructional Practices,” by providing instructional flexibility, access to Web 2.0 tools, and access to Web based curriculum resources every day.
- Retain flexibility for ever changing technology.

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Our current success in changes to the way learning is happening can be traced back to key steps involving infrastructure readiness and planting seeds of change with staff. Two years prior to rolling out the 1 to 1 Initiative, the district invested in the construction of a wireless network. Another key investment at the time, was the installation of fiber optics between all buildings to transport data. One year prior to the 1 to 1 Initiative, as part of a scheduled rotation, staff computers were replaced with laptops. Changes to the culture from desktops to laptops introduced the idea of portability and connection to the wireless network for our teaching staff.

It was decided to implement a “soft rollout” of staff laptops in the middle of spring semester. Staff members were allowed to keep their desktops. They were introduced to laptops and told they could use both through the end of the year and would have their laptops to take home over the summer. We learned a valuable staff development lesson by not picking a date and just switching; the staff “bought in” to the idea of portability when they could learn to use this new tool on “their time”.

We researched successful and unsuccessful 1 to 1 Initiatives. We visited other districts, attended conferences, and read journals. We evaluated hardware including laptops, notebooks, netbooks, tablets, and handhelds. We tested several devices but decided on netbooks. This was through partnering with Verizon Wireless to supply 3G enabled netbook computers. The 3G opportunity was intriguing, as it provided 24/7 Internet access to all students. Although all of our buildings were wireless, 3G access away from school, “leveled the playing field” by providing all students the same opportunity for access to information, regardless of their economic situation.

Another significant factor in the success we are experiencing is through the implementation of a classroom management system. We use Moodle and My Big Campus in this capacity, as virtual extensions of our classrooms. This is still a teacher directed space; and we are seeing teachers “flip” their classrooms. We are seeing students engaging in discussions in the evenings and the weekends. We are seeing entire classes going paperless as assignments are posted, collected, graded and turned back virtually. We see groups of students in the LMC, commons, or in the halls before school working on their netbooks.

On the hardware side, we have placed either an interactive white board or a ceiling mounted projector in every classroom. This ability to stream content also opens teaching and learning opportunities in each classroom. We have hired an “Integration Coach” for the district whose primary responsibility is to work with teachers in their classrooms bringing their ideas to life integrating Web 2.0 tools. Through his work, classrooms are changing to 21st Century models. In some instances, desks are moving out of rows. In some instances tables are replacing desks. In some instances walls are covered with erasable “dry erase” paint.

All these components work together to create collaborative learning opportunities brought to students in their classrooms. Staff gains access to the information they need through portable laptops, a “window to the world” in every class and a “just-in-time” model of staff development where our Integration Coach comes to them. Students prosper as staff is more engaged and has “bought in” to a common direction of the district. As this model of staff development continues, we are now seeing staff taking initiative to hold their own “impromptu” collaboration sessions to share and explore a new technology idea or tool. This is a powerful development that is happening organically based on creating the environment where such efforts are encouraged.

However, the most exciting development we have witnessed is the impact of all students in a given class having access to Internet information through having an Internet enabled device in their hands at all times during school. We live in uncertain economic times for education funding. As we look to the next few years, how sustainable is district purchased netbooks expanding through grade levels every year? Can we supply a new grade level with devices, but also start to “double” the purchases as the original netbooks reach their life expectancy?

We subscribe to the tenet that if you want to know what someone is thinking, you ask them. Several surveys of students, staff and community have been administered. We have learned much including:

- Most (not all) of our families have internet access at home.
- Most (not all) of our families have wireless Internet access at home.
- Most (not all) of our students have some form of portable Internet enabled device.

Knowing that to have equal access for students that otherwise wouldn’t have it, the district will continue to provide devices and access for those students. But, why wouldn’t we ask our families and community to share this amazing resource that we know will transform how teaching and learning is happening in our classrooms?

In January of 2012, we opened our network to seniors in upper level classes to **bring their own devices**. We began in a few AP classes and are expanding this program one class at-a-time (every few days) as we iron out new demands on our wireless network. We are hopeful that the network will open for students at the high school sometime soon after spring break. We are hopeful it can expand to our middle school for next school year. Again, based on experience and lessons learned, we are implementing a “soft” rollout. By expanding one class at-a-time, we can work with staff and assure they are comfortable with a variety of different devices and how to start accessing these “tools” that are now appearing in their classrooms.

As a part of our now blended 1 to 1 Initiative/BYOD, we are also introducing Google Apps as BYOD expands.

This powerful collaboration tool gives students access to word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, illustrations, and Web Site development. We see Google Apps serving as an important and necessary component of the transformation of learning in Ashwaubenon.

We have physical buildings and classrooms that function as district and “teacher controlled” spaces. We have My Big Campus and Moodle which function as virtual extensions of those physical classrooms. Google Apps provides a different space that can be facilitated by the teacher, but is more of a “student controlled” space. Students can work together, but also have a place for saving files that they will have access to year after year in school, but also after they leave our school and continue beyond our walls into their lives.

What should teaching and learning look like in 2012? Should it be a teacher at the front of the room lecturing to students who are sitting in rows with spiral notebooks and pens? Or, should it look something like Ashwaubenon School District with a shared resource of students bringing their own devices and the district filling in gaps? We don't think we have found a panacea that will work for everyone...we have found a part of the answer that works for us.

The journey continues!