As of this month, every single one of Newark Central School District’s 2,100 students has a 1:1 computing device that allows offline access to class work, stored files and other educational materials as well as pre-filtered use of the Internet. It also enables them to digitally communicate with their teachers and vice versa. Pre-K through second graders at Perkins and Lincoln schools got their iPads during the last school year and since the start of the 2019-20 school year in September, Kelley School, Newark Middle School and Newark High School students received their 2-in-1 laptop tablets complete with fold back screens and stylus pens that allow them to write or draw on them.

We’re all connected.
Because they have homework, NMS and NHS students are permitted to take their tablets home at night and on weekends.

Working closely with Krista Lewis, NCSD’s Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Jamie Sonneville, NCSD Director of Technology, put together a long-range 1:1 computing device initiative five years ago.

The plan was approved by the New York State Education Department last year and the NCSD was awarded $2.2 million in NYS Smart Bond Act funding to purchase the 1:1 devices. Of that amount, about half has spent to purchase the hardware and software that goes along with initiative so far.

While this first year is the initial implementation phase, ultimately the intent of the initiative is to marry best teaching practices with enhanced student computer literacy to bolster academic growth and improve educational outcomes.

To achieve this end, the district intentionally didn’t put the cart before the horse.

“The long range objective of the 1:1 computing initiative is not to replace live discussion and collaborative engagement in the classroom and not give kids an unwieldy amount of screen time, but to provide tools to enhance effective learning practices,” Lewis said.
Newark’s strategy in rolling out its 1:1 computing initiative has been lauded in both a case study white paper and an article written for the educational magazine “Inspire” by Brooklyn, N.Y.-based Blank Technologies Corp (Blank.tech) from which the NCSD purchased the devices.


Because of the amount of preparation that proceeded students receiving the 1:1 devices, Sonneville said the overall reaction by teachers and students has been “very positive.”

“It has been an awesome experience participating in this initiative at Newark,” she said. “It was rewarding to see our staff waiting in lines for their devices and hearing students say that device rollout day was the best day of their lives. In the weeks since the initial rollout, there seems to be this positive buzz in the buildings.”

Aaron Sweet, NCSD, who is the NCSD Technology Integration Coach who has been working with students and staff throughout the implementation phase, also is pleased with what he has seen so far.

“It’s amazing to see our teachers and students use the laptops every day. I can walk into almost any classroom in Kelley, Middle School or the high school and see purposeful use of the laptops and it’s truly enhancing learning. From our use of Office 365, “Schoology” and many other technology tools, our students and teachers have a lot available to them. Our delayed roll-out of laptops allowed teachers to be extremely prepared with intentional use of technology. It’s going to be very exciting to see where our schools are with technology in a few years with what we’re seeing now!”

NCSD Board of Education President Russ Harris lent a helping hand during the distribution of the 1:1 devices at Newark High School and Newark Middle School.

“It was amazing to watch the Middle School and High School students pick up and configure their computers,” he said. “When I was in school I had a writing problem. It wasn’t until I got my first computer in the 1980s that I found that the thoughts moved from my head to my fingertips a lot easier than through a pencil. These kids are lucky. These devices will level the playing field for our learners.”

Thanks to Lisa Eakins, Kari Hamelinck, Jamie Sonneville and Aaron Sweet for providing photos.

The entire @NewarkCSD IT Department learned in August how to build the new @blankdottech JP3 one-to-one devices! The Department participated in a self-maintainer program so it can complete repairs right here in the district.