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Rockford High School Freshman Center

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Blue Ribbon Exemplary Schools

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Dear Parent,

As you are aware, Rockford Public Schools is committed to using state-of-the-art technology to enhance and expand our teaching-learning environment. This commitment supports one of our district's long-term RAMS IX goals: Utilize real-world experiences to enhance teaching and learning of 21st century skills.

You are receiving this information because you have a 9th grade student this fall. As stated in earlier communications, beginning the second trimester of this school year (approximately November 27th), the Freshman Center will transition to a 1:1 digital learning environment, meaning all students will utilize a laptop computer for each class period during the school day. These classes will be using wireless technology whereby **students are encouraged to bring their own device (BYOD) to school** to enhance their education through a more "hands-on" learning environment. Students are expected to bring this device to every class period and then home every day after school to use for any school work and ensuring it is fully charged for the next school day. Currently, Rockford Public Schools utilizes a 1:1 digital learning environment in grades DK – 8 and the transition to the high school level is beginning this year with 9th grade and next year with 10th-12th grade.

We have made this commitment to better serve our students in several ways:

- Students can gain access to RPS instructional content 24/7.
- Students gain real world skills and experience in research, collaboration, content creation, and communication using similar technology and tools to that in college and university settings.
- Students' work more accurately mirrors what employers have been asking of our graduates and better prepares them for a real world career.

After running a successful BYOD pilot in several 9th grade classes this past spring, many students (and parents) have noted, that **by bringing their own devices**, students enjoy additional benefits. Some of the benefits cited are:

- Students can pick a device more suited to their personal tastes than if they were issued a typical school issued device (they may select devices that are lighter, smaller, bigger, more powerful, etc.)
- Parents and students would not need to be responsible for RPS property, and therefore, would avoid paying into the accidental damage program pool.
- Students could store their own files (including music and personal documents) on their devices for personal use whenever it may be appropriate. Students could also use personal devices for non-school/non-education purposes. **This is not possible with a school issued device.**
- Students would not be subject to the RPS content filters and access restrictions when they were off school property. Any school issued device is subject to web filter and access restrictions 24/7.
- School issued devices are between 3-5 years old.

Our Technology team intends to review each personal student device brought to school for classes and help insure students can fully participate.

Bring Your Own Device Guidelines

If your student chooses to bring their own device, here are the recommended guidelines for efficient functionality:

Acceptable devices include:

1. Chromebooks (purchased within the last 3 years)
2. Windows Laptops (running Windows 10)
3. Apple Devices:
 - a. Laptops (purchased within the last 5 years and running Safari 3.1 or greater)
 - b. Tablets (including iPad Air or greater, purchased within the last 2 years)

All devices must meet the following **minimum** requirements:

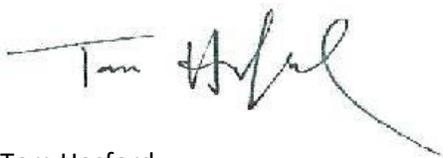
1. a 9.5" diagonal display
2. a keyboard (physically attached as wireless keyboards have the frustrating ability to connect to or interfere with other student devices in a room of students)
3. a web browser (Chrome, Safari, or Microsoft Internet Explorer– Note that other browsers may create frustration for students while accessing content designed for the “big 3 browsers”)
4. a wireless WiFi connection capability

If you are interested in having your student bring their own device, it is recommended that you search the internet and local advertisements to find a price and device that works for your family and meets the minimum requirements stated in this letter.

Should your child not have a device that meets the minimum requirements outlined above, the school will provide a laptop computer to access the required materials. Your child will also have access to the course material for homework from any network you may have at home, or they may access the material with public internet connectivity.

If you have any questions or concerns about this initiative, please feel free to contact me at any time. We are very excited about the educational experience this new set of tools is going to afford our students as we better prepare them for both college and career.

Sincerely,



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