



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL REVOLUTIONIZES EDUCATION

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Kenosha's Washington Middle School is about to become the first public school in the state of Wisconsin to offer laptop computers for every student.

The school has pioneered a program appropriately called 1:1, in which every student will have access to laptop use in school and at home. "These computers are learning tools, just like textbooks and pencils," Principal Beth Sabo said. "1:1 is a direction that students need to take for life skills in the 21st Century." Advanced technological education has figured prominently in Sabo's tenure at Washington. The school's entire teaching staff has had laptops for the past five years. "I've always believed teachers should have up-to-date tools to engage students in learning and to become better educators."

That philosophy was extended to the student body last year when Washington pooled enough funds to pilot a program in which one 7th grade house, about 70 students, was given laptops. At the beginning of this school year the entire 7th and 8th grades were given the same opportunity, and the day before Winter Break Sabo was notified there would be adequate funding to cover all of 6th grade also, thanks to support from a combination of District funds, a low-interest loan and very competitive pricing from the vendor.

Technology Resource Teacher, Michelle Valeri, shared the story of one student who was initially opposed to the idea of having his own laptop because he couldn't type well, but soon "we couldn't get it away from him." The 1:1 initiative provides familiarity with application packages such as Microsoft Office and invaluable skills such as Internet use. The program also allows teachers to post curriculum online, and receive assignments via electronic drop box. Valeri added that these efforts have been met with the educators'

enthusiastic support. “Ask some of the teachers about their experiences before and after,” she said. “Before long they won’t even remember what it was like without [these tools]”.

There will be a special program at Washington Middle School on Monday, February 19 from 10 A.M. to Noon to present the remaining students with their laptops. Officials from state and local government, from area universities and libraries, as well as from the Kenosha Unified School District will be present. Washington Middle School is located at 811 Washington Road in Kenosha.

For information on the 1:1 program contact Gregroy W. Cunningham at 262-344-3252, or at cunni016@uwp.edu.

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