

## PowerUp Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### TEACHER QUESTIONS

**Q. Will there be bags provided for laptops?**

A. The laptops we are bidding include a protective rubberized bezel to help with safety issues. It will be up to each student to provide a book bag or similar to carry his/her laptop to and from school in a safe way.

**Q. Wi-Fi access for students when home. Flexibility in assignments for kids who do not have Wi-Fi at home.**

A. It will be important for each student to have access to the Internet while not at school, including to perform homework, communicate dynamically with the learning management system (LMS), conduct just-in-time communication with teachers, and other school-related activities. However, the laptops will have internal storage to allow students to download and store curriculum and some supporting curriculum content (such as saved Web sites, some videos, and the like) on their laptops prior to leaving school grounds. Once at home or when at a location where Wi-Fi is unavailable, the student can access his/her content on their device. This is called "local content". When homework needs to be submitted to the LMS, the student can send the homework to the LMS while offline, the material can be timestamped, and then the content is delivered the next the student gets a Wi-Fi connection. For families in need of Wi-Fi access at home, Comcast offers an affordable option that can be found on our website at <http://www.rcs.k12.in.us/parents>

**Q. Will there be flexible hours for Wi-Fi access or questions?**

A. The Technology Department and other departments will be creating help documents, FAQs, and videos to help students, parents, and teachers as the PowerUp initiative rolls out. Also, we are looking into ways to providing off-hour support by flexing technician time to allow them to arrive later in the day to start their shifts so there is some coverage of phone and e-mail support for general help desk questions.

**Q. Are there choices in digital curriculum for math like we have had in textbook adoptions?**

A. During the Math textbook adoption stage, digital curriculum will be reviewed for adoption if it meets the needs of our teachers and students.

**Q. What kind of devices, what kind of models (such as touch screen, etc.) will be provided for our students?**

A. The bid specification includes a Microsoft Windows laptop that has a minimum of an 11" (11 inch) screen, a standard laptop keyboard (it will not include a numeric keypad), touchpad, and rubberized protective bezel. Because we have to put this out to public bid, we will not know the make, model, or brand of laptop until the bids are received and awarded.

**Q. Will there be Professional development for teachers? For para professionals? For substitute teachers?**

A. Professional development is the key to making sure our teachers (including substitutes), staff, administrators, students, and parents use and manage these devices properly. The PowerUp plan includes professional development.

**Q. Apprehension of getting rid of disposable resources like workbooks, etc.**

A. Teachers are not expected to discontinue use of standard textbooks in lieu of 100% digital resources. We are still under contract for textbooks that have been adopted in the recent years

and those adoptions will continue until the contracts expires. If workbooks are included in those adoptions, teachers can continue to use them.

**Q. Teacher expectations about how much time per day or week are you expected to be using devices.....How will that look?**

A. The initial expectation for our teachers is that they will use these devices in their classrooms. Implementation will vary, by subject area, grade level, and individual teacher. We will continue to seek teacher input and offer additional professional development opportunities to increase utilization within the classroom.

**Q. Funding – how will the PowerUp initiative be sustained?**

A. Textbook reimbursement through book fees will sustain the PowerUp initiative. As we transition to a digital textbook environment, the method for financial sustainability is no different than with current textbooks. Purchases for initial startup of this initiative may not utilize debt (bonds) or grant funds to implement the textbook reimbursement process.

**Q. Several teachers have computer carts in their classroom so teachers can control them. They did not want them sent home with students. Students could check out laptops in the media center. Why is this not a part of the plan?**

A. Because these devices will be rented just as standard textbooks are rented, students cannot be withheld access from curricular materials. Laptops on classroom carts are not recommended for two reasons. First, financing future needs is not sustainable. Secondly, it would be extremely difficult to provide every student in each hour of each classroom access to devices for homework if necessary. Additional devices located in a media center would be an added expense to the already numerous devices in each classroom. Devices necessary to produce classroom sets without devices to be checked out exceed 4,500. The number of devices needed for a "take home" 1:1 initiative are 3,000. The expense of these additional devices would increase the cost of the plan as well as reduce textbook reimbursement sustainability. The carted model is not recommended for the sustainability of the plan.

**Q. Will there be charging stations at school? Where, cost, will device sustain a charge?**

A. The laptop specifications will be for a battery that lasts a minimum of 6-8 hours. Students will be expected to have his/her laptop charged prior to school. In the event that a laptop needs charged, there will be standard outlets and power strips available. Students will be able to purchase additional power chargers if they desire. They will be issued one charger with the laptop.

**Q. Durability of hinges on Laptops – how far will they bend?**

A. Part of the roll out and training for students and parents will be on the proper care and handling of devices. One key training item will be one ways that laptop hinges can be protected by showing students and parents the best way to open and close laptops. Also, students will be shown how to properly carry and store laptops.

**Q. What size screens?**

A. Minimum of 11" screens.

**Q. Insurance plan for laptops – who can afford it? Responsibility issues?**

A. The PowerUp plan includes an option we call the Red Devil Defense Plan. Parents can opt into it by paying an annual fee (for example, \$45.00 annually) that will cover accidental breakages, etc.

**Q. Will all assessments be done on the devices?**

A. At this point, the laptop specifications will meet our current assessment program requirements. Because the ECA (End of Course Assessment) and ISTEP exams change every year,

we do not know if the proposed laptops will run future assessments. We will continue to support our standard desktop computer labs in all of our schools.

**Q. How will our Spanish speaking community receive parent communication about all this? Students will also need companion information in 1st language in getting started and then move them to English.**

A. Communication will be posted to our website in Spanish and English formats. Interpreters will be present at PowerUp parent meetings, open houses, and student registration.

**Q. Do we have enough infrastructure to do all this? What filters will we have?**

A. Our current Wi-Fi infrastructure can sustain these devices. As we grow our online curriculum content, we will expand our Wi-Fi access points where necessary. With the PowerUp initiative, we will also be able to obsolete older devices that can cause slower Wi-Fi responses for all users. When teachers, students, and staff encounter issues with their Wi-Fi, please report those issues to your building-level Technology Consultant. He or she can then submit an RCS trouble ticket for us to review.

**Q. Will students get to keep their laptops at the end of 4 years?**

A. That has not been determined yet as we do not know what the actual state of those devices will be in after 4 years. If the device is not suitable for continued use, we will not want to keep them in our inventory. At that point, we will dispose of them according to Indiana state statute.

**Q. Have you considered added expenses like surge protectors, charging stations, etc.?**

A. Additional expenses have been considered and charging stations are being reviewed as these needs are anticipated.

**Q. Will there be extra computers for teachers when kids forget them or forget to charge them?**

A. We will roll out an inventory system at each school that will allow students to check out a device on a daily basis if their assigned device is in repair or if they have forgotten it at home.

**Q Will the district choose a standard learning management system (LMS)?**

A. A committee for evaluating and choosing an LMS has been created. Some of the comments about an LMS is provided here.

The BIGGEST concern was about the Learning Management System and which one it would be. They want one that all grades can use 5 – 12 and that is supported. They want the LMS to be able to connect back to the gradebook. They want it to be able to save them time in the classroom. You need a LMS that is a single space that everyone goes to. How long does it take to set it all up. How easy is it to use? Consistency across the board is critical. They want to be able to do quizzes and tests on it. The following are some LMS programs:

- Canvas – Miami U uses it. Project Lead the Way uses it. Indiana University (and all branches such as IU East) uses. Yorktown uses it with PowerSchool.
- Schoolology - Used by Portage County with PowerSchool.
- Itslearning - Used by MSD Wayne and Evansville Schools.
- Blackboard – Ivy Tech and Ball State uses it.
- My Big Campus – Limiting. My Big Campus will no longer be available after June 30, 2016.
- Moodle – Earlham uses it. Some RHS teachers use it. Steep learning curve. It is open source software. Would need to use an internal server and support.

**Q. Can teachers keep iPads?**

A. Yes. However, if a teacher does not want to maintain two mobile devices (an iPad and a laptop), they are free to turn in their iPad so that it can be re-assigned in the district.

**Q. Read 180 will probably remain the same....Some classes will still need the regular computers.**

A. That is correct. Several specialized courses will continue to use desktop computers, such as Read 180, FACs, business department, Project Lead the Way, Foreign Language Department, Radio/TV, Yearbook/newspaper, and so on.

**Q Classroom management of devices as well as universal rules and guidelines in RCS handbook for devices will be needed.**

A Rules and guidelines are provided within the PowerUp plan. These will be updated and expanded as necessary.

**Q What will we do with the poverty issues, pawn shops, selling on line, theft, etc.?**

A The devices will be set up so that they are not useable if a user does not have an authorized RCS username and password. In addition, as with similar 1:1 initiatives at Richmond Community Schools, representatives from the Operations and Technology departments will visit the local pawn shops to familiarize them with the type of student device we adopt. If they encounter one of our devices, we will ask them to contact our offices immediately for retrieval.

**Q What about the monitors and filters for these devices?**

A Students will be filtered while accessing the Internet using LightSpeed filtering software.

**Q What sites can you lock down? There are many where kids can go and just copy answers, formulas, etc.**

A Teachers can report sites to their building administrators and technology consultants to have them reviewed for filtering.

**Q Can we use YouTube?**

A Yes. Teachers have access to YouTube.

**Q Regarding funding, which funds will we be using cash balances from (if that's not relevant) then the question is whether or not we're sacrificing anything else for this initiative. "Is there anything we're not going to be able to do if we do this?"**

A Funds to implement the initial PowerUp initiative will come from the Rainy Day Fund. This initiative has no financial impact on other programs at RCS.

**Q How ready are we to handle the volume?**

A This is a fair question since some users notice a slow down during peak times on their own internet. We currently have two Wi-Fi networks at RCS. One is called the RCS-WLAN2. The other is called RCS-WIFI. RCS-WLAN2 is used only by RCS owned laptops, iPads, and other mobile devices. RCS-WIFI is considered a "public" Wi-Fi network that users can use their own devices on. Users still must have an authorized RCS username and password to use the RCS-WIFI network and those users are filtered the same as all users. The difference is that devices not owned by RCS can access that network. At the high school, on a typical day, approximately 1,300 devices are on the wireless network. Of those 1,300 devices, over 900 of them are on the RCS-WIFI network and are not RCS owned devices. In the upcoming weeks, the Technology Department will begin the process of narrowing the capabilities of the RCS-WIFI network to ensure our RCS-WLAN2 network is not compromised in speed and connectivity.

## STUDENT QUESTIONS

**Q Will we get to take them home?**

A Yes. Laptops in grades 5-12 will be take-home devices to ensure that all students have access to homework and other school resources. Think of the laptop as your textbook; we are even call it your "tech book" to help reinforce that idea.

**Q How will it be fixed so we can't play games or get into other stuff on them?**

A Students will be responsible for ensuring that only school and school-related content is loaded on the devices. Periodic checks of devices will be done by faculty, administrators, and technology staff to review content.

**Q Some teachers are scared of electronics.**

A Professional development will be provided to allow teachers and other staff to become more familiar with the devices.

**Q Wi-Fi at school is kind of slow.**

A Please report all delays and slowness of Wi-Fi to your teachers. In turn, we ask teachers to send that information to our school-based Technology Consultant so that we may track down those slow areas.

**Q What kind of computers will they be?**

A The bid specification includes a Microsoft Windows laptop that has a minimum of an 11" (11 inch) screen, a standard laptop keyboard (it will not include a numeric keypad), touchpad, and rubberized protective bezel. Because we have to put this out to public bid, we will not know the make, model, or brand of laptop until the bids are received and awarded.

**Q When you are carrying laptops, you get jostled in the hall a lot. What if they break?**

A During our student and parent meetings, students will be provided with training on how to handle and care for their laptops. Part of the expectations will also be good hallway (and other location) citizenship to ensure that all students can get to class without incident. In the event of a breakage, the school will have procedures for determining the next course of action. In some cases, disciplinary action may result.

**Q What about the kids who cannot afford them or the insurance?**

A Those who meet the federal requirements for the Free/Reduced Lunch program are eligible for free textbooks. Because the device will be one of the required textbooks, those eligible for Free/Reduced lunches will be eligible for free textbook fees for the laptop device. The cost of the repair/replacement plan will not be eligible under the Free/Reduced Lunch program, so families will need to pay for that as a separate fee. This fee will not be mandatory.

**Q Will we be able to bring our own devices?**

A No. Students will not be able to bring their own devices as a substitute for the RCS laptop. Because the RCS laptop is the student's text book ("tech book"), the device must be a device that we provide for all students. Think of it this way...students are not allowed to bring in their own math book or history book to substitute for the school required text book. The same will be true for the RCS laptop tech book.

**Q What if someone steals our computer?**

A Procedures for this situation and similar ones will be provided to students, parents, teachers, and administrators during training and rollouts. If a computer (or any other school property) is stolen, please report it stolen immediately to the teacher or to your school principal. For stolen items, the School Resource Officer will be contacted for law enforcement next-steps.

**Q What happens if I forget my computer at home?**

A We will roll out an inventory system at each school that will allow students to check out a device on a daily basis if their assigned device is in repair or if they have forgotten it at home.

**Q Are the computers going to have tracking devices on them?**

A To ensure the security of devices, users will need to log into their laptops with an RCS username and password. Information about other security enhancements installed on the devices will not be publically published at this time.

**Q When do you plan to start doing this?**

A The plan is for the devices to be ready for roll out during the registration timeline for the upcoming 2016-2017 school year.

**Q (Asked of student teams in Intermediate and HS buildings) How do you feel about having individual laptops you can take home for school work?**

A All the students felt they could learn better and faster with computers and that this would help them better prepare for college and work and the world they will live in.

## PARENT QUESTIONS

**Q Protection and Safety of children - Will there be filters?**

A Yes. Students will be filtered with the LightSpeed Internet filter. This is the same filter used by RCS for all Internet filtering.

**Q If a child becomes the victim of a predator through a school device, is the school system liable?**

A The school system has a responsibility to report any inappropriate behavior on student devices though it is not held liable. The student or parent should immediately contact his/her teacher, counselor, principal or the Assistant Superintendent's office if a student encounters such a situation.

**Q When will implementation of this initiative take place?**

A The plan is for the devices to be ready for roll out during registration for the upcoming 2016-2017 school year.

**Q Is our infrastructure strong enough to handle it?**

A Our current Wi-Fi infrastructure can sustain these devices. As we grow our online curriculum content, we will expand our Wi-Fi access points where necessary. With the PowerUp initiative, we will also be able to obsolete older devices that can cause slower Wi-Fi responses for all users. When teachers, students, and staff encounter issues with their Wi-Fi, please report those issues to your building-level Technology Consultant. He or she can then submit an RCS trouble ticket for us to review.

**Q Will testing be done on these devices?**

A At this point, the laptop specifications will meet our current assessment program requirements. Because the ECA (End of Course Assessment) and ISTEP exams change every year, we do not know if the proposed laptops will run future assessments. We will continue to support our standard desktop computer labs in all of our schools.

**Q Can we have classroom domains where teachers can see what is on every student's computer?**

A There is software that allows for that type of accessibility. However, through our testing and conversations with several other districts in Indiana, the software works best when installed on computers that have a wired (and much faster) network connection. For the most successful results of digital curriculum uses, schools have found that standard teacher observations and engagement works the best to ensure students stay on task.

**Q Professional development and classroom management of these devices is critical.**

A Yes. The PowerUp plan includes a sample plan for teacher and staff professional development. RCS will use eLearning Specialists, Technology Staff, Media Specialists, Technology Consultants, and other staff for professional development activities. In addition, the two-day We R Richmond eLearning Expo 5 will provide over 20 workshops on preparing faculty for PowerUp tasks.

**Q What will the Red Devil Defense Plan cover?**

A In general, the Red Devil Defense Plan will cover accidental breakages of screens, keyboards, and other laptop components. More details of this plan will be provided in the near future.

**Q Can digital textbooks be updated anytime?**

A The updates of digital textbooks are controlled by the publishers. Some provide updates on a routine schedule to ensure teachers and curriculum directors are kept informed of those updates.

**Q Will you begin all of this at one time?**

A The plan is for the devices to be ready for roll out during the registration timeline for the upcoming 2016-2017 school year. The rollout will include all students in grades 5-12.

**Q What do students do who do not have internet access?**

A It will be important for each student to have access to the Internet while not at school, including to perform homework, communicate dynamically with the learning management system (LMS), conduct just-in-time communication with teachers, and other school-related activities. However, the laptops will have internal storage to allow students to download and store curriculum and some supporting curriculum content (such as saved Web sites, some videos, and the like) on their laptops prior to leaving school grounds. Once at home or when at a location where Wi-Fi is unavailable, the student can access his/her content on their device. This is called "local content". When homework needs to be submitted to the LMS, the student can send the homework to the LMS while offline, the material can be timestamped, and then the content is delivered the next the student gets a Wi-Fi connection.

**Q Will all the computers come with basic software?**

A Yes. Laptops will include basic software determined by the Technology Department, Curriculum, teachers, and administrators.

**Q What can parents, not on free and reduced lunch, expect to pay in book fees?**

A The book fees for 2016-2017 have not been established and approved at the time of this writing.

**Q Will the \$76,000 be enough for additional personnel for this many devices?**

A Two additional staff members are part of the PowerUp plan. This includes one Mobile Device Technician and one Mobile Device Clerical. We also have our building level technicians, media specialists, eLearning Specialists, and building-level Technology Consultants. At this time, it is believed staffing at the above level will be sufficient.