

Why Do I Support the 1:1 High School Laptop Initiative?

As the Director of Communications and Information Technology at Hall-Dale School district, I have seen a marked difference in the teaching environment and the learning achieved by our high school students. There's no question that computers in a 1:1 environment for high school students makes sense, especially after enjoying that privilege in the 7th and 8th grades. It's also clear that there's a tremendous amount of learning and achievement that goes on outside the classroom that may or may not be related to the current lessons.

The reality is that we must start to demand more from our students. But limited classroom instructional time and the differences in student learning styles make the traditional teaching model obsolete. With these computers, educators are able to break out of the traditional mold of the typical classroom of the '60s into one of both synchronous and asynchronous instruction.

Richard Florida¹ suggests that technology alone in this creative age is not going to make us safe. We need to bring in the kind of creative entrepreneurs who can make great ideas into sustainable business models. Only then, Florida says, will we get real economic growth.

He warns us however that unless we're willing to harness the creativity of people, we're going to lose the edge, (have we already?). As our generation has grown up knowing how to use a telephone, our children must grow up knowing how to collaborate and create using computing devices.

Some say these laptops are just the new pen or pencil. But they are so much more.

These computers provide an opportunity for independent exploration and problem solving regardless of family economic resources, offer a critical component to learning and the best opportunity for our students to compete in this 21st century.

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> typewriter | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> communications studio |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> radio | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> video production studio |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> television | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> blog editor |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> movie theater | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> organizer |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> graphic design studio | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> scientific instrument |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> music recording studio | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> collaboration tool |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> library | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> stage on which our students stand as individuals or together |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> university | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> and so much more... |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> textbook in motion | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> dark room | |

"We're in the midst of a fundamental economic revolution, bigger than the change from an agricultural to an industrial society. It's based on creativity including technological, economic and aesthetic creativity." Florida writes. For these reasons I support the 1:1 high school laptop initiative to provide this resource to all Maine high school students to help them be competitive in the 21st century global economy.

¹ Richard Florida is the author of **The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure Community and Everyday Life**, published by Basic Books in June 2002.