ASSETS SCHOOL
Learning that transforms lives

July 5, 2018

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This year will be my 18th year at Assets School. When I started teaching at Assets in 2001, another teacher and I worked together to bring assistive technology into the high school program. Assets High School was selected to pilot Kurzweil text-to-speech software, and we also eagerly implemented the earliest versions of Dragon Dictate. We could see the potential in these types of programs, and we realized that technology tools could assist our students to leverage their strengths and compensate for their learning challenges. Today, technology is a regular part of our lives. While this presents a new set of challenges with teenagers, it also opens up great opportunities, particularly for those students with learning differences. There are a wide variety of tools available, many for free, that support students with challenges in reading, writing, math, attention, memory, and more. Over the past few years, we've observed our students and found that the students who have a personal laptop are much more likely to adopt tools to support their learning than students who do not. We have seen the benefits of students in organizing their homework and connecting with knowledge when they have it with them at home and at school. Because of these reasons, Assets High School **requires all high school students bring a laptop to school daily**. We recognize the challenges that come with this requirement, but we feel strongly that the benefits outweigh those challenges. Fortunately, over the past few years, the cost of laptops has decreased dramatically. In order to make this initiative more feasible for some families financially, we do not require a particular type of laptop. While the laptop will need to have some basic features outlined on the attached page, there are models under $500 that will suffice.

If possible, we do highly recommend getting a Mac laptop because assistive technology tools are readily available and easy to use. We've also found that Macs are easier to manage both from a parent and school perspective, and students are familiar with the Mac laptops because that is what they have been using at Assets for many years.

We understand that any additional costs above tuition may not be possible for some of our families. You may contact Paul Singer, Head of School, if you have personal concerns about the ability to provide a laptop for your child at this time. In addition to cost, I know there are several other questions that come to mind. I have also attached a FAQ to address some of those concerns.

I would like to thank you in advance for your support with this initiative. We are excited about the opportunities that a one-to-one laptop program provides for our students and faculty.

Sincerely,

Susan Travis

Susan Travis, Ed.D.
High School Principal

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What kind of laptop do I need to purchase for my child?
While we recommend that students purchase an Apple laptop, this is not a requirement. The laptop needs to have wireless capabilities and have a minimum of 128GB of hard drive space and 4GB of RAM (while this is the minimum, the more RAM that can be added the better as this is what handles the working memory of the laptop). We would also recommend getting a flash-based hard drive as these are much less prone to damage and are much faster than older mechanical hard drives. At this time, iPads or tablet devices are not an acceptable substitute; however, this year we are allowing the Microsoft Surface Pro or Surface 3, which have a full version of Windows operating system on them. We also do not recommend Chromebooks as then tend to lack the working memory and size requirements to make them function well as a daily solution for students, and they have trouble accessing the printing system on campus.

What kind of software needs to be on the laptop?
The laptop has to be sufficient to get on the Internet from school and be able to access information. Many teachers use web-based tools like Google Apps, which are only available with access to the Internet, so this is critical. In addition, students need to have some sort of word processing software. We would recommend Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) because this is one of the most ubiquitous sets of software used in the world. Apple users could consider Pages, Keynote, and Numbers, which are similar to the Office suite. Another free option is Open Office, which is open source software that works as a good substitute for the Office suite and can be downloaded at openoffice.org for both Mac and PCs. Students should also have the Google Chrome browser installed as well (this is a free web browser) to access various assistive technology tools used in some classes.

Can my child bring an iPad instead of a laptop?
No, at this time, we are requiring a laptop. While iPads have come along way over the years, there is still a gap between the power of a laptop and this mobile device, especially in accessing many of the web-based tools.

My child already spends too much time at home on Facebook and video games, won't this cause a greater distraction for students?
There is no doubt that technological devices can be quite distracting for students, particularly students who already struggle with attentional issues and managing their time. However, it is important to teach all students how to be responsible users. At school, teachers set clear expectations and consequences for students who misuse technology. We recommend having a discussion with your child about the laptop, and work together to compromise and come up with agreed upon expectations and consequences. You can post your family technology expectations on the refrigerator or somewhere they are easily seen as a constant reminder for you and your child. Personally, we do not think it unreasonable to expect your high school student to use the device in a common room in the house, opposed to their bedroom, and set a "curfew" for laptop use. You can also require access to their social network sites, set expectations for personal information, and implement Internet blocks and filters. However, we warn you that our students are very smart and often find creative ways around these things. This is why it is important to have ongoing discussions about Internet safety, cyberbullying, and other areas of concern. Finally, we would recommend that the parent be an "administrator" of the laptop. You need to be able to access all parts of the device. Students will need to bring their laptop daily to school and also access the laptop for school work, so unfortunately, confiscating the laptop will cause a significant hindrance on their ability to complete their assignments.

What happens if the laptop breaks?
Assets School does not have the resources to repair or troubleshoot student laptop problems. We highly recommend looking into insurance when purchasing a laptop, especially if your student is prone to breaking things or downloading viruses. On the laptop suggestions, you will notice that most companies offer accidental damage insurance so that the laptop can be fixed. Apple also offers AppleCare, which we recommend as well. However, AppleCare does not always cover negligence when it comes to a laptop, but now offers repair for a service fee if it was accidental. You can also contact your homeowner's insurance company as many of them offer supplementary insurance for lost or broken laptops. You could also look at purchasing computer support as well.

What happens if my child forgets to bring his/her laptop to school, or it is being repaired?
Students need to bring their laptops everyday, charged and ready to go, along with a power cord to re-charge during the day, if needed. We understand that there might be circumstances were the laptop is out for repair, or a student who occasionally forgets the laptop. In these cases, we will have a few loaner laptops so that students can complete their work, we must have a permission form on file for this. However, students cannot rely on using a loaner laptop from the school as a regular device.

What are some of the benefits of each student having his/her own laptop?
One of the keys at Assets is to help our students to learn about who they are as learners (strengths and challenges) and to understand the accommodations they need to overcome or compensate for their challenges. A personal laptop is a tool that can help students to meet these challenges head on. The truth is that in the "real" world after Assets, most colleges and careers require the use of technology in some way. For example, many colleges have required courses that are only offered online. Having a student better understand how to use a laptop and integrating assistive technology into their everyday lives will help prepare them for their future.

How do we, as parents and teachers, educate our students about Internet safety and responsible use? Safety is always our first priority at Assets School. In addition to ongoing professional development for teachers, we seek out opportunities to teach our students about internet safety and responsible use. For parents, we recommend visiting the Hawaii Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Website. This site has lots of information for parents and educators. http://hawaii.gov/ag/hicac

Do students have access to inappropriate sites at school?
Assets School uses a proxy system that all students must go through for Wi-Fi access at school. This system should block most inappropriate websites. While the Internet is constantly changing, Assets will do its best to protect students from inappropriate areas online. However, please know that most students have their own cell phones that they can use to access the Internet freely with their wireless provider versus getting onto our school Wi-Fi network. Our goal is to teach responsible use, so we have established expectations, policies, and consequences for inappropriate use of technology (including personal cell phones) that are stated on our school Internet and technology use agreement and the student handbook.

If you have a question not listed here, please call or email Susan Travis at 423-1356 or stravis@assets-school.net.

Apple Laptop Suggestions (prices as of July 2018)

Description	The 11" MacBook Air is thin and lightweight. 128GB Storage 1.8GHz dual-core Intel Core i5 processor Turbo Boost up to 2.9GHz 8GB 1600MHz LPDDR3 memory 128GB SSD storage[1] Intel HD Graphics 6000	This Macbook is new to the series and is a 12" model. 1.2GHz dual-core Intel Core m3 processor Turbo Boost up to 3.0GHz 8GB 1866MHz LPDDR3 memory 256GB SSD storage[1] Intel HD Graphics 615	The MacBook Pro is a great laptop. This is the 13" model. 256GB Storage 2.3GHz dual-core Intel Core i5 processor Turbo Boost up to 3.6GHz 8GB 2133MHz LPDDR3 memory 256GB SSD storage[1] Intel Iris Plus Graphics 640 Two Thunderbolt 3 ports
Starting Price	$849	$1249	$1449
AppleCare	$229	$229	$249
AppleCare Warranty	AppleCare+ for Mac provides global repair coverage, both parts and labor, from Apple-authorized technicians around the world. Coverage includes the following: • Your Mac computer • Battery[1] • Included accessories such as the power adapter • Apple memory (RAM) • AirPort[4] • Apple USB SuperDrive • Coverage for up to two incidents of accidental damage, each subject to a service fee of $99 for screen damage or external enclosure damage, or $299 for other damage, plus applicable tax[1]		
Other Recommendations	When purchasing, if you can afford more RAM (working memory) this helps the computer run faster when multiple applications are running.		

To purchase a laptop from Apple, you can either visit an Apple Store or go online to apple.com.

Other Suggestions – If you are looking for specific software, contact Academic Superstore online, they offer great discounts to students. Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, and Powerpoint) for around $100.

PC Laptop Suggestions (prices as of July 2018)
Here are some options from Best Buy, but you can also check Amazon or Costco as well. Assets School highly recommends getting an accidental damage plan so that it will be easy to repair when needed. Usually, these warranties are under $300 for 3 years.

Student Deals

Dell - Inspiron 2-in-1 13.3" Touch-Screen Laptop - Intel Core i5 - 8GB Memory - 256GB Solid State Drive - Era Gray
Model: I7373-5558GRY-PUS | SKU: 6083539
★★★★½ **4.5** (659)
FREE Shipping: Get it by Mon, Jul 9
Want it faster? Pick it up at Honolulu or see more shipping options in checkout to 96744.
☐ Add to Compare

$ **PRICE MATCH** GUARANTEE
$849.99
Included Free: 1 item
🛒 Add to Cart
Open-Box from $704.99

HP - Pavilion x360 2-in-1 14" Touch-Screen Laptop - Intel Core i5 - 8GB Memory - 128GB Solid State Drive - Silk Gold with Natural Silver
Model: 14M-BA114DX | SKU: 6082002
★★★★½ **4.6** (506)
FREE Shipping: Get it by Mon, Jul 9
Want it faster? Pick it up at Honolulu or see more shipping options in checkout to 96744.
☐ Add to Compare

$549.99
Clearance
Save $200 Reg $749.99
Included Free: 1 item
🛒 Add to Cart

If you are interested in a Microsoft Surface, please purchase one with a full operating system. Here is an example below that you can purchase at Microsoft.com or at Best Buy.

Microsoft - Surface Pro - 12.3" Touch-Screen - Intel Core i5 - 8GB Memory - 128GB SSD with Platinum Type Cover (Latest Model) - Silver
Model: KLH-00001 | SKU: 6251988
Pen sold separately.
☐ Add to Compare

See More Options

☆☆☆☆☆ Not Yet Reviewed
FREE Shipping: Get it by Mon, Jul 9
Want it faster? Pick it up at Honolulu or see more shipping options in checkout to 96744.

$ **PRICE MATCH** GUARANTEE
$799.00
On Sale
Save $360
Was $1,159.00
Included Free: 1 item
🛒 Add to Cart

Other Suggestions – If you are looking for specific software, contact Academic Superstore online, they offer great discounts to students. Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, and Powerpoint) for around $100.