

Case study

Penn-Delco School District

Educators, students choose HP ProBook for 1:1 program



Industry

K-12 Education

Objective

Ensure student college-readiness by launching 1:1 PC program

Approach

Equip every high school student with an HP ProBook Notebook PC

IT matters

- Equalize device access for high school students
- Ensure security, compatibility through standardization
- Provide light weight, robust capabilities, long battery life
- Deliver productivity and durability features students favor
- Choice in multi-vendor device evaluation

Business matters

- Support student college-readiness
- Enable “flipped classroom” pedagogic model
- Foster communication, critical thinking, collaboration
- Overcome classroom barriers of time and space



“We felt that investing in a 1:1 program was an essential piece of our students’ education. HP came through with the right device, and great service and support.”

– Dr. Alexis McGloin, assistant superintendent, Penn-Delco School District



Penn-Delco School District is a six-school K-12 district 15 miles southwest of Philadelphia, Penn. To ensure its high school students graduate college-ready, Penn-Delco decided to launch a 1:1 PC program. The district evaluated a variety of devices—of differing operating systems, form factors, and feature sets—from several vendors. The top choice of student and educators alike was the HP ProBook Notebook PC.

Foster collaboration and critical thinking. Free students and educators from traditional classroom drawbacks. Meet students where they are in their tech-savvy lifestyles. Penn-Delco was already a technology-rich school district—with interactive whiteboards, PC-equipped teachers, computer labs, and digital science textbooks—when it decided to take the next step and equip high school students with take-home devices. Underlying this 1:1 initiative's success was detailed planning, ongoing stakeholder communication, and rigorous device selection.

“We felt that if we did this we had to do it right,” says Dr. Alexis McGloin, assistant superintendent of Penn-Delco School District. “You need teacher buy-in and professional development; the support of central administration; parent involvement; purposeful integration of instructional technology; and robust, durable mobile devices. It comes down to communication among all the stakeholders and having a solid plan in place prior to implementation.”

Students and teachers choose HP Notebook PC

A key part of the 1:1 program success was choosing the right device. The district formed a selection committee, which mapped 30 devices onto a spreadsheet—including PCs, tablets, touchscreens, and chrome books, from a variety of vendors. More than 30 data points were entered for each device, noting factors from operating system to size. The district's essential requirements included solid state drive for fast start-up; long battery life to last the school day; and light weight to be carried easily in student backpacks. Six devices made it into the subsequent pilot study.

“We felt it was important to offer a 1:1 program to level the playing field. And we wanted standardization to ensure network security, application compatibility, and maintenance ease.”

—Barbara Hagerty, instructional technology coordinator, Penn-Delco School District

The committee selected 10 teachers and 30 students to participate, including teachers from every discipline—not just science-

oriented early technology adopters—and students who used demanding graphics applications as well as Microsoft® Office. Each tester received each device in rotation and filled out an evaluation. The committee also used a scoring rubric.

The results came as a surprise. The committee expected the students to want a tablet, most likely a heavily advertised one from a well-known manufacturer. No. The students chose a full-featured HP Notebook PC. “They didn't want the tablet because there wasn't a keyboard on it, and they didn't think it was durable enough,” says Barbara Hagerty, district instructional technology coordinator.

“We believe both the durability and usability of the HP laptops has exceeded expectations of any device that would be used extensively on a daily basis.”

—Dr. George Steinhoff, superintendent of schools, Penn-Delco School District

While all this was going on, Penn-Delco remained in close touch with its HP representative who, understanding exactly what the district was looking for, brought in a few early models of the HP ProBook Notebook PC. “Our HP representative has been outstanding—always available, helpful, ready to follow through on questions and thinking ahead about our needs,” Hagerty says. “Before the HP ProBook ever was released to the general market, he brought some samples and let us try them out to see if the device met our needs—which it absolutely did.”

The HP ProBook Notebook PC was thinner and lighter than the piloted HP Notebook PC, and it was very robust, full-featured and durable to withstand heavy student use. Penn-Delco upgraded to the Intel® Core™ i5 processor to run even most demanding science-lab applications quickly and reliably. The district leased 1200 devices through HP Financial Services and purchased four-year HP Care Pack Service to match the lease length.

High school students are given the devices in ninth grade to keep for four years, with the district's technology staff upgrading the image as needed. Parents pay a \$50 technology fee that covers accidental damage. Teachers also are equipped with HP Notebook PCs with a model that includes a CD drive.



Planning, communication, training ensure program success

Penn-Delco did not simply acquire PCs and hand them out. It spent a year and a half developing the program methodically on multiple fronts. Committee members visited other school districts that had implemented 1:1 programs, and talked to them about what worked and what didn't. They kept the school board apprised of their progress, trained teachers to integrate technology into the classroom, and made sure administrators walked the walk by using the technology themselves.

“Our selection criteria included solid state drive for speed; light weight so students could carry them; and long battery life. It all came together with the HP ProBook Notebook PC.”

—Dr. Alexis McGloin, assistant superintendent, Penn-Delco School District

Regular email updates were sent to parents, as well as a student-made commercial about the program. During a special parents' night, educators showed parents how to use the devices and turn on Wi-Fi at home. A multi-session student conference covered how to turn on and operate the device, and use various resources and social media.

“We did so much prior legwork that the implementation itself went very smoothly,” says Amy Jenkins, assistant principal of Sun Valley High School. “What's more, training is ongoing. We have technology integrators in classrooms two periods a day helping teachers. We have 18 student tech interns that students and teachers can go to for help. Support and professional development are not one-time events, they are ongoing throughout the year.”

Overcoming traditional classroom barriers

The payoff for all this preparation is apparent in the classroom. Learning is more collaborative and project-based. Teachers create lecture content for students to view at home, then use valuable classroom time to dig deeper. Classes are starting to collaborate across walls, working with shared documents posted on Google. Teachers are preparing and posting content—a physics lecture or solving a math problem, for example—to share not just with students but also with one another, for collaborative teaching.

“What we're seeing now is richer discussion,” says Jenkins. “Instead of 30 kids isolated in a classroom, we might have 125 kids interacting with the same content. They communicate with one another, with their teachers, and even with other teachers of the same subject.” This new freedom combines the best of classroom and online education, she adds. “You hear about online learning, no walls. But the biggest downfall of online learning is lack of face-to-face contact. Now we can have both.”

Customer at a glance

Application

1:1 laptop program in high school

Hardware

- HP ProBook Notebook PC

HP services

- HP Care Pack 4-year Return to Depot
- HP Financial Services

“The teachers are really excited about this,” adds Dr. McGloin. “They show me how they’re able to work together, flip their classrooms, do so much more than they could in the past.” In addition, says Superintendent Steinhoff, the program helps Penn-Delco pack more learning into each day. “Perhaps the greatest benefit to moving towards the 1:1 gets to the heart of that priceless commodity—time. Over the course of a school year, countless hours of precious instructional time is recaptured now that time is not wasted travelling to computer labs, unpacking computer carts, waiting on dated machines to power and boot up, etc. etc. There is never enough time to accomplish all that teachers want to do but the laptops absolutely move us closer to that ideal,” says Dr. George Steinhoff, superintendent of schools, Penn-Delco School District.

“What we’re seeing now is richer discussion. Students communicate with one another, with their teachers, and even with other teachers of the same subject. It’s like we’ve taken the walls down.”

— Amy Jenkins, assistant principal, Sun Valley High School, Penn-Delco School District

Penn-Delco is keeping an eye on educational outcomes such as SAT scores and other student-achievement measures. In the future, the district may expand the program to middle-school students—placing devices in the hands of a greater proportion of its 3400 students.

“The SV 1:1 program with HP has been transformative. Teachers report that students are clearly more engaged, and the laptops have clearly become a go-to tool to increase content relevancy and course rigor.”

— Dr. George Steinhoff, superintendent of schools, Penn-Delco School District

Dr. McGloin offers the following advice to other districts contemplating a 1:1 program: “Gain buy-in from all stakeholders, including faculty. Support and train them. Be methodical. Do your homework—research, plan, and communicate. That sets the program up for success.”

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