

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (5-17-13)

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Jackson Academy launches first K-12 Apple one-to-one initiative in Southeast;

Enhances teaching and learning with computing device for each student K-12

Students at Jackson Academy have completed the first school year in an all-Apple device environment that complements teaching and learning approaches designed for student success in the 21st century. Jackson Academy is the only school in the Southeast offering devices for each student in kindergarten to twelfth grade through the Apple one-to-one program.

The school issued Apple devices to all students at the start of the academic year and has incorporated the new technology and collaborative learning into the curriculum with positive results. Students in fifth through twelfth grade were each issued a Macbook Air, while first through fourth grade students have iPads and kindergarten students use the iPod Touch.

"This year our students have created some amazing content on their devices that demonstrates a high level of engagement and a deep understanding of the subject matter they have learned," said Eddie Wettach, dean of technology at JA.

Educators at the school say the digital initiative named "iLearn" capitalizes on opportunities technology brings to education while preserving successful, traditional methods. "Our world is changing, and along with such change, new demands will be placed on our students—both in college and in life," said Cliff Kling, chief financial officer and general counsel at Jackson Academy. "To best prepare our students to live and work in a digital and globally connected environment, we are supplementing traditional curriculum with more technology and our traditional teaching methods with more flexible and collaborative methods."

Preparation for the Apple initiative began several years ago. School leaders visited other Apple 1:1 schools in several states and were hosted by Apple at its headquarters in Cupertino, CA. JA provided teachers with Macbook Pro computers in 2008 to help them become thoroughly familiar with the Apple platform. In 2011, administrators and faculty conducted a pilot program to determine the best way to implement the initiative. Extensive faculty professional development was conducted by Apple distinguished educators and

others before student devices were issued. Teachers regularly attend regional and national conferences, and in-school professional development is ongoing. Extensive planning also went in to preparing the campus network, creating use and care documents, and arranging for distribution.

The goals of the program are in line with the strategic plan, said Peter Jernberg, president of Jackson Academy. "One of the key goals of Jackson Academy's strategic plan is to build a distinctive element into the educational program designed to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositional qualities needed for success in the 21st Century," he said. "We believe iLearn, in partnership with Apple, Inc. is a strong step in that direction for Jackson Academy and its students."

Students are using the Apple devices in a myriad of ways, both individually and in groups, said Bobbie Downey, 21st century instruction coordinator. "Projects the students have produced are extraordinary in the knowledge, sophistication and creativity they display," said Downey.

From creating Wiki projects—where students in groups develop informational, educational web pages—students have learned teamwork and collaboration, and have honed writing, editing and research skills. Film and interactive media students have created newscasts of school events and personalities, while learning interviewing, editing and production skills. Seventh-grade students took a rotation class in digital literacy, where they learned about digital responsibility and safety, while sixth grade students conducted interviews and produced public service announcements. Preschool students reinforced reading, math and handwriting lessons through instruction using SMART boards, computers and iPod Touches.

"Students have had increased participation in creative and collaborative work this year," said Dr. Pat Taylor, JA headmaster. Recently, ninth grade English students were given the open-ended assignment to use technology to demonstrate their learning in a particular unit. A group of students collaborated to build a 3-D model of the Bastille in Minecraft, complete with a full first-person walkthrough and narration that the students produced as an online video. "The level of engagement, understanding and retention of the subject matter that these students have experienced is at a completely higher level than traditional classroom methods offer," said Taylor. This project is just one example among many that Jackson Academy students have participated in this year.

Faculty and students are well supported in this initiative with an on-site Technology Center that has the appearance of an Apple store. The Tech Center provides hardware and software support offered by professional staff and student workers. Repairs to devices are completed in-house. Using three LCD

screens, teachers and technology personnel can use the Tech Center as a professional development meeting area. In addition to support for users, the Jackson Academy Tech Center employs safeguards including filtering and a monitoring system.

“Overall, we want to develop citizens who think critically, can identify and solve problems, have strong communication skills, are flexible, are creative, have a global vision, are environmentally conscious, have a technological awareness and appreciation, and most importantly, are of virtuous character,” said Pat Taylor. “The iLearn environment fosters 21st century student competencies to position students for the future.”

To learn more about JA’s iLearn initiative, visit iLearn.jacksonacademy.org.