

Prospect Lake Elementary Proposal for WiFi Access Points

Introduction

Prospect Lake Elementary is excited about bringing WiFi access to our school, and with the opportunities it will provide for our students to increase their learning. As with schools across the Province, the needs of students at Prospect Lake Elementary have become increasingly diverse. The addition of Wi-Fi will not only support our staff and students address this diversity, but it will also enhance the implementation of the newly designed provincial curriculum framework mandated for September 2016.

Rational

Prospect Lake educators believe that wifi is essential in today's world. We believe that providing regulated access to a wireless network will enable us to better meet the learning needs of a diverse student population. Wifi has become an important part of our world. Whether it be for social contact, to check emails, to google information about anything and everything, or for up to date world news as it happens. Today Wi-fi is an accepted part of most student's lives as they access it at home and in their community and, by extension, we feel it should be accessible at school to support their learning.

Prospect Lake educators support B.C.'s Education Plan which is based on the principle that every learner should realize their full potential in our education system. We believe that learning is empowered by technology." The Education Plan asserts that it will "encourage smart use of technology in schools, better preparing students to thrive in an increasingly digital world. Students will have more opportunity to develop the competencies needed to use current and emerging technologies effectively, both in school and in life. Educators will be given the supports needed to use technology to empower the learning process. Schools will have increased Internet connectivity to support learners and educators." At Prospect Lake, we are ready to implement the changes put forth by the new curriculum framework, but we need Wifi to support and enhance our efforts.

Another key element from B.C.'s New Education Plan encourages personalized learning for all students. Inquiry and personalized learning are key strategies used at Prospect Lake school. Our current wired computer lab assists students but, more often, it impedes the very nature of the inquiry. An educator's ability to be spontaneous when children have emerging questions or inquiries can be limited if the school's lab is unavailable or down the hall and you have to pack up the class to get there. Wifi enables new educational practices to emerge because access to the internet becomes ubiquitous – a given. When access becomes available anytime and anywhere, educators and students begin to use those resources differently. Students will be able to use technology in a more productive way to enhance their learning and education. Educators will be able to provide more flexibility, student choice and address personalized learning more effectively. The use of tablets will allow students access to online information, learning resources and enable better sharing of their learning.

Moving to a wireless system is also necessary for the simple fact that more and more hardware is designed without network ports. This is not just computers but also devices such as tablets, smart phones, and e-readers which have no physical network connection. Wi-Fi is necessary to allow

this new generation of technology to be usable in our classrooms as other modes of technology become obsolete.

At Prospect Lake we want our students to be strong digital citizens. We want them to have competencies around online safety, know how to determine the accuracy of information, build and play with coding and understand best practices for using technology in a respectful and responsible way. For us this means Wifi that allows access to a wealth of learning resources and the ability to communicate outside of the classroom and connect with the world in real time.

Our Plan

The Prospect Plan for a Wireless network includes a limited number of wireless access points that would be activated as necessary. The plan will provide a wireless network consisting of four access points in our school located in the following places: Room 103, Library, IST Room and an access point in the office that is for school and district administrative use. With the exception of the office site, which Facilities staff require to maintain heating, lighting and other electrical systems in the school, these access points will be activated when there is a need for students to access the wireless network. When not in use, the network will be turned off. These sites, including the one in the library which, well away from other classrooms. The technical aspects and installation of the system will be developed and installed by IT specialists from our District.

Communication

It is important that all partners in the school community understand the reasons for proposing WiFi at Prospect. As listed below, in the spring of 2016 there were opportunities for parents and staff to ask questions and give feedback in regard to our proposal.

- **Tuesday, April 5th 2016** – the proposal was shared with all CUPE staff with the opportunity for questions and feedback. There was unanimous support for the proposal.
- **Wednesday, April 6th 2016** – the proposal was shared with all PAC presidents who gave their support to the plan. They appreciated the opportunities provided for parents and staff to be well informed and have opportunity to ask questions and give their opinions and ideas.
- **Tuesday, April 12th 2016** – The proposal was shared and discussed with all teaching staff at our staff meeting. The staff strongly supported the proposal.
- **Wednesday, April 15 2016** - An information item explaining our proposal appeared in the April 2016 Principal's Report that was posted on our website and emailed to all families in the school. In this information item parents were advised that they could contact Mr. Guiguet by phone, email or in person if they had questions and/or wished to express their point of view.
- **Monday, April 18th 2016** – Our proposal was shared at the Prospect Lake Elementary Parent Advisory Council evening meeting. The proposal was supported by the parents who were in attendance. However, the parent community was advised that, in addition to the PAC meeting, that there would be a parent meeting dedicated solely to our WiFi plan.
- **Tuesday, October 11 2016** – An invitation was extended to all parents and guardians to attend a meeting with the Prospect Lake school administration and teaching staff to answer questions, share ideas and give feedback regarding this proposal. This invitation will posted on our website and emailed to all families in the school who are subscribed to our website. In addition, it is posted on our outside school sign board.

We recognize that not all people agree with wifi being in elementary schools. Therefore, in order for parents and guardians to make an informed decision, we have included two links with relevant research on the topic from both sides of the debate. If you would like to discuss this proposal personally with Mr. Guiguet he can be reached in person at Prospect, by phone at 250 727 3314 or by email at mguiguet@sd63.

Here is the link to Health Canada:

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/radiation/cons/wifi/faq-eng.php#a2>

Here is the link to information from Canadians for Safe Technology:

<http://www.c4st.org/>

Thank you for your continued support.

Prospect Staff