



CRESWELL SCHOOL DISTRICT

# 25 Android Tablets. One Month. Infinite Possibilities.

Sponsored by Intel® Education

“As teachers, we’ve been looking for an all-purpose technology solution. We were surprised by how much more we could accomplish with the Android tablets. We’ve seen where the rubber hits the road with them. We do a lot of project-based learning so, as a tool, we’ve seen how they could fit in with our curriculum.”

— Rob Jerome, Social Studies teacher, Creswell Middle School, Oregon

## In Terms of Technology, All’s Well at Creswell

Creswell School District Superintendent Todd Hamilton has been a teacher, instructional technology specialist, curriculum and staff development specialist, technology and student services director, as well as a district superintendent. As Creswell’s superintendent, Todd does a little bit of everything. He oversees all of operations—at the district level—and helps develop the budget and presents it to the board, amongst other things. This fluidity is obvious in his district office, which is attached to Creslane Elementary School, located in Creswell, Oregon.

“I never know what my day will be like,” Todd says with a laugh in his open office as students and administrators mill past.

Though a somewhat rural district, Creswell has made technology-infused curriculum a priority. In fact, Todd is emphatic about getting his staff up-to-speed on the latest innovations in education technology.

“In this time of budget reductions and restrictions, we need professional development more than ever,” Todd says. “So I’m committed to providing that wherever possible. I send our more technologically adept teachers to various ed-tech conferences. It’s nice to get our folks out there. When they get back, they are excited to share what they have learned.”

### CRESWELL SCHOOL DISTRICT AT A GLANCE

- Creswell School District serves roughly 1,300 students in grades K-12.
- The district has three schools: Creslane Elementary (grades K-5), Creswell Middle (grades 6-8) and Creswell High School (grades 9-12).
- The district operates its own technology departments. The majority of the district has good connectivity based on fiber optics.



One of Creswell Middle School's more tech-savvy teachers, Rob Jerome, focuses much of his energies on integrating technology in his classroom. For instance, as part of Rob's Social Studies class, he had his students create medieval civilizations using Minecraft.

"That's a great example of a teacher getting out of the way to let learning happen and not getting hung up on procedure," Todd explains. "It comes down to asking 'how does technology provide engagement?' Another example was where we had one student who simply hated writing. One day, though, his teacher saw the student chatting on instant messenger: he popped up and was IM-ing a storm. So the teacher put him in front of a computer and found the student had a lot to say! Technology can be a tool that really works for kids."

#### LEFT TO THEIR OWN DEVICES

Creswell Middle School received a loaner set of 25 Android tablets from Intel Education. The school got to put the tablets through their paces for a month and then share what they thought. Eighth Grade Math teacher Stan Mercer used the devices in his art class, asking the students to create their own version of Vincent Van Gogh's *Starry Night* using the Android tablets and a painting app.

"The level of engagement was incredible," Stan relays. "Logistically, we're just not able to have all the kids have oil paint. I can't imagine what that would cost in materials. With an app, they can erase. MyScript calculator is one of my favorites. It allows you to perform mathematical operations naturally using your handwriting. I think that's what calculators will be like in the future. With the app, it's about what you think: the concept behind the equation. It took an obstacle off the table, and the kids were much more engaged: pushed to higher levels of thought. It's up to us teachers to guide that, so that our students can produce real-world results."

#### CRESWELL COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

- Creswell, with a population of over 5,000, is located in the southern Willamette Valley, 10 miles from Eugene: Oregon's second largest city. The school district serves Creswell and the rural area surrounding it, about 70 square miles.
- The city's location on the rail line, Highway 99 and the Interstate 5 has influenced local jobs, which are primarily based on agriculture and timber processing, with nearly 70% of the city commuting out of town for employment.



Todd is another huge advocate of apps for learning.

“Our schools have a very app-centric way of thinking, which is yet another reason that the devices worked so well for us,” he says. “Most apps are built in such a way that you don’t notice the differences of the devices you’re using. There’s more of a seamless experience with apps. It goes back to what do you want to do? How can we support the kids?”

According to Stan, the students preferred using the tablets for research over their classroom’s netbooks because they were much faster. And, though keyboards were provided, his students never really used them. Teacher Rob Jerome was impressed with the device’s long battery life.

“It would last for days!” Rob says with a grin. “As teachers, we’ve been looking for an all-purpose technology solution. Our netbooks now seem really slow in comparison. We were surprised by how much more we could accomplish with the tablets. Android is much higher on our list now. We’ve seen where the rubber hits the road with them. We do a lot of project-based learning so, as a tool, we’ve seen how the tablet could fit in with our curriculum. They are great at taking video for instance. You can’t even buy a digital camera for that price!”

Ben, an eighth grade student who is considered by many at Creswell Middle School as the school’s unofficial Director of Technology, also sang the praises of the tablets.

“Kids like Android stuff. iPhones are for old people,” Ben shares. “I loved how well the devices worked with Google Drive. I could upload photos much easier than with an iPad. I’ve used lots of other tablets and I think Android tablets are the best. With Apple stuff, there’s no control over where to put files. With Android, the files are right there, and you can do so much more.”

### **STAYING ON TOP OF THE CLASS**

Yet, as any educator knows, sometimes kids can do *too* much with their devices. The task of managing devices on a classroom level can seem daunting to many teachers, hindering implementation efforts and buy-in. But the teachers at Creswell Middle School are unfazed by the challenge.

“Classroom management of devices is very teacher dependent,” Rob explains. “It takes trust in between the teacher and the student. With the Android tablets, the students felt like we were all on the same page. And Google Apps for Education makes it all easy-peasy. You’re

up and going pretty quickly. The tablets are so close to phones that the learning curve wasn't a big deal. The devices were lighter than we thought, and the screen is spectacular. For teachers, it was harder because you need to know how to teach with them."

Stan chimes in.

"If a student is misusing the technology, I hear about it: There is no honor amongst thieves in middle school!" he adds with a laugh. "I think the devices are no different than handing the kids a pencil and paper. Do you worry about what they draw? It goes back to trust and good morals. Despite our 'phones off' policy, I let my students use their phones sometimes as calculators because research on their netbooks is so slow. One day, we were making 3-D models of pyramids and cubes. I saw a kid texting and called him on it. He was texting his mom about how cool his project was! The kids are usually pretty good about technology use because they know that they're making me look bad if they abuse it. The tablets fit more seamlessly with the kids' phones, especially since more kids use Android phones these days."

As Todd and his teachers reluctantly returned the classroom set of Android devices, Stan shared some parting thoughts.

"Schools can't afford to jump on an expensive bandwagon that's going nowhere," Stan explains. "And ten years from now, things will be so different that students will be asking their teachers 'you had math books!?' The kids are hungry for technology. And they deserve the best. Devices like the Android tablets help even the playing field too. The kids need the same chances to access the same resources. And when they do, they amaze me everyday!"

#### ANDROID DEVICE SPECIFICATIONS

- Connection: Wi-Fi Only
- OS: Android™ 4.1.2 Jelly Bean
- Processor: Intel® Atom™ 1.2GHz Dual Core
- Camera Resolution: Front, 1.3 MP. Rear, 3.0 MP
- Battery, Usage: Up to 8 hours
- Internal Memory: 1 RAM, 8GB ROM
- Main Display Resolution: 1024 x 600 Pixel
- Main Display Size: 10.0"
- Weight: 10.72 oz.
- Other Features: GPS tagging; HD Playback; HD Recording; Photo Editing