

## Selecting a laptop for the Senior Academy

There are several criteria to consider when buying a laptop for your student entering the Senior Academy. If you prefer not to buy, the school will again be offering a lease program for last year's laptops. If you already own a laptop, and it meets the following criteria, then you are all set and ready to go.

1. Does the laptop meet the criteria set by Brownsburg High School?
  - a. Laptops must be a supported operating system.
    - i. Windows XP Professional (Windows XP **Home** is NOT supported).
    - ii. Windows Vista Professional or Home Premium (Vista Home **Basic** is NOT supported).
    - iii. Windows 7 Professional or Home (Windows 7 **Starter** is NOT supported).
    - iv. Apple computers may be used if they have one of the above operating systems as a bootable partition.
  - b. Laptop must support Microsoft One Note software.
  - c. The laptop must support 802.11g wireless technology.
  - d. Laptop should have a battery life sufficient for the school day (6-7 hours).
2. Screen size and weight
  - a. Screen size does add weight; however the screen should provide viewing comfort for your student.
  - b. Review the computer size and weight so that your student is comfortable carrying the computer throughout the school day.
3. Memory and Hard disk size
  - a. Most laptops marketed during the last 3 years will have ample memory and disk storage. If it has Windows 7 or Vista operating systems, it will be fine. Windows XP Professional should have a minimum of 512mB memory and 30gB disk capacity.
4. Personal features
  - a. Is Microsoft Office productivity software bundled?
  - b. Select a computer that has features meeting your students personal needs; e.g., built-in video camera, off-line DVD player.
5. Future use
  - a. Select a computer that will be useable for years down the road. (Estimate a number of years, example 4)
6. Warranty
  - a. Review the standard warranty inclusions and exclusions.
  - b. Review your home owner's insurance policy. Can you get a rider to cover your laptop?
  - c. Review and consider an extended warranty
    - i. Remember your student will be transporting daily to/from school, throughout the school day, and perhaps after school activities.
7. Carrying case
  - a. Be sure to include a carrying case that adequately protects the computer with separate compartments for the laptop and books.
  - b. The case should also be comfortable for the student.
  - c. A good idea would be to purchase one of the small neoprene form-fitting zipper bags (about \$10) to put the laptop in before putting it in the book bag. It will help protect from scratches, dints and damage to the faceplate of the CD/DVD drive.
8. Price
  - a. We do not recommend brands of laptops or stores. We do recommend staying with a major brand and purchasing from a store or on-line company that can address questions and facilitate repairs. Present laptop prices at a local electronics retailer that meet the schools criteria range from \$370 to over \$1000. The battery life of the lower end models was about 3 hours. Some mid-range price (\$700) laptops offered battery life from 6-9 hours. The number of battery cells is a good indicator of battery life. A 12 cell model (\$650-800) would provide 9 hours of computing time, however it did not include an on-board CD/DVD drive which would be needed to load some software applications. Pricing varies from week to week.
9. Netbooks
  - a. Netbooks, while small, very compact and the least expensive (\$300) are acceptable if they meet the criteria set by Brownsburg High School.
  - b. **At this time, the netbooks available at the electronics retailer we checked did not include an approved operating system.**