

## Back 2 School: The Silverdale iPad Initiative

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As students return from their summer breaks to the halls of Silverdale Baptist Academy for the 2011-2012 school year, it won't take them long to notice something new in the hands of their teachers. While students were enjoying late nights with their friends and hanging out at the pool, teachers had been eagerly awaiting their new iPad 2 and the training that would follow.



The iPads fit right into SBA Headmaster Becky Hansard's vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. "For decades we have been talking about a progressive classroom – one that is well-lit, set up in a way that encourages discussion and collaboration among students, and one that provides technology as a powerful tool designed to engage and inspire our students." Mrs. Hansard was ready to see this vision become a reality; in the Spring of 2011, a strategic plan was outlined to purchase and implement the use of iPads for classroom

instruction, beginning in the Fall of 2011. "We were on a tight timeline" says Daniel Ashworth, Director of Communications, "but with a dedicated team hard at work, we have been able to carry out two weeks of training classes and send teachers home equipped with a solid understanding of the great tools and a new spark." In fact, Ashworth says that the training has been a neat experience to be a part of, as many teachers have really become excited and engaged like they never have before about educational technology.

Although these new iPads belong to the academy, the teachers are encouraged to integrate the tablet into their personal lives as well. Kim Thompson, SBA's elementary principal believes that encouraging the teachers to integrate the iPad into their personal lives will allow them to spend more face time with their students and become more proficient with a tool that can revolutionize their teaching.

"At SBA we are very passionate about implementing instructional strategies that can truly capture the learning modalities of our students that are part of the iY generation," says Margarita Ioannidis, the Dean of Academic Administration. She is a firm believer that the iPads and other electronic media will allow SBA teachers to create a learning environment within their classrooms that promotes experiential and participatory learning. "Students of the iY generation learn better if we can provide them with an experience that will solidify their learning. Students crave to engage in learning that goes beyond listening to engage all the senses through seeing and doing. That is the kind of the learning experience that the iPads can create."

SBA is intentional about continuously innovating its instructional strategies so it can truly engage the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner. This generation of students thrives in image-rich teaching that allows them to remain connected. The iPads empower SBA teachers to enrich their teaching with powerful visuals that include 3-D images of the brain and DNA structures, to interactive maps and other models. The iPads are also powerful tools that facilitate collaboration and teamwork as part of the learning experience, while at the same time cutting down on the use of traditional paper documentation. They provide one more tool to keep students and teachers connected in the learning process.

The iPad initiative at SBA is the beginning of a truly exciting journey of innovation, discovery and interactive learning!

