

# iPod Program: An Engaging Way to Learn

In late February, Yennadon Elementary opened its doors to a group of special visitors. School superintendent Jan Unwin, several trustees and some members of senior staff had come to the school to see the successful iPod program in action.

Their first stop was Mrs. MacDonald's grade 3 classroom, where they were treated to a series of student presentations on the role of the iPod in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning. The whole world, the visitors learned, was at these students' fingertips. Then it was on to Mrs. Linde's and Mrs. Jakeway's Kindergarten class, where the visitors discovered how this technology could effectively engage even the youngest learners.

The guide of this expedition was Lisa Jakeway, an Elementary Helping Teacher who supports Kindergarten

to grade 7 teachers and students at all 20 elementary schools in the district. It's Lisa's job to oversee the successful integration of iPods, iPads and other 21<sup>st</sup> Century Technology into the classroom. And with 364 iPads, 219 iPod Touches and 18 iPods already in the district, this is no small task.

I sat down with Lisa Jakeway after the tour to talk about this technology and the district's iPod Project, and to find out a bit more about what great educational applications are currently on the market.

---

## Hi Lisa. First of all, could you give us some background information about the SD42 iPod Project?

Sure. The district iPod Project began last February at Albion Elementary School with teaching partners Jennifer Hughes and Jodi Hayhoe. Together with myself and David Vandergugten, Director of K-12 Education, they undertook a four-month pilot project to determine how effective the iPod touch would be in helping improve student engagement,

reading fluency and students' attitudes towards reading. As a district, we want to ease the sometimes challenging transition from primary to intermediate, so we chose to work with grades 3 and 4 for that project.

## And the pilot program was a success?

The program was so successful that the Board of Education and Senior Team approved the purchase of 3 more iPod carts



*Emma Dunn leans in to study her work.*



Elementary Helping Teacher Lisa Jakeway with Elliot Dew.

with 30 iPods in each to be shared by two classrooms at three schools. Many teachers from across the whole district applied to participate in the program.

**How many classes are participating now?**

Currently we have 7 classes at the grade 3 and 4 level participating in the 1-to-1 Project. The teachers at each school decide how to share the iPods equitably between them.

**It sounds like there is a lot of interest in this program. Any plans for expansion?**

Absolutely. The district plans to expand the

program again next year to include up to 12 more classes in 6 new schools and continue in the same classes that are using the iPods now. Ideally, we would like to be able to support all grade 3 and 4 classrooms, but this can get expensive.

**In light of the expense associated with the purchase of this technology, what is being done to ensure that none of the iPods are lost or stolen?**

Each of our iPods is engraved with the School District logo and can also be located with tracking tools. When they're not being used, the devices are secured in a locked case in a secure room in each of the schools. I'm happy to say that there have been no cases of iPod damage or theft so far. Students know that it's a privilege to be able to use the iPods and they take very good care of them.

**What value do you think this technology brings to the classroom?**

The students are very excited about the opportunity to learn with the help of an



## A few of Lisa Jakeway's Recommended iPod Apps

**Literacy Apps:**

- Time Reading
- LAZ Library AA-R
- K-5 Reading
- ABC Cursive
- 300+ Sight Words
- Little Speller
- Sentence Builder
- Synonyms and Antonyms
- Book Maker

**Poetry Apps:**

- Poetry for Kids
- Tongue Twisters
- Famous Poems
- Poet Kids
- Kids Poem
- Kids Rhymes 2

**Math Apps:**

- Basic Math
- Math Genius
- Mad Math
- Math Bingo
- Jungle Coins
- Quick Graph

**Time Apps:**

- Jungle Time
- TT Clock
- Clocks 4 Kids
- Tell Time Lite

**Science Apps:**

- Planets
- 8 planets
- Sky View
- Solar Walk
- Mystic Colors

For full list of great learning apps, visit:

<http://schools.sd42.ca/ipod>



iPod and they're very engaged. That's crucial. Teachers have reported increased student independence, increased student engagement, active learning, excitement, motivation and much more.

### **So does this educational approach replace traditional learning?**

Absolutely not. iPods are a tool teachers can use to extend student learning and engagement. This method of learning allows students to learn independently and to have choice in what they read, research or focus on at their own level.



*Nick Bueckert tackles a math problem.*



*Brianna Dyer shares her work with Superintendent of Schools, Jan Unwin.*

### **What does a typical class with these devices look like?**

It really depends on what the teacher is doing at the time. There are many leveled reading applications and books that can be downloaded onto the devices. A teacher may tell students to select a book to read, listen to a book app, or listen to an audio book.

Because students already know what books are at an appropriate level for them, they're able to select and read those books. This helps build confidence in students who may be reading at a lower level and would otherwise be self-conscious about it.

### **So let's talk about these applications. I'm curious: what are the most popular ones?**

The LAZ leveled reading apps are great for K-3 reading levels. There are also numerous read aloud books as well as iBooks, Bookster, Pictello, Math Bingo, Splash Math, SkyView, and 8Planets, and Safari for internet access.

### **And what's the best application for learning math, do you think?**

Students love Math Bingo! The application lets them choose and customize different characters and decide what problems to work on. There is addition, subtraction, multiplication and division at 3 levels of difficulty for each. As they play, they can earn "Bingo Bugs."

### **Okay. What about the best app for improving literacy?**

Voice Memos is a voice recording app that comes with the iPod and can be purchased for the iPad. It's an application that lets students record themselves reading and then review that recording. We educate students about what good readers do and then have them listen to good examples of fluent reading on the iPods. As students listen to themselves read, they're able to identify what they're doing well and where they need to improve. They can then re-record the same passage and save all recordings, which allows the students and teachers to monitor progress throughout the year.

### **Sounds great! Can students continue this work at home?**

Because we have chosen to keep the iPods at school, students can only continue at home if someone in the family has an iPod, iPad or iPhone. Of course, if they are able to continue their iPod learning at home, it is always a good idea for parents to be aware of what apps the child is using and what he or she is accessing on the internet. Our students are always closely supervised when they work with these devices at school.

Learn more about the iPod Project at <http://schools.sd42.ca/ipod>