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District implements finalized e-Learning policies

By **Tatum Mitchell**,
Print Co-Editor-in-Chief

The concept of e-Learning school days has been approved by the school board as of Oct. 21, 2019. Principal Edward Schwartz explained this process and the upcoming steps.

“The board approved of us using e-Learning days instead of emergency days at the end of the year ... The next phase is now we have to create our plan and submit it to the state through the Regional Office of Education,” Schwartz said.

Training for teachers took place on Nov. 11, 2019, and e-Learning days will be allowed to commence in 30 days. English teacher Nathaniel Haywood said that overall, the e-Learning day last year went well; however, time is a factor in the process.

“I think if there is enough time in between,

then it can work. If the e-Learning days are being used instantaneously or in short order after the day that is off, then that becomes much less effective because you need time in order to adequately plan for what can be done at home... The more time there is, the more effective the e-Learning day becomes,” Haywood said.

Schwartz considers the pilot e-Learning day that took place last year as a starting place for ideas regarding a plan. Senior Kate Stanley expressed her opinion on what she would like to see from a potential e-Learning day plan.

“I believe that e-Learning has to be short enough to keep students interested but as in-depth as a normal class period ... An ideal assignment for me would be to watch a video about a

certain topic, take notes and have a homework worksheet of some sort,” Stanley said.

According to Schwartz, there are certain requirements the district must incorporate in order to meet the state-mandated law regarding e-Learning, Public Act 101-0012.

“It has to be considered a five-hour day of attendance. We have to ensure kids have access [to Internet] at home. ... We have



Graphic by **Elliot Sheets**

to have a way of monitoring and verifying students’ participation ... [and] give notice on how the day works,” Schwartz said.

In addition to completing and submitting a plan, there will also be teacher trainings taking place in the future, according to Schwartz.

Last year, the online make-up day was initiated multiple weeks after the missed day due to weather issues. Schwartz said one of the goals of the new e-Learning day policy is going to be focused on timeliness and making up the classwork missed so that teaching and learning can be continued.

Many students are in favor of the concept of an e-Learning day. Sophomore Deanna Eslit spoke on how the e-Learning day from last year went for her.

“The e-Learning work was really easy and convenient for me. I was able to get it done in a reasonable amount of time and contact my teacher by email if I had questions,” Eslit said.

In years past seniors did not have to make up the missed days of school at the end of the year due to graduation. Senior Jorie Selig expressed her opinion regarding the changes to the senior make up days.

“It’s kind of disappointing that they hadn’t changed it sooner because [seniors] won’t be able to miss school at the end of the year, but overall, I think it’s an efficient use of time. ... Teachers can still make and have students take video notes and such. We will still be able to get out of school and enjoy summer as soon as possible, which I feel like both students and staff appreciate,” Selig said.

School Wi-Fi changes to be for only District 99 devices

By **Jacqueline Barba**,
Managing Editor

This year students can no longer access the school Wi-Fi because top priority for connectivity goes to District 99-issued devices. The master facility plan aims to allow students more access to their own data plans; however, while the master facility plan remains underway, students can expect a lag in the Wi-Fi connectivity within the school building.

As said by Associate Principal Omar Davis, the ultimate goal is for students to use their own data plans rather than the school Wi-Fi. Presently, students may have trouble using their own data because cell phone signals do not travel well through cinderblock and concrete—DGS’s main components. The master facility plan will replace cinderblock with glass, a material through which cell phone signal travels easily.

In the meantime, Davis suggested that students download different apps such as Google Hangouts or GroupMe onto their Chromebooks in order to contact family and friends outside of the building.

“My recommendation in the meantime is to find a way to communicate with your Chromebook, if it’s just one those messages, like ‘I forgot my lunch’ or ‘Hey, I’m going to stay after school.’ However, if it’s an emergency, we do have phones throughout the building. I would suggest that students let an adult know, a teacher, any staff member, and we can get you to a spot where you can make a phone call,” Davis said.

Texts to parents and friends alike often fail to send, and ordinary uses for cell phones, such as Googling something, seem out of the question. Students have expressed concerns regarding phone usage during school hours.

For students, like sophomore Matthew Malone, using their phones to communicate with others has become a daily challenge.

“Sometimes I need to contact my parents about whatever things I may have going on after school. If there’s just something on your mind you need to look up or, you know, a burning question, you can’t do that either,” Malone said.

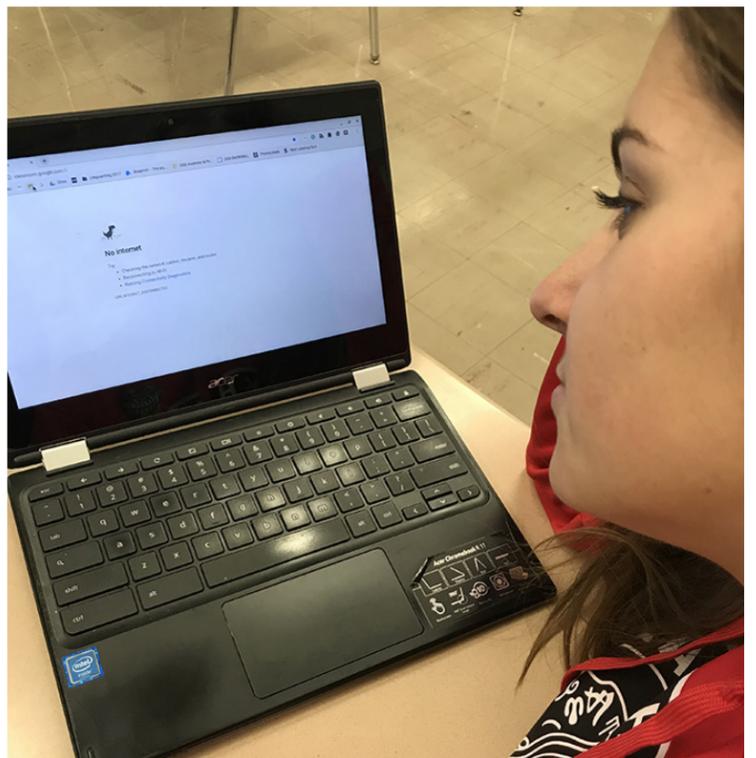
According to Davis, DGS has three Wi-Fi networks, including one for district devices, one for teachers’ personal devices, and guest Wi-Fi for school visitors. The bring-your-own-device Wi-Fi for teachers and the guest Wi-Fi are protected by a standard password that administration changes sporadically throughout the year.

In previous years students could access the district device Wi-Fi on their personal devices. This caused much of the Wi-Fi connectivity to be taken

from District 99-issued devices. This is motivating the administration to make several changes to the school’s Wi-Fi accessibility for students.

“Our current policy is [that] we offer priority Wi-Fi connectivity for all district issued devices,” Davis said.

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Many students are struggling to connect to Wi-Fi due to the construction. Photo by **Jacqueline Barba**