

# Comal Independent School District

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Comal ISD teachers enjoying Mac experience**

Despite the fact 100-degree temperatures are hard to ignore, don't be surprised if you see a Comal ISD teacher caroling door to door or drinking eggnog over the next few weeks.

Lately, CISD instructors have been acting like they're in the middle of Christmas break, rather than summer vacation.

That's what happens when every single teacher in the Comal ISD – more than 1,000 of them – receives a new Apple Macbook laptop computer when they walk through the district's Support Services Building doors.

Thanks to voters who passed a \$205.85 million bond in May, the Comal ISD purchased new Apple Macbook laptop computers for every teacher in the district.

Over a three-week span in July, the Comal ISD had training sessions for nearly half of its teachers, who were handed their brand new laptops. Teachers who didn't attend the summer training will attend sessions later in the summer and fall. A full-time certified Apple trainer will be on hand in the CISD over the next 15 months to provide training for teachers and students.

"This is absolutely wonderful," said Jennifer Anton, a second-grade teacher at Hoffmann Lane Elementary. "I was actually going to go buy one of these on my own. Knowing I'll be able to use all these great Mac features in my classroom is really exciting."

It didn't take Memorial High teacher Tom Grajek long to warm up to the idea of using a Mac laptop either.

“I’m a Windows user, so this is all new to me,” Grajek said. “But I’ve always heard wonderful things about Macs, and I can’t wait to use all of the available applications with my students.”

The beauty of the Apple Macbook laptops Comal ISD teachers are receiving is that they’re dual platform, meaning they can run both Windows and the Mac operating systems.

“There’s no question having dual platform is a great tool for education,” said Pete Vraspir, a Professional Development Consultant for Apple who led the training sessions. “Teachers can use whatever they feel most comfortable with.”

Vraspir is certainly confident in the ability of Apple’s products to benefit teachers.

“We gear our products toward education,” Vraspir said. “By the time they leave this training, teachers are excited about using new programs like Photo Booth, iMovie, Comic Life, GarageBand and Final Cut Pro in their classrooms.”

Christi Urrutia, a kindergarten teacher at Specht Elementary, was actually a bit apprehensive when she walked into training and had her first encounter with the world of Macs.

“I’ll admit I was nervous,” Urrutia said. “Now, I can’t wait to do another training session. Macs are very user friendly and I can see how they will benefit us.”

Travis Hinman, Comal ISD’s Assistant Network Administrator, has seen many energized faces leave the Mac training sessions.

“Some people are coming in uncertain, but they leave with the ‘wow’ factor,” Hinman said. “I see the light bulb turning on and the ideas flowing on how useful Macs can be in the classroom.”

Comal ISD teachers aren’t the only ones benefitting – students will have access to brand new Mac laptops as well. For students, each high school will have five mobile carts filled with of 30 new Macs, while middle schools will have four each, and each elementary school will have three mobile carts with 25 Macs.

In all, the Comal ISD purchased 3,000 new Macbook laptop computers. The CISD school board approved a \$4 million three-year lease agreement for the

units with Apple, Inc. At the end of the three-year agreement, the district can buy all the Macbooks for \$1 each. CISD teachers and students also will have access to PCs.

“We’re looking at student achievement, and if students are engaged they will succeed,” said Sandra Shelton, Comal ISD Director of Accountability and Instructional Services. “We feel this is the tool our students and teachers need that promotes 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.”

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