

## **Why are we holding on to old-school paper books?**

Technology is a constantly evolving tool that provides many academic benefits to our students. The school has an electronics device policy in place to ensure phones and other devices do not become a distraction to the learning environment; however, teachers can and often do choose to incorporate technology as a learning tool to help students develop the necessary skills to find success in their post secondary education and beyond.

Specifically, in Language Arts, students are permitted to use their personal e-Readers to read their outside reading books (SURF books) at appropriate times during class. When it comes to the required reading material, though, all students must have a hard copy of the book in class for a variety of reasons:

- Annotating is a learned skill that fosters deeper reading, critical thinking, and substantial learning. Often misconstrued as highlighting, annotating is the act of making notes on the page to interact with the text. It is essentially a conversation the reader has with the author, and it also is a way for students to develop their metacognition skills, another essential skill for success.
- A hard copy of the novel promotes consistency in the classroom. When teachers ask students to turn to a particular page to focus on a certain skill, all students will quickly be able to access the material. Additionally, while many texts are digitally available, not *every* text has a digital version, even at the college level. It is essential that we prepare our students with the skills to navigate textbooks, among other texts, without the instantaneous assistance of a search bar.
- Grading and monitoring of student learning and participation frequently involves annotation checks. Due to the number of students, books must be collected from time to time and it may take a few days for teachers to get through the novels before conferencing with the student and returning their books. If teachers were to collect e-Readers, there would be many potential issues such as liability, loss of battery power, a locked screen, the accidental deleting of items, not to mention the fine line of privacy.
- Academic honesty is a concern at all grade levels, but especially at the secondary level. Many e-Readers have cameras and/or internet access. Similar to smartphones, this can be extremely difficult to monitor. While teachers may include lessons from time to time that involve certain electronic devices, students must have these devices turned off during school hours unless specifically instructed otherwise by the teacher.

We do our best to provide students with opportunities to develop their technology skills in conjunction with fostering their academic growth at the highest levels. Determining how and when to incorporate electronic devices is an issue we do not take lightly, and we will continue to consistently assess our decisions about what is best for our students' learning and their learning environment.