

Game Over? Potential App Store game shutdown concerns students

Cathedral Prep students are known not only around the city, but around the state of Pennsylvania for being some of the fiercest competitors, and the most motivated students. Prep's success in athletics is made clear in the halls as numerous state championship banners hang and trophies gleam. In the classroom, Prep's student body earns scholarships and placement into prestigious programs with regularity. But there is one more battlefield where Prep's fighting and winning passion can be on full display: the students' iPads.

Prep was the first school in the area to implement the iPad program. Students and teachers alike were given iPads as an enhanced part of the learning process, which connected the students to not only the knowledge of each other but also to the world. In recent years, many other schools have followed in Prep's footsteps such as Fairview and Mercyhurst Prep.

"The iPad program, I think, gives the students a great opportunity to learn and grow as students," said Prep English teacher Mr. Peightal.

Apps such as eBackpack, NetClassroom, Pages, Keynote, and Socrative give students the ability to check and complete online assignments, and communicate directly with the teacher on a name-to-name basis.

"It has helped me a lot, being able to communicate on a professional level with my teachers and the administration. I think this will help me when reaching out to future employers," said senior Nick Wetzel.

These tools in the classroom help prepare students for life

outside of the classroom, but they also create an atmosphere like no other. A few times each year, friendships are tested and loyalty is tested. This is very apparent when a game hits the App Store that can't be beat. Some famous games such as *Nova* and *Rules of Survival* have taken over the school in the past. Online battles versus one another require constant attention and skill. When administration finds out about these games, they are quick to pull the plug on the app, causing it to disappear from students' iPads. Movements such as #FreeNova have had little success, and many have had to say farewell to the game.

"It's such a shame when this happens," says senior Alex Kownacki, "You want to invest all the time you can in these games because you never know when it's going to be gone."

It's no secret that the iPads can be a major distraction for students. At Fairview High School the administration has removed the App Store from their iPads in an effort to keep students focused in the classroom.

"It does help me stay focused because I know I would be constantly on a game or the internet," said Fairview sophomore Teddy Murphy, "There is so much downtime though, and I think it would be nice to connect and communicate."

So when rumors began to spread from multiple faculty members about the games being removed from student iPads at Prep, many students were left in shock.

"This is the Prep experience. Excelling everywhere, even on the virtual platform with my friends," said senior Andrew Burns.

While no administration was available to speak on the matter for a direct comment, murmurs in the hallway and classrooms struck fear into the student body. During an all school assembly, principal Jim Smith referenced being able to take away the App Store if the student body wanted to continue

pushing the boundaries and “up the ante” at the end of the first semester.

So as the future of student iPads and many of Cathedral Prep’s students’ online careers hang in the balance, many just don’t want anything to change.

“With one semester of my senior year left, I just want to enjoy everything I can before I’m gone,” said senior Calvin Behm.

So as this journey of virtual life takes a new and unexpected turn, be prepared for a restart.