GRANADA HILLS, Calif., August 17 – It is opening day at Granada Hills Charter High School (GHCHS) and every one of the 4,600 enrolled students has a new Chromebook laptop computer. By placing the instructional technology device into the hands of every student, Granada Hills Charter is committed that all students will experience more individualized instruction, increased collaboration inside the classroom while gaining immediate access to online research, and will be better prepared for college, career and life experiences.

“With universities educating students in a digital environment and most jobs requiring knowledge of technology, we have to equip our learners with the necessary skills to be successful throughout their entire life,” says David Bensinger, Administrative Director of Instruction at GHCHS, “By learning how to manage their digital footprint and giving all students equal access to information and learning tools, we are investing in their long-term educational goals.”
Teachers in all areas of instruction from English to Visual and Performing Arts plan to utilize this new tool in their classrooms so they can better accommodate every child’s pace of learning and to implement instructional strategies like repetition.

“When I play an educational video, students can watch it at their own pace or as many times as they need,” says Matthew Bivens, GHCHS visual arts teacher.

“I use Chromebooks for almost everything in my classroom including passing out assignments, submitting answers, and completing assessment forms,” explains Archer Nishioka, GHCHS mathematics teacher, “I can see their individual work immediately instead of every student waiting to raise their hand.”

The GHCHS administration collaborated with other large schools to research and plan the execution of this program. “We asked for advice from many schools, private and public, who have similar programs,” says Bensinger, “However, none were of the size and scale of our roll-out so we carefully planned this implementation to ensure the smoothest integration possible.”

In the spring, the Los Angeles Unified School District upgraded the wireless capabilities of Granada Hills Charter High School using voter approved LAUSD school bond funds. The campus Wi-Fi project provided the necessary infrastructure to support individual computers for all students. Granada Hills Charter released Chromebooks through a pilot program beginning with 30 students in an Economics class. During the six week summer school, over 200 students used the devices across seven classrooms followed by another launch of 1,200 devices to all enrolled students during the three-week summer transition program for incoming ninth graders.

Each Chromebook has a full suite of web-based applications providing pupils access to unlimited storage and educational tools including the free Google Classroom application which is widely used in secondary schools and universities throughout the country.

Granada Hills Charter does not require parents to pay a fee for the computer and the school also provides a free case so students can take them home. The school negotiated the purchase of the computers from Hewlett Packard and offers an optional insurance policy of $20 per year. The total cost, per student, including hardware, software licenses, and security and filtering subscriptions is less than $80 per year. The on-campus Hewlett Packard Certified technical team will provide instant support, maintenance, and repair to all devices, saving additional expense.

“The incorporation of individualized technology that responds to each student’s and teacher’s needs will undoubtedly change the face of education,” adds Bensinger, “At GHCHS, we feel it is our responsibility to create a school environment that encourages such innovation and equips our students with the necessary knowledge and practical skills to succeed in the 21st Century.”
About Granada Hills Charter High School: Granada Hills Charter High School, the largest charter school in the nation, is an independent public school in the San Fernando Valley. As a fiscally independent conversion charter school, Granada Hills Charter has a current student enrollment of approximately 4,600 and an annual student wait list of almost 3,000. The School’s student body is considered one of the most diverse, with more than 40 languages other than English spoken at home and over 60 nationalities represented. Over 2,300 students are eligible for the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program. As a 501c3 non-profit benefit corporation, the School’s Governing Board is the legal entity overseeing all school policy and its $50 million operating budget. In 2015, BusinessInsider.com and Niche recognized GHCHS as the #1 public high school in California and #10 public high school in the United States of America.