



Instructional Technology in WCPSS:

A Student and Learning-First Approach

Overview of district-provisioned device strategy

February 2026

Current Global and National/Local Context

Global Context for Students and Their Future

Districts must ensure students are prepared which means excellent student outcomes and reduced achievement gaps and the ability to think and solve problems in a world shaped by technology...both now and in the future.

Analytical thinking remains the most sought after core skill among employers...AI and big data top the list of fastest-growing skills, followed closely by networks and cybersecurity as well as technology literacy. Complementing these technology-related skills, creative thinking, resilience, flexibility and agility, along with curiosity and lifelong learning, are also expected to continue to rise in importance over the 2025-2030 period.

World Economic Forum. (2025). Future of Jobs Report 2025. World Economic Forum.
https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_Report_2025.pdf

At the same time...

National/State/Local

Districts are facing constricting or uncertain budgets at the state, local and federal level, increasing costs, roll off of pandemic funding, and the necessity to make hard choices to help direct funds toward the people and resources necessary to prepare students for their future.

Wake County Technology Devices | Recent History

PRE-PANDEMIC Past up to 2020	PANDEMIC AND REMOTE 2020 - 2021	POST PANDEMIC - 1 to 1 2022-PRESENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCPSS adopts gradual use of devices; not moving as aggressively as some districts toward 1-to-1 but a steady increase of device use to support learning CIP provisions 3 to 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per force, schools including WCPSS pivot to 1-to-1 to enable any learning. There are conspicuous challenges with learning at home. Per force, device use and application becomes accelerated. CIP becomes 1 to 1 	<p>Schools, teachers and students continue to use devices in a 1-to-1 ratio - in many cases leveraging the tools and availability to innovate and teach but with concern that tools are not always used intentionally nor effectively and perhaps too frequently.</p>

2026

Going forward:

How do we approach instructional technology as a school system **intentionally from this point forward, leading with learning.**

2019

Rapid, Increasing Use of Technology

Through this period of time, technology only increases its influence across American life - changing the **shape of social and economic reality - with AI likely to only increase change.**

Aims of This Presentation

- Provide insight into the current context and takeaways about district-issued technology devices.
- Present a district-wide strategy including **principles** to guide the work focused on instruction, **device near-term actions and long-term options** and a path for **support for devices for learning**.
- Propose a timeline for moving on this strategy over the next year in line with the 27-28 budget cycle.
- Gather board thoughts and feedback.

Current State

- One-to-one device ratio across the district after the pandemic.
- K-12 students are issued Chromebooks with a three-year refreshment cycle at 3rd, 6th and 9th grade.
- K-2 students do not take Chromebooks home; Pre-K Students have class sets of iPads.
- Current practices require devices for testing (EOGs/EOCs, ACT), remote learning, accessing the curriculum, as well as the many learning applications.
- Current practices have been built around a one-to-one device ratio per students; Some students bring their own computers.
- Current damage practices provide a replacement for first damage and a stay-in-school issued device after the second damage.
- WCPSS purchase devices (rather than lease currently)

High-level Takeaways

From staff, students and teachers

- **Use is the main focus.** Concerns are less about the device itself and focused on how they are used. Devices are used as a regular and necessary support for learning daily; likewise, they can cause challenges when used ineffectively.
 - Used for group projects, access LMS, checking grades, instructional videos, accessing learning tools (Dreambox, Lexia), organization and personalization. Increasingly vital as students progress through schooling.
 - Concern about ensuring time is useful and that there isn't too much screen time or ineffective screen time. Educators indicate concerns about devices being used for unproductive or non-instructional purposes.
- **Function of Devices.** On the whole, educators, students and parents indicated that devices are generally serving their basic purpose (function well, easy to use, meet instructional needs, improve learning experiences) but challenges do arise with managing devices (broken devices, chargers, etc.)

"We should balance the work and activities embedded between face-to-face collaborative work and other activities off-device with time to utilize the benefits of having a device to support classwork rather than being the main tool." Educator

"I feel like my device makes a huge impact in my learning because it is the only computer that I have at home. Without it I wouldn't be able to do my schoolwork." Student

"During work they [students] use devices, during down time they use devices. Less time using devices, more time spent interacting with teachers and other students." Parent

High-level Takeaways and Feedback

From staff, students and teachers

- **Stewardship and Management.** Damage and stewardship of devices is a concern (broken screens, replacements, missing chargers/charging issues)
- **Educators,** in particular, are concerned about distraction from learning and use being challenging to manage.
- **Access.** Parents and teachers, generally expressed the more desire to manage student access while some students expressed challenges/dissatisfaction with access to sites and tools.

"I use school-issued devices daily as a powerful learning tool. They enhance engagement, provide access to resources, and foster collaboration. However, without proper monitoring, they can quickly become distractions, impacting focus and academic performance. Many students struggle with self-regulation, and parents have voiced concerns about insufficient content restrictions. Additionally, excessive screen time can affect student well-being, contributing to anxiety and social challenges." Educator

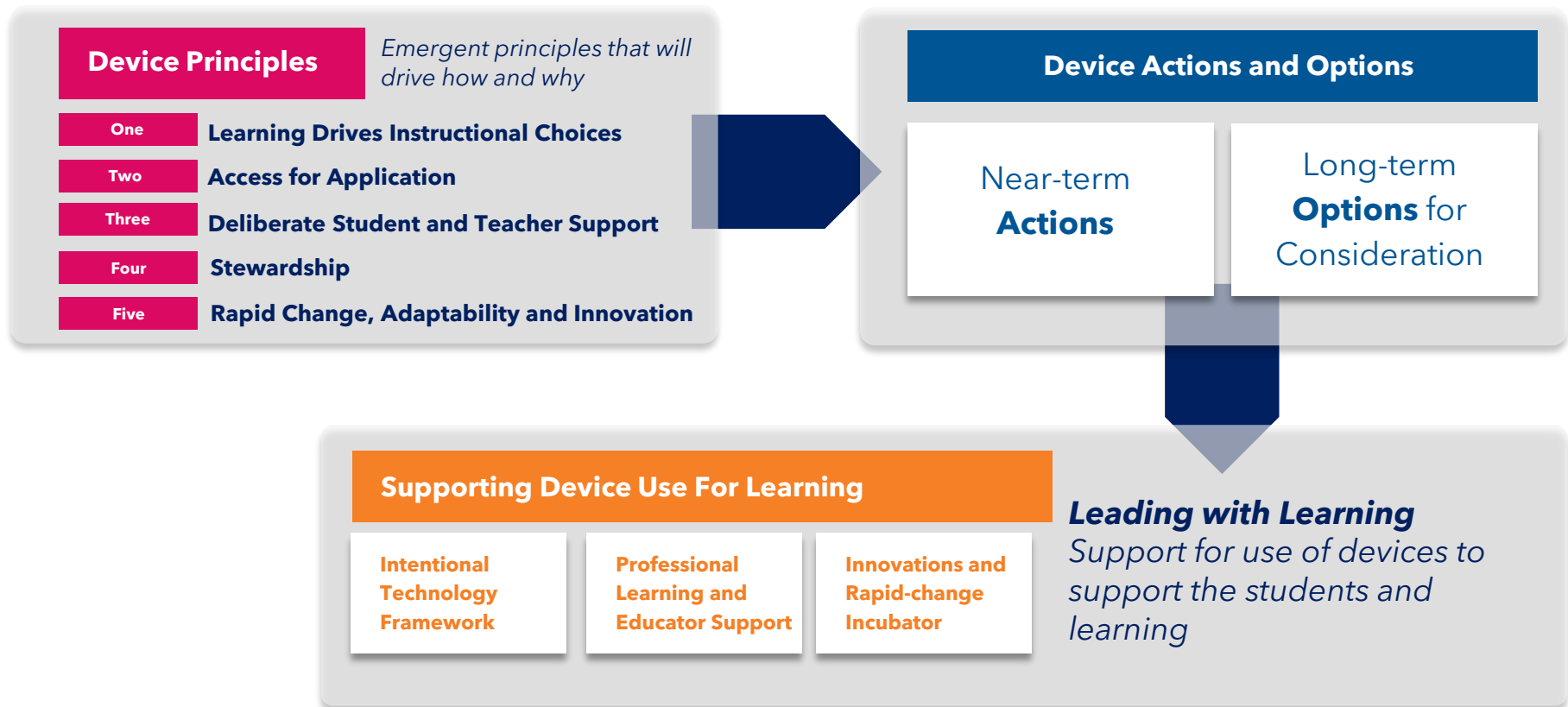
High-level Takeaways and Feedback

From Board

- Concerns about overall use especially in the early grades and wanting to ensure devices are not used too much or ineffectively.
- Ensuring security and safety are a high priority.
- Long-term questions about what we know is effective in use and ensuring those practices are encouraged and taught.
- Questions/Concerns about how much devices are shaping student educational experience.
- Explore at what grade-levels students need to take home devices.
- Reality of budget pressures on all parts of the system.

Going forward

Technology Devices Strategy Map



Going forward

Principles to guide a student and learning-center approach

Principle One

Learning Drives Instructional Choices

Principle Two

Access for Application

Principle Three

Deliberate Student and Teacher Support

Principle Four

Stewardship

Principle Five

Rapid Change, Adaptability and Innovation

Principles to guide a student and learning-center approach



Principle One

Learning Drives Instructional Choices

Essential Question: Does learning drive our approach to use of technology?

Our central tenant is to let the objectives drive teaching and learning. In some cases, it will be obvious that technology is needed (AutoCAD in CTE). In some cases, it is not (teaching sharing in Kindergarten), and in many cases it will be an instructional decision.



Principle Two

Access and Application

Essential Question: Does every student have access to the technology when they need it?

WCPSS approach to technology will not lead with a ratio of devices to students but instead ensuring every student has both **access** to the technology he or she needs to learn and ensuring that that **application** is **meaningful for learning**.

Principles to guide a student and learning-center approach



Principle Three

Deliberate Student and Teachers Support

Essential Question: How do we scaffold the use of technology for students over time?

We expect technology application to increase over time as a student progresses through grade-levels, with students especially in the early grades spending less time on devices, being explicitly supported by adults in how to use them, and gradually increasing such that high schoolers use devices in ways that are like college students and professional adults.



Principle Four

Stewardship

Essential Question: How do we create the policies and practice for stewardship?

We expect students to treat devices as a privilege not a right and that careful resource allocation is vital to ensure access to for all students to technology when they need it.

Principles to guide a student and learning-center approach



Principle Five

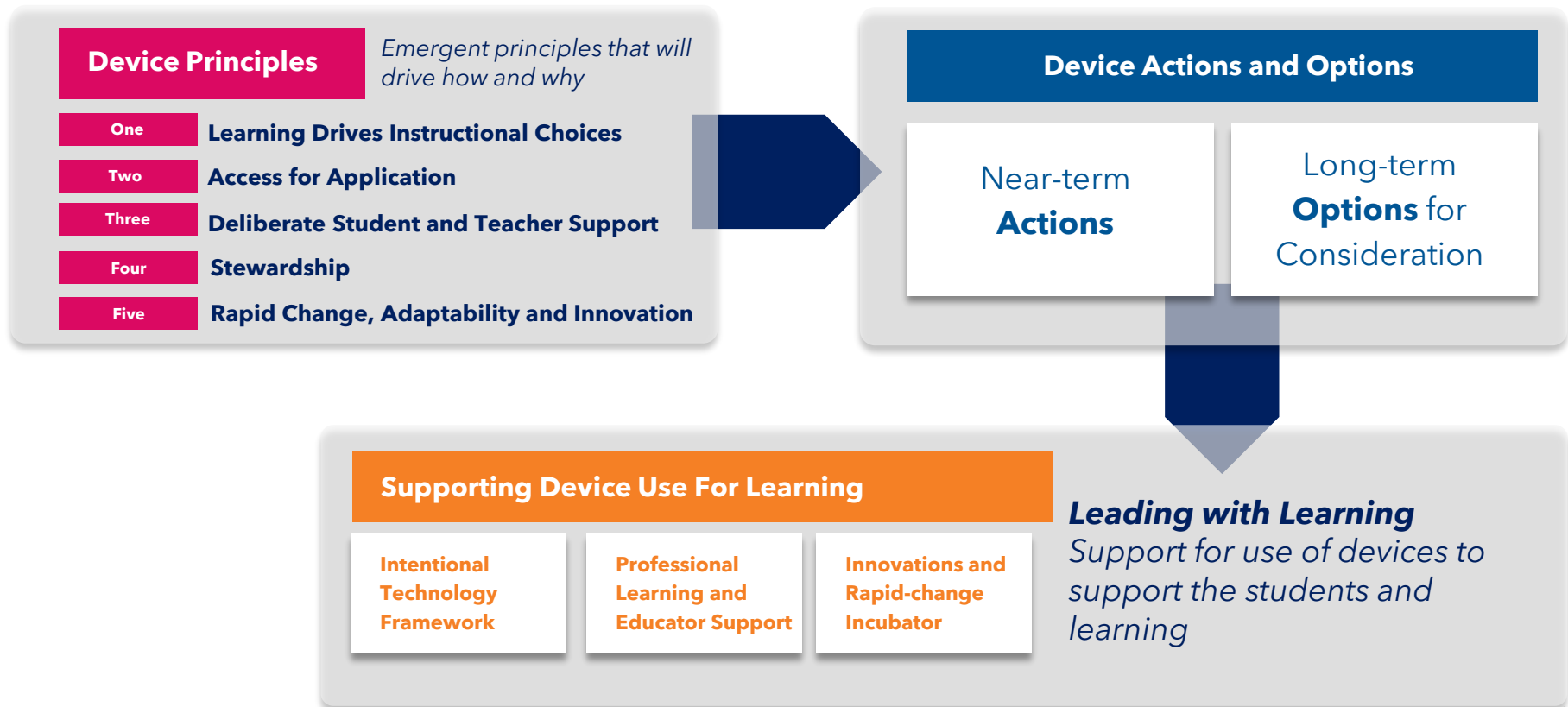
Rapid Change, Adaptability and Innovation

Essential Question: Are we ready to change as tech changes?

Reading the tea-leaves on technology is challenging, especially with increasing influence of AI in most aspects of life. This could mean emergent potential harms of technology that we need to mitigate (for instance divided attention) or emergent potential advantages (powerful feedback tools, secure and effective tutoring tools). WCPSS technology approach needs to be able to pivot rapidly as technology changes.

Going forward

Technology Devices Strategy Map



Going forward

Supporting Devices Use For Learning

1

Intentional Technology Framework

Academics will lead a framework development process that outlines a vision of a learning-first application of technology to include **scaffolded increase of technology skills over time for STUDENTS** and **high-leverage practices for TEACHERS** including multi-modal creativity, rapid feedback, organization, communication and collaboration functions. We will build off the best of what is happening and mitigate challenges.

2

Professional Learning and Educator Support

Building off the framework, arrange to support the application of technology for learning, differentiating by grade-level to ensure teachers have the knowledge, skills and disposition to **intentionally apply** devices effectively in instruction.

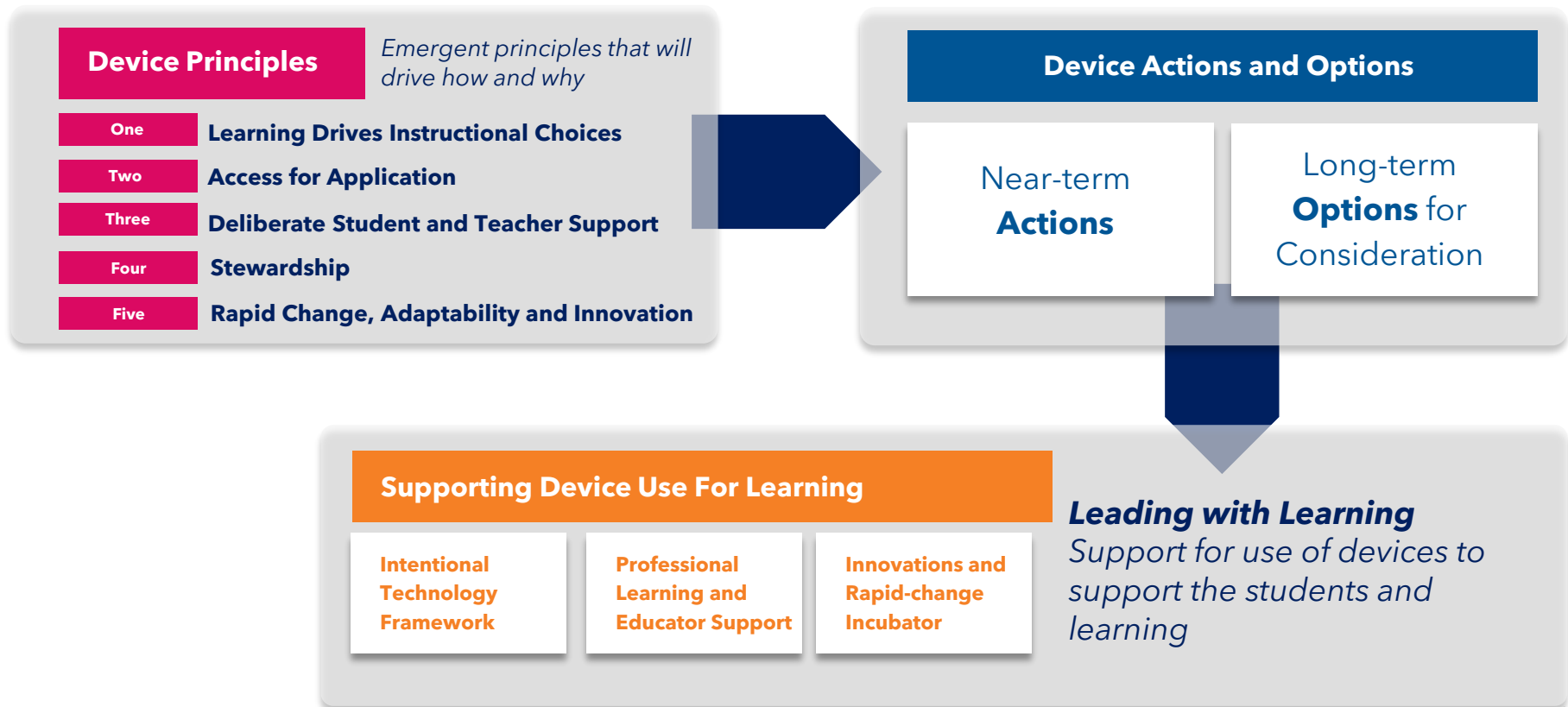
3

Innovations, and rapid-change incubator

Create a working group run through Academics and Technology and in collaboration with practicing teachers and leaders to **highlight innovative, learning-first applications** of technology that exemplify the vision laid in the framework and highlight excellence in instruction using technology.

Going forward

Technology Devices Strategy Map



Device Actions

Planned Actions on Devices in the next 12 months

1

Classroom Sets and Take-home Policy

- **PreK-2 devices are classroom sets.** WCPSS continue to not send devices home with students in K-2.
- **3-5 devices study with schools.** WCPSS will collaborate with Elementary Principals and school-based staff this spring to determine the implications and make a recommendation on student take-home practices in 3-5 for school year 26-27.

2

Pilot and research estimates on various cost-saving measures. Study need and cost and develop recommendations as to whether **leasing arrangements, adjusting the replacement cycles, adjusting type of devices** and **accidental damage protection** offer savings to the district that can be funneled into other vital functions in advance of 27-28.

3

Initiate a review of accountability measures for device stewardship to ensure students, parents and others have training and resources to support care for devices.

Device Actions

Planned Actions on Devices in the next 12 months

4

Usage study: Use available or additional tools to systematically collect, analyze and adjust practices based on a close look at student in-school usage disaggregating by grade-level, courses, and schools.

5

Break-Fix Reporting and Action. In the requirement of NCGA's Break/Fix legislation, WCPSS will conduct the analysis this spring, gathering data and using that data to inform purchasing plan and total cost of ownership.

Device - Long-term Options

For Discussion for 27-28 Budget Cycle

Options	Pros and Cons	Recommendation
Realign ratio of devices in early elementary, considering reducing where possible while ensuring access for instructional needs.	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• May introduce cost savings that can be redirected to other potentially important instructional or operational goals• May help alleviate screen time concerns in the early grades• Collaboration and planning with schools may allow for many of the current uses of devices to continue without explicit one-to-one <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Currently, some types of testing/monitoring/instructional functions may create logistical work and challenges.• Will require work arounds for activities that require one to one and other uses in the early grades• May raise access and equity concerns for students and families	Develop an action plan for realignment of Pre-K and K devices to reduce where possible while ensuring key functions like assessment, instructional resources and any accommodations are accessible for students; report to the board ahead of 27-28 budget cycle; maintain first and second grades at one-to-one class sets with a reconsideration for 28-29.

Device - Long-term Options

For Discussion for 27-28 Budget Cycle

Options	Pros and Cons	Recommendation
<p>Institute a formalized bring your own device policy <i>(students brings their own district approved, non-cell phone device and are not issued a district device, if family chooses)</i></p>	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comfort with and responsibility for device may increase• Some students are already doing this while <i>also</i> being issued a district device• Could potentially conserve resources/lower costs if formalized and no district issued device is required for students <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• May raise access and equity concerns given students will have different devices• May create some instructional challenges (loss of instructional time due managing different devices, different format or appearance of text, potential different functionality)• District-issued devices are required for state testing, external vendors and expectations are built around current levels of access for those functions.• Complicated situations related to ownership (e.g. a student's personal device is damaged by another - intentionally or unintentionally).• Overall centralized device management will become complex - district cannot support devices brought by students• Will require additional clear policy and expectations to be put into place	<p>Continue provisioning one to one devices for students 1-12 to ensure access and equity, employing cost savings actions outlined to reduce the overall # of devices purchased.</p> <p>For grades 9-12, develop opt-out policy, family commitments, and computer requirements to allow students that bring their own devices to not be assigned a district device.</p>

Device - Long-term Options

For Discussion for 27-28 Budget Cycle

Options	Pros and Cons	Recommendation
<i>Align purchasing of classroom panels over the long-term to instructional need</i>	Pros: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long-term cost savings• District has a three-year runway given that all classrooms currently have these panels Cons: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers may have concerns about access to this tool• Some teachers use the panel's advanced functionality as vital parts of their classroom structure	Gather data on panel usage and shift to instructional-based needs provisioning aligning future refresh to grades and classrooms where the tool is most needed and instructionally valuable.

Consolidated *Draft* Timeline

	Spring and Summer 2026	Fall and Winter 2026	Spring and Summer 2027	2027-2028 SY
Device Provisioning Near-term Actions	3-5 Class Sets/Stay in School Recs Collaboration with School Staff and Recommendations for 26-27 SY	Initiate a review of accountability measures for device stewardship		
	Cost-saving pilots and research (ADP, leasing) Apply Results Ongoing			
	Usage analysis		Report on Results Winter 2026	
	Break-fix Reporting	General Assembly Report Required (Aug)		
Device Provisioning Long-Terms Options	Pre-K - K Overall Device Realignment Planning	Dec 2026 Informing		Implementation
	Promethean Board Based on Need Planning	Budgeting for 2027-		Implementation
	Research High School Formal BYOD Approach	2028		Implementation
Support Device Use For Learning	Intentional Technology Framework			
	Professional Learning and Educator Support			
	Charter, Convene and Institute Innovations and Rapid-Change Incubator			

Leading with Learning

At a minimum, that means ensuring equitable access to the right tools for every student AND ensuring the use of these tools helps them learn...**which means both getting them out and putting them away at the right time.**

