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## District 64 to Extend Funding of 1:1 Initiative to Grades 6-8 Chromebook Devices

July 15, 2014

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The Park  
Ridge-Niles  
School  
District 64  
Board of  
Education  
at its  
meeting on  
July 14  
approved a  
further

investment in student learning by utilizing its available funds to cover the entire grades 3-8 Chromebook initiative, as well as the improved ratios of iPads for grades K-2.

According to a "shared funding" plan adopted by the Board earlier this spring, parents of students at the grades 6-8 middle school level were to have purchased a Chromebook device for their child from the District for \$322.00 including



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**sales tax.** The District had already approved directly funding the devices provided to students in grades K-5.

The action will provide immediate financial relief to middle school parents. The Board assumed responsibility for the purchase of the grades 6-8 devices, but is requiring parents to share responsibility through a \$30 allowance toward device upkeep.

According to Chief School Business Official Becky Allard, new information became available on District 64's financial performance since the Board approved the shared funding formula on April 28. "This information also was not available to the Board Advanced Technology Committee during the time it was finalizing its recommendations to the Board on funding options," she noted.

In reviewing its tentative budget draft #2 on July 14, Allard noted that the upcoming year is anticipated to end with an estimated operating funds surplus of \$1.7 million. She also reported that District 64 had just concluded the 2013-14 fiscal year in strong condition, increasing its fund balance by \$3.37 million more than it budgeted.

The Board agreed to invest about \$500,000 from the 2014-15 tentative budget to cover the grades 6-8 parent-paid portion of the 1:1 learning plan, which will reduce the expected surplus for the year to \$1.2 million.

In addition to providing financial relief, Director of Innovation & Instructional Technology Mary Jane Warden noted that the Board's action would give District 64 complete ownership of all devices across all grade levels and the ability to manage them exclusively. "It will allow the District to more freely establish the best conditions for success for an anytime, anywhere 21st century learning ecosystem," she noted. "Given the age of the young adolescents that will be utilizing these devices, District 64 feels strongly that it is in everyone's overall best interest to exercise as much control as possible over this online

learning environment," Warden stated.

"We look forward to partnering with parents and students to foster digital citizenship and empower our students for 21st century learning," she added.

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