

To: Board of Education

From: Mary Jane Warden, Director of Innovation & Instructional Technology

Date: July 14, 2014

Re: Updated Recommendation on 1:1 Initiative

As I begin my work with District 64, it is my pleasure to assume responsibility for guiding the implementation of an exciting 21st Century Learning Plan. My desire is to uphold its vision and goals to provide students with the type of learning opportunities that will prepare them for high school, college and beyond. I highly respect all the work that has been done and I want to commend the Board Advanced Technology Committee (BATC) and my predecessor for laying this groundwork and obtaining approval to launch this bold initiative.

Management of Devices

I have had the opportunity in the past week to think more deeply about this plan in light of my own past experience deploying 1:1 learning environments. I am seeking to refine the plan surrounding a critical issue of "ownership" of the Chromebook as it related to the "management" of these devices. As you know, District 64 has adopted a shared funding approach: Chromebooks are being provided by the District for students in grades 3-5, while parents will purchase Chromebook devices for students in grades 6-8.

For devices owned by District 64 in grades 3-5, clearly District 64 will have complete control over the management of them. However, for grades 6-8, because the Chromebook will be 100% funded by parents, families will own these devices. Yet, because the devices are being primarily used as a teaching resource within the District 64 learning environment, District 64 has an overriding responsibility to "manage" them so that students can maximize their use for learning. "Management" refers not only to safety (e.g., filtering of inappropriate materials), but also to all of the resources that students can access when logged in to the device.

At present, District 64 plans to maintain a high degree of control in order to create proper conditions in the classroom for greater success in teaching and learning. In the District 64 21st Century Learning Plan, the District is creating a "learning ecosystem," if you will, and the devices will be configured to optimally "live" and breathe in this ecosystem. The goal is to establish a 21st century learning environment that extends to anywhere the student takes this device. Certain behaviors, assumptions and expectations can then be established. As this is Year 1 in the initiative of the 21st Century Learning Plan, it will be imperative for the District to be able to set appropriate controls in order to establish classroom and cultural expectations.

As noted earlier, "management" refers not only to safety (e.g., filtering of inappropriate materials), but also to all resources that students can access when logged in to the device, such as YouTube (flipping the classroom), WeVideo (online video creation and editing), Class Dojo (positive feedback system), KhanAcademy (math instruction) -- all integrated into Google Apps for Education and our own studentsd64.org domain.

Proper login to the District 64 domain will need to be reinforced in order for these resources and configurations to be deployed. It will be essential to have a level of management and control of the devices and logins to minimize the need to disrupt classroom instructional time to troubleshoot a situation.

Ownership Concerns

For the Chromebook devices in grades 3-5, this issue of ownership vs. management will not be a concern. Since the District owns the devices, the District will manage them. Although students whose families pay an annual insurance fee may take them home, the expectation will be that those devices remain under District 64 control at all times since they are District 64 property.

District 64 had planned to maintain this same approach to management for devices in grades 6-8. 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. Our current requirement will be that students will follow all expectations and guidelines of District 64's Acceptable Use Policy and school rules when using the Chromebook both at home and at school.

Through our Google Management Console, management that already takes place in the District will apply whether the Chromebook is used through the District network, or at home. This is because configurations are applied to students' accounts. Keeping in mind that these devices are student-owned, however, management of the device by District 64 may infringe on the free use of the device outside of school hours that the family might otherwise expect to have with a device that they own.

District 64 will continue further research to determine whether there is any system available that would allow us to provide a way to have "dual" use of the Chromebook, so that it would be managed by District 64 while at school, but also could be accessible so that parents could directly use and manage it at home. This would allow the device to be used by parents or other family members via their own personal log-ins, which would be completely separate from the District 64 student account.

Unfortunately, there is no practical, "scale-able" way for a device to be readily converted from school use with the District 64 configurations to general home use. The settings must be in place to match the needs of the more restrictive school environment to create the proper conditions in the classroom for greater success in teaching and learning.

Possible Alternatives

Coupled with this ownership concern, District 64 also is sensitive to the dual cost placed on parents of middle school students to purchase a Chromebook in addition to the payment of the regular, annual student fees. District 64, therefore, has explored whether it would be possible to consider absorbing the full cost of the 1:1 initiative for all grades 3-8.

Since April 28, when the Board approved a shared funding formula by grade levels for the 1:1 plan, new information has become available on District 64's financial performance. This information was not available to the BATC during the time it was

finalizing its recommendations to the Board on funding options. The updated financial condition includes:

- As presented in the 2014-15 Budget Draft #2 at tonight's meeting, the 2014-15 year is anticipated to end with an estimated operating funds surplus of \$1.7 million for the coming year.
- District 64 also has just concluded the 2013-14 fiscal year in strong condition, as noted on the June 30, 2014 financial report noted in tonight's consent agenda.

The cost of the District amending its position for middle school students purchasing a Chromebook would be the reduction of the anticipated 2014-15 budgeted surplus from \$1.7 million to \$1.2 million.

Updated Recommendation

Our revised recommendation, therefore, is for the District to invest further 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. This would give District 64 complete ownership of all devices across all grade levels. It would, therefore, allow the District to more freely establish the best conditions for success for an anytime, anywhere 21st century learning ecosystem. This would also offer considerable financial relief to parents of students in grades 6-8, and should eliminate any debate, confusion, or frustration around the topic of ownership vs. management as described previously. Clearly if District 64 owns all the devices, then management will be exclusively maintained by District 64.

District 64 administration, therefore, recommends that the Board assume total responsibility for funding the previously approved 1:1 initiative, including the parent-paid portion for grades 6-8 students.