



TO: Liam Skinner, Superintendent

FROM: Oneida Fox Roye, EdD, Assistant Superintendent 

DATE: January 10, 2025

RE: Report on Chromebook for K-4

The following is in response to the motion submitted by Fred Bahou on 11/6/24.
Request the Superintendent to report on the feasibility of having all students in K-4 of LPS students to not take home their Lowell Public School-issued Chromebooks & iPads & consider all homework assignments to be sent home using their books or worksheets.

This Response to Motion reviews the Chromebook and iPad usage policies in the Lowell Public Schools for Grades K-4, focusing on whether students should take devices home. A key distinction is made between Chromebooks (for general use) and iPads (primarily for special education in K-2, requiring home access). After reviewing the current recommendations and taking into account the feedback from the Technology Department, we are providing the following response regarding not allowing the Chromebooks for Grades K-4 to be taken home.

1. Chromebooks for Grades K-2:

Our current recommendation is that Chromebooks should not be sent home for students in Grades K-2. This aligns with the general policy in place across the majority of our schools, where 90% of schools do not send Chromebooks home for these grade levels. We believe that for younger students, it is important to limit the use of Chromebooks outside of the classroom environment to encourage other forms of learning and social engagement.

2. iPads for Special Education (K-2):

iPads are currently used as communication devices for our special education students in Grades K-2. Given their importance in supporting communication and learning needs for this group of students, it is necessary that these iPads are allowed to go home.

3. **Chromebooks for Grades 3-4:**

Given that 90% of our elementary schools do not send Chromebooks home with students in Grades 3-4, we could consider creating a policy that encourages Chromebooks to remain at school to ensure proper use and maintenance.

4. **Policy Consideration for K-4 Chromebooks:**

If we were to implement a policy where Chromebooks in Grades K-4 are not allowed to go home, we would need to consider alternative solutions for storage. For example, each school would require carts to securely store the Chromebooks when not in use. The estimated cost for such carts ranges from \$1,500 to \$1,700 per cart, depending on the size and quantity needed for each classroom. This could represent a significant financial investment for the district, which should be carefully evaluated.

5. **Current Practices in K-4 Schools:**

Our data indicates the following current practices across K-4 schools:

- **Moody:** Chromebooks stay at school.
- **Pyne:** Chromebooks for Grades K, 1, and 2 stay at school.
- **Reilly:** Chromebooks stay at school.
- **Rogers:** 70% of Chromebooks stay at school, with the remainder going home for iReady work.
- **Shaughnessy:** Chromebooks stay at school.
- **Pawtucketville:** Chromebooks stay at school.
- **Greenhalge:** Chromebooks stay at school.
- **McAvinnue:** Chromebooks stay at school except for rare occasions when a single student may take them home.
- **McAuliffe:** Chromebooks stay at school, with Grades 3 & 4 taking them home over the summer.
- **Morey:** Chromebooks stay at school.

Conclusion:

Given the current data, the recommendation for Grades K-4 to not allow Chromebooks to go home seems to be the most prudent decision. This policy would help ensure the protection of district devices and reduce the need for costly storage solutions. However, the success of this policy should be regularly reviewed, especially considering the concerns related to middle school Chromebooks and breakages.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to further discussions regarding the best path forward for our district's technology policies.