Choosing Technology for K–12 Classrooms
Many school districts are using technology in their schools to enhance learning and increase efficiency. Here are some considerations and steps to help you make smart decisions for your students — from choosing the right devices to implementing blended learning.
Parents and schools want technology.

92% of parents & 96% of teachers believe the integration of technology is important to education.¹

[Since we introduced technology into the classroom,] I cannot stress how the level of engagement and student motivation has increased dramatically.

Tracey Vander Hayden
Principal, Pioneer Middle School
Orange County, California
Challenges in implementing school technology

• Choosing the right technology tools
• Training staff adequately
• Adjusting curricula
• Making the best use of funds

Points to consider

• Have a clear strategy for your district when it comes to technology procurement, implementation and staff training.
• Form a subcommittee to make sure teacher and district goals are aligned, budgets and timelines are met, and technology works properly.
• Consider technology companies with managed services that provide guidance with everything from strategy and setting milestones to lifecycle services, procurement and training.
• Teach the teachers. 82% of teachers say they aren’t receiving the training they need to use technology to its full potential in the classroom.²

What districts are doing

Tustin Unified School District approved a measure that provided $135 million for Tustin schools for upgrades in 850 classrooms³, including:

• Document cameras
• Wireless Internet connections
• Classroom tablets for grades K–4
• Tablets for every student in grades 5–8
• Laptops for every high school student
Blended learning is a mix of learning delivery methods, commonly consisting of in-class instruction that is reinforced with online content, tailored to each student’s individual learning pace.

According to the National Center on Time & Learning, by supplementing teacher-led instruction with new innovations in education hardware and software, students across the country are given access to new and exciting content, as well as new ways to learn and create.

The 7 steps are:

1. Set a clear, purpose-driven vision for technology and blended learning.
2. Determine your readiness for blended learning.
3. Design a blended learning model.
4. Select the technology needed for your model.
5. Plan and deliver staff training.
6. Create a troubleshooting plan.
7. Reflect, adjust and improve.
Choose the right device.

In the U.S. in 2014, more than 60% of the devices sold to K–12 education were Chromebook™ or Windows® products. Chromebooks require a high-speed Internet connection and are good for tighter budgets. Windows offers more versatility and more applications but may run higher in cost when you add features and security.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Chromebook</th>
<th>Windows laptops</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>$200 to $400</td>
<td>$200 to $2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Battery life</td>
<td>Up to 10 hours, depending on the manufacturer</td>
<td>3–7 hours, depending on the model</td>
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<td>Speed</td>
<td>Pages load quickly, video is high-definition and multiple pages can run at the same time. Chromebooks also don’t need to start up — they are instantly on.</td>
<td>Laptops require startup time. Processing speed varies on different devices and determines the amount of time required to interact with programs and media.</td>
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<td>Storage</td>
<td>File storage on the device is minimal, usually around 16GB. Google provides 15GB on Google Drive™, a cloud-based file storage service.</td>
<td>Students can store large files and download software and applications to the hard drive so they don’t always have to be online to do their work.</td>
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<td>Applications, media and software</td>
<td>Chromebooks do not allow software or media downloads. Applications must be Web-based to be usable.</td>
<td>Applications are practically unlimited, and you can choose which browser to use. Just about any type of program can be downloaded and run.</td>
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<td>Suppliers</td>
<td>Acer, ASUS, Dell, HP, Lenovo, LG, Samsung and Toshiba</td>
<td>Windows can be installed on a wide variety of laptops from almost any manufacturer.</td>
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<td>Size</td>
<td>Chromebooks fit into backpacks and are lightweight, from 2 to 4 lbs.</td>
<td>Most models weigh about 5 lbs. — lightweight versions range from 2 to 6 lbs.</td>
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<td>Ease of use</td>
<td>Applications run in browser windows and are fairly straightforward.</td>
<td>Laptops can be set up to be kid-friendly by limiting or restricting programs. The user experience should be controlled.</td>
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Bringing technology into your school district is no small task. You may face pressure from the board, teachers and parents to make all the right choices — along with a budget that limits what you can accomplish. But it can be done. Schools across America are using technology to meet standards and to help students learn and prepare for the future. Yours can too.
Partner with Insight.

Insight helps school districts of all sizes find the best ways to use technology to achieve goals and meet curricula standards. We provide cost-effective solutions and services, along with the expertise to guide you through the process from strategy to implementation and beyond.

4. National Center on Time & Learning entitled “Supporting Student Success Through Time and Technology, a step-by-step guide to successfully implementing blended learning and expanded learning time at your school.”