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# School Council Report: Transition from BYOD to School-Provided Chromebooks

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Technology is constantly evolving. When our school launched its 1:1 computer program in the Fall of 2007, we were a forerunner in education. Nearly twenty years later, our goal is to be a forerunner once again, this time in best practices that support *how* students use technology as a purposeful tool for creative and critical thinking.

I like to compare it to a driver's licence with students: we don't simply throw them in the car on their own and say figure it out. We teach them *how* to drive, what to watch for and how to *think* like a safe driver. Then they get their learners license and we drive *with* them before they head out on their own. As adults we have full access to cars because we have already proven we have these skills. Technology in every facet is the same and we want to support students in developing these skills.

**Starting in the Fall of 2027, we will begin grandfathering out our Bring Your Own Device program in favour of school-provided Chromebooks.** All incoming Grade 5 students will use school Chromebooks, and we will phase out BYOD one grade at a time over the next five years so families who have already invested in personal devices can continue using them.

This shift aligns closely with current education research best practices. Research shows students being frequently distracted by digital devices during lessons and advises that classroom technology should be used intentionally to support learning outcomes. Additionally, standardizing on school Chromebooks helps close the gap between students by removing the financial burden on families and ensuring every student learns on an equal footing.

On a practical, day-to-day level, this transition addresses four key areas:

- **Physical security:** All Chromebooks remain stored and charged in carts inside the school, protecting them from loss or damage during commutes.
- **Compatibility and IT support:** Personal devices run on different operating systems, which makes some of our required educational apps unavailable or incompatible. School Chromebooks give every student the exact same tools and allow our IT department to centrally manage troubleshooting, updates, and app downloads.
- **Fewer classroom disruptions:** School devices are configured for our network, reducing Wi-Fi issues, and

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keeping them at school eliminates delays caused by forgotten laptops or dead batteries.

- **Stronger monitoring and focus:** Personal accounts are restricted on school Chromebooks, and teachers gain full access to classroom management tools like Vretta and Class Tools to reduce distractions and prevent misuse.
    - Class Tools and Vretta are locked programs that restrict students' ability to access external apps or links outside of their given task or assignment. These are controlled by the teacher.
    - Recently we utilized this tool with a grade 6 class. They had two math assignments on division to complete. They were given access to a 'How To' video and the Google Forms for their answers - all other links, games, and apps were locked. The teacher reported a significant improvement in the quality of work turned in and even had a student report, "I didn't want to do the work so I tried to get out of Class Tools but there was nothing else to do so I just did the work instead. I finished all of it - what should I do next?"
    - Vretta and Class Tools also help reduce the ease of access to AI tools - saving teachers significant time flagging AI use and addressing academic dishonesty. While students could still find work arounds, these tools slow down the process and inform teachers when a student is disconnected. Providing a learning opportunity for them to teach digital citizenship and critical thinking skills.

To support this change, our IT department has committed to supplying additional Chromebooks over the next couple of years. Fundraising for extra devices is also an option we can explore together to further strengthen our inventory. Over the coming months, we will work with IT on cart allocations and communicate with incoming Grade 5 families so they know they do not need to purchase a personal device for Fall 2027.