

Questions for HCPSS from PTACHC Delegation on 9/1 PTACHC Meeting as a result of the Technology Committee's Presentation

The questions below were written on index cards by audience members and collected at the end of the presentation. The full text was retyped in this document and shared with HCPSS for comment. The responses are directly from HCPSS.

- 1) "There seems to be confusion @ EMMS with homework assignments being only on chromebooks when those aren't going home with students this year. Can a reminder be sent to ALL teachers there that all homework assignments should be on PAPER!"

HCPSS Response: The expectation is not that all homework must be on paper. Instead, the schools should communicate how students without home devices will access or complete assignments when technology is required.

- 2) "Did HCPSS share their pilot methodology and the research questions to be answered from running the pilot?"

HCPSS Response: Yes. The purpose of the Chromebook Cart Pilot is to evaluate the impact of keeping Chromebooks at school and to gather feedback and data that will inform future district decisions about device access.

The pilot is designed to examine:

- The academic impact of keeping Chromebooks at school and using them intentionally during the school day.
- How an in-school device model affects instructional practices and student learning.
- Device management and breakage rates.
- Feedback and experiences from students, families, teachers, and school staff.
- How schools can provide equitable access to technology for students who need a device at home.

The pilot model uses classroom Chromebook carts rather than individually assigned devices. Students will have access to devices when they are needed for instruction, with the same device potentially being used by different students throughout the day.

The pilot also includes special considerations for students who require consistent access to a device. Students with IEP/504 plans, multilingual learners, and students enrolled in Accelerated Math who require a device will have an assigned device.

At the conclusion of the pilot, HCPSS will analyze the data and stakeholder feedback and use those findings to develop recommendations regarding a potential district-wide model. The intent is to use evidence from the pilot to determine what approach best supports student learning, instructional needs, equitable access, and responsible technology use.

- 3) "Did HCPSS share why only not sending them (laptops) home is the main point of the pilot vs. reducing in-school use as a pilot pillar?"

HCPSS Response: Not sending Chromebooks home is not the sole or primary purpose of the pilot. A key component of the pilot is examining how schools can use technology more intentionally during the school day, including opportunities to reduce overall in-school device use when a device is not necessary to achieve the learning objective.

The pilot is intended to help us better understand the impact of an in-school device model, including both where devices are available and when they are used for instruction.

As part of the evaluation, HCPSS will gather data and feedback related to:

- **Instructional intentionality:** Are devices being used when they meaningfully support the learning objective rather than simply because they are available?
- **Student learning and engagement:** What impact does the model have on student learning, participation, and engagement?
- **Intentional Balance:** How are teachers balancing digital learning with paper-based, hands-on, collaborative, and other instructional experiences?
- **Device management:** What impact does the model have on device breakage, loss, charging, and management?
- **Stakeholder experience:** What are students, families, teachers, and school leaders experiencing under the model?
- **Equitable access:** Are students who need technology outside of school able to access appropriate accommodations or devices?

The pilot will provide evidence to inform recommendations about the future of instructional technology in HCPSS. The goal is not to replace one blanket expectation with another, for example, requiring everything to be digital or requiring everything to be on paper. The goal is to ensure that the instructional purpose drives the modality.

- 4) “Can I opt my MS out of a chromebook? They are distracting and students don’t need their own - they should only borrow them as needed from the school. Giving them a device defeats the purpose of no devices in the school. As a sub teacher, I watched over half the class choose to play on the computer instead of participating in gym and play. Also it turns teaching into a constant nagging and babysitting for chromebook assignments. Completely miserable.”

HCPSS Response: At this time, families are not able to opt their student out of having access to a Chromebook because there are required elements of the curriculum that include the use of technology.

At the same time, HCPSS recognizes that technology can be distracting when it is not being used purposefully. Teachers are encouraged to be intentional about when devices are used and to use them when they enhance or support the learning experience. The goal is not for students to be on a Chromebook simply because one is available, but for technology use to be driven by the instructional purpose.

- 5) “No longer allowed access to the Howard County Directory. How can we communicate with our community? How to advocate for students when we can’t reach their families?”

HCPSS Response: The Superintendent addressed concerns about access to the Howard County Directory during the meeting, including the reasons for the change. That said, we understand the concern about being able to communicate with families. HCPSS will not prohibit PTAs from independently collecting information

from parents and establishing a directory for their school.