

Technology Committee Recommendation

Background Information: The Personalized Digital Learning (PDL) device refresh for middle schools is scheduled for the 2017-18 school year. The district's technology team began a review/analysis of devices in Spring 2016 with a survey of middle school students, middle school teachers, and a focus group team of more than 50 representatives. The review of devices continued in Fall 2016 with consultation and/or visits with other districts in the Southeast who had middle school 1:1 devices. On Jan. 17, 2017, a team of 75 stakeholders (2 Student Cabinet representatives from each middle school, 2 randomly-selected teachers from each middle school, each middle school's principal and instructional coach) met to review and recommend the refresh device. The preferred device selected by each of the four groups (students, teachers, coaches, and principals) was the Dell Chromebook.

Recommended Action: Based on the stated preference of the middle school students, teachers, instructional coaches and principals, the District PDL Steering Committee supports the recommendation for the Dell Chromebook, 11-inch touchscreen, as the 1:1 refresh device for the next cycle of PDL in middle school grades. The following are recommendations:

1. Purchase Dell Chromebooks 11-inch touchscreens for each middle school student, with distribution in Fall 2017. The package would also include a protective laptop case, Complete Care for device repairs, and more permanent charging stations for classrooms.
2. Purchase Dell Chromebooks 11-inch touchscreens (model that converts to tablet) for each middle school teacher, with distribution in Spring 2017.
3. In order to ensure a smooth transition with curriculum documents and instructional practices, allow middle schools to keep a supply of old student iPads that are in good condition for a period of transition in the 2017-18 school year.
4. After a period of transition for middle school teachers to the new Chromebook, push down the teacher iPads to elementary grade students since the teacher iPads are the same model as those used in fifth grades PDL.

Estimated Project Cost: The cost of the total middle school refresh above can be accomplished inside the annual capital fund budget schedule established for PDL. The unit cost of the Dell Chromebooks is less than the unit cost of an iPad, which may result in some savings that will be determined later when the total cost of transition is known. However, the final estimates are yet to be determined for infrastructure transition costs (additional bandwidth required, charging carts, device management program, etc.).