



Board (PUBLIC)

22 June 2020

Report No. 20-055

Purchase of Replacement and New Chromebooks

**Key Contact: Shawn Lehman, Superintendent of Instruction,
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PURPOSE:

1. To authorize the purchase of 5000 student chromebooks to replace some of the devices loaned to students as a result of school closure due to Covid-19 and to prepare for various learning scenarios in the fall of 2020, which we anticipate will require additional mobile technology for students and schools.

CONTEXT:

2. On March 12, 2020 the Province announced that schools would close until March 30th due to Covid-19 and risk of transmission of this virus. Subsequently, the Province and Ministry of Education extended the closure period on several occasions which resulted in school being closed until the end of the year. This necessitated school districts, staff and students to shift to a Learn at Home model. The province provided a Learn at Home framework for parents to access in the early stages requiring access to technology. Initially, OCDSB created a District wide Learn at Home framework for staff, students and parents to use which was also built on a platform best accessed through technology. Educators facilitated learning using Google tools or the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

In mid March, the District had schools survey families to determine how many students would require mobile technology and how many students did not have internet or reliable wireless technology.

The District has 23,500 student chromebooks in our schools. As of September 2019, 5,000 of these Chromebooks were no longer receiving updates from Google and will be removed from the fleet of board owned chromebooks during the 2020 - 2021 school year.

Since the end of March, schools and the board have collaboratively deployed 11,000 chromebooks to students and families to assist with learning at home. We

have 12,500 student chromebooks remaining in our schools with these devices being spread out over many of our sites; some buildings have provided all of their inventory to students and families through the deployment process.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

3. B< has the money in its budget to support the cost of the chromebooks; however, this request is in excess of what staff can support and requires specific board approval.

As we prepare for September 2020, there are three scenarios that the District is planning for:

- a) Full Return to In School Learning with no reduced class size limitations;
- b) Adaptive Delivery Model: return to school with physical distancing and smaller cohorts. This would require technology to be used and available to students while at school and learning at home; and
- c) Continued Full Remote Learning with all students learning at home which will necessitate mobile devices being required to support students while learning at home.

The other consideration we need to keep in mind is how technology will be used at school in the first two scenarios, the cleaning guidelines and if the technology will be able to be shared by students throughout the school day. In any in school model involving physical distancing, technology will play a key role for teachers to support students with 1:1 or small group targeted instruction, and to facilitate collaboration between students.

Program and Learning, Innovation and Adolescent Learning, Learning Support Services, Equity and Inclusion and Business and Learning Technologies (B<) are working on a technology model to ensure equitable distribution of mobile technology to students and school communities.

B< has decided not to collect mobile devices or hotspots from students and families at the end of June, except for students who are graduating or leaving the board. We are unsure what our schools will look like in September and students may continue to require use of these devices.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

4. B< will use money from its 2019-2020 budget to purchase 5,000 chromebooks at a cost of \$2,260,000.

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

5. We have had conversations with some school principals who are concerned they do not have any chromebooks remaining in schools or they do not have enough chromebooks to support a 4:1 students to mobile technology ratio. We are also planning for damaged or broken devices being returned in the fall that are no longer usable.

The additional 5,000 chromebooks will complement the chromebooks we already have in our schools.

STRATEGIC LINKS:

6. This initiative is connected to the culture of innovation and our ability to modernize instructional practice and promote a culture of collaboration and learning. As part of the work in the B< three year plan, Transforming How we Learn and Work, this will enhance digital fluency for our students and leverage technology through instructional practice to improve student learning.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board authorize the expenditure of \$2,260,000 for 5000 student chromebooks.

Shawn Lehman
Superintendent of Instruction

Camille Williams-Taylor
Director of Education and
Secretary of the Board