



Screen Time & Our Students

Our Mission:

In USD 232 we believe technology should be used in an appropriate and intentional manner which opens doors for students to Engage, Personalize, Measure and Create.

Parents may have questions about screen time and its effect on children. We understand, we are parents too!

“Will students be on devices all day?”

“Will my child be safe online?”

Everything you need to know is below. Please feel free to reach out to your child’s principal for more information.

Why are we using devices?

We have had computer devices in our elementary classrooms for years. In 2017 our District Technology Committee saw the importance of creating digitally proficient students and created new technology [standards](#) for teachers and students. The USD 232 Board of Education approved those standards and recognized the need for classroom sets of iPads to open the doors to collaboration, problem solving and critical thinking skills which students need to be successful.

Did parents have any input in the process?

Yes! Parents, along with teachers, students, administrators and Board Members make up our District Technology Committee. After reviewing data from our two-year long pilot program, the group came to the consensus in February 2020 to purchase classroom sets of iPads in our 7 elementary schools.

Will my child bring home a device?

No, elementary devices will remain at school at all times.

Will students use iPads all day?

No! The iPad will not replace the teacher or traditional hands-on activities that also make learning fun and relevant. Technology is simply another tool in the teacher’s toolbox to help students learn, much like a textbook or pencil. Just as your student doesn’t use a pencil for every activity in school, neither will they use the iPad for everything.

Will technology make my student smarter?

Unfortunately iPads are not a magical fix. However, websites and apps that help pinpoint student deficiencies and fill holes have proven to enhance student growth. We want to be appropriate and intentional with the use of devices.

What about Screen Time Concerns?

How much time children spend using technology during the day is a concern for many parents. Recent studies, like [a new JAMA Pediatrics analysis](#) of dozens of past studies on screen time and academic performance suggests “how much” may be the wrong question. Instead, they suggest, how students are using the devices matters more. Idle screen time (such as watching tv and playing video games) was shown to have a negative affect on academic achievement. Thirty minutes of bad screen-time is 30 minutes too long. That’s why our teachers have received and will continue to receive professional learning on the appropriate use of technology in lessons.

What do you consider “appropriate and intentional” use of technology?

Through district provided and job-embedded professional development, teachers are encouraged to think about how their students are using technology, ensuring that each activity falls within one of four buckets: Engage, Personalize, Measure, and Create. When students are **engaged** in technology, they’re using media to learn in ways that didn’t exist before, like taking a 3D tour of a cell. Technology also **personalizes** learning, helping students learn through differentiated activities. Teachers get quick **measures** of student progress with check-ins and mastery assessments. And, technology allows students to **create** everything from websites to videos to show what they know. Every lesson is designed around learning standards and objectives. Many lessons will not require the use of technology.

What kind of apps will be allowed?

USD 232 developed a stringent app approval process. We want to make sure that educational apps do more than simply substitute learning students could get in a different way. When a teacher requests an app, their building principal must first approve it, then it will be evaluated at the district level before it becomes available for classroom use.

What will prevent students from accessing inappropriate sites?

Securely, a web-content filtering software, is installed on each district device and is designed to block questionable content. However, it is important to recognize that no web filter is capable of blocking all objectionable content all of the time, which is why we constantly monitor sites and adjust the filter in real time. Ensuring students are accessing the Internet responsibly requires a combination of "over the shoulder" monitoring, periodically reviewing student Internet activity and educating students on the appropriate use of the Internet. Another tool teachers will use to monitor content is Apple Classroom. This app allows teachers to see everything every student is doing on their iPad in real time and allows teachers to redirect students if needed.

What if I have questions about how technology is being used in my child’s classroom?

In USD 232 we believe in a strong parent/teacher partnership! If you have questions about anything happening in your child’s classroom, please reach out to the teacher directly. They will be happy to tell you all about the amazing things happening in their room daily!