Nome Public Schools
Director of Technology Report

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Current / Completed projects

As mentioned in past reports, as a cost savings measure, the Tech Dept is looking at replacing staff Apple devices with ChromeBook Plus. The cost of most ChromeBook Plus devices are $500 less than a MacBook. Additional advantages of ChromeBook Plus are rapid restart, scheduled and faster operating system upgrades, easier settings controls through the Google Admin Console, longer life span through the extended Automatic Update Expiration (10 years from date of manufacture vs five to seven years for MacBook). Another advantage is that staff would be using systems similar to the ones students use and would have the knowledge to provide better guidance on use, keyboard shortcuts, etc. Since the second week of November, I have been utilizing only a ChromeBook Plus in order to test the capabilities and feasibility of use for NPS Staff. To date I have not found anything that I cannot do on a ChromeBook Plus that I could do on my MacBook. It requires a little bit of a shift in how tasks are completed but the capabilities exist. I have been able to remote connect to macOS, WindowsOS, and ChromeOS devices for remote assistance or for server management / access. I am able to create, combine, and sign PDFs. I can cast my device to interactive displays and control them from the touch screen of the ChromeBook (this capability does not exist with MacBook). I also gained access to the improved version of the MyViewboard software with increased presentation capabilities that our current ViewBoard interactive displays will not update to. There are many offline capabilities with ChromeBook Plus that do not exist for standard ChromeBook, an important feature for periods without internet connection. After suggestions by staff observing my use, I have ordered additional models with increased capabilities to test. These models include devices with 2 in 1 screens (able to fully open the display 360° and utilize it as a tablet with a touch screen and stylus). These options increase mobility of faculty who desire to move around the classroom instead of teaching from the panel. When the additional devices arrive I plan to rotate them through various staff to test them and provide feedback.

We have started preparing our network environment for the conversion to ChromeBook Plus pending the outcome of the tests of ChromeBook Plus devices by staff. Part of this process is implementing settings specific to staff devices in our multiple organizational units (groups) in Google Admin Console. These settings will allow us to define who is allowed to login to devices (one staff to assigned device), scope specific printers, and apply settings or assign internet filters as required by e-rate, Board Policy, and or cyber security requirements / best practices.

Kindergarten Report Card converted to Google Sheets. Because of the foundational standards specific to this grade level, the Kindergarten Report is unique, so it resides outside of PowerSchool / PowerTeacher. The previous version consisted of an Excel spreadsheet, a Word document specifically created for Mail Merge processes, required edits of the merged document to remove fields from future terms, and then printing a specific number of pages from the edited sheets. The conversion to Google Sheets allowed for the use of a script to execute from inside of the spreadsheet that produces the report cards, from a protected template, for records specifically marked to Print. The use of the script automatically removes the extra fields that were imported in the previous process and the generation of null reports (blank reports from extra rows in the spreadsheet that did not contain values. The script generates individual PDF documents with the Student Name in the title for easy identification and printing. The use of the Google Sheet also allows for greater control and easy access for teachers to input student data and grades. It is estimated that the conversion will save approximately 20 to 30 minutes of time for each teacher during the end of term generation / printing events. Site admins also gain easier access / oversight of the process.

Replacement ChromeBooks distributed to 3 classroom carts at Nome-Beltz Middle High School. Our Systems Administrator, Andrew White, was able to provision and distribute 75 replacement devices to 3 classroom carts at NBMHS during November Family Teacher Conference days. The swap of these student devices is part of the Technology Department device replacement plan that schedules replacement every 7 to 10 years for student devices.

Category I and Category II e-rate year. This year our Category I (Cat-I) Internet and Category II (Cat-II) internal network equipment contracts go out for bid. I normally contract our Cat-I for five years in order to align to the 5 year renewal budget of the Cat-II. This cycle saves me time instead of having to process Cat-I on a yearly basis. It also produces discounted rates for internet prices under the longer contract. This year we enter into a unique bid season for Cat-I Internet because of new Internet services capabilities in our area that were previously unavailable. With the introduction and greatly enhanced capabilities of Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite systems, installation of the LEO land station in Nome, and general increases in Internet Service Provider capabilities it should increase the number of bids we expect to receive. There are also grant options available under LEO that could equate to zero district cost and no limitation on bandwidth like there is under Broadband Assistance Grant100 (BAG100) which caps each school at 100Mbps speed. The hope is that with the increase in capabilities we will see cost reduction of services in general or be able to greatly increase bandwidth for little to no cost to the district when coupled with our 90% Cat-I and 85% Cat-II reimbursement through the e-rate program. For Cat-II services we expect to replace most of our network switches and Access Points (WiFi antennas) throughout the district.

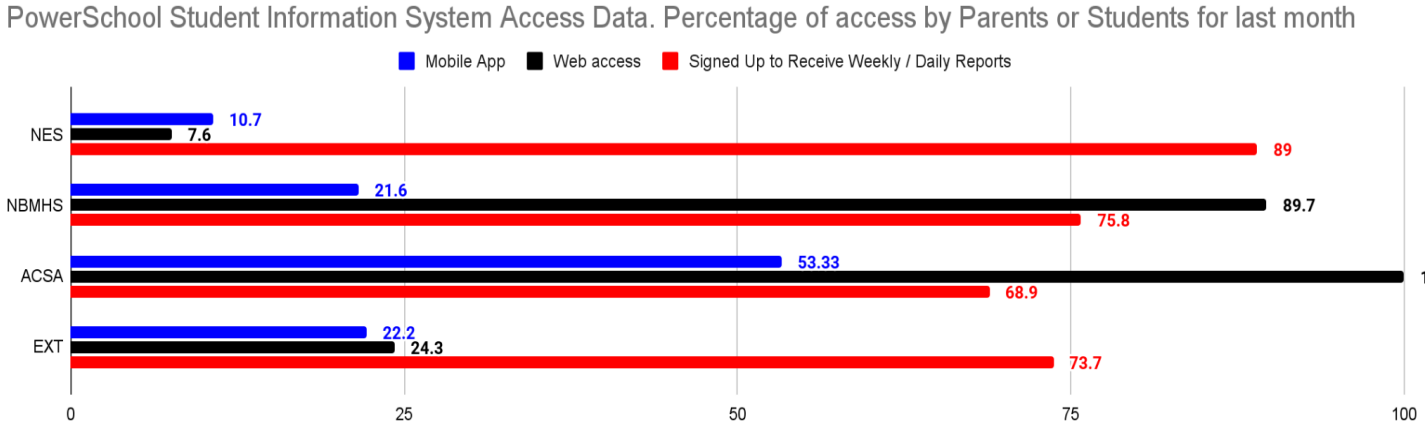
Future Projects

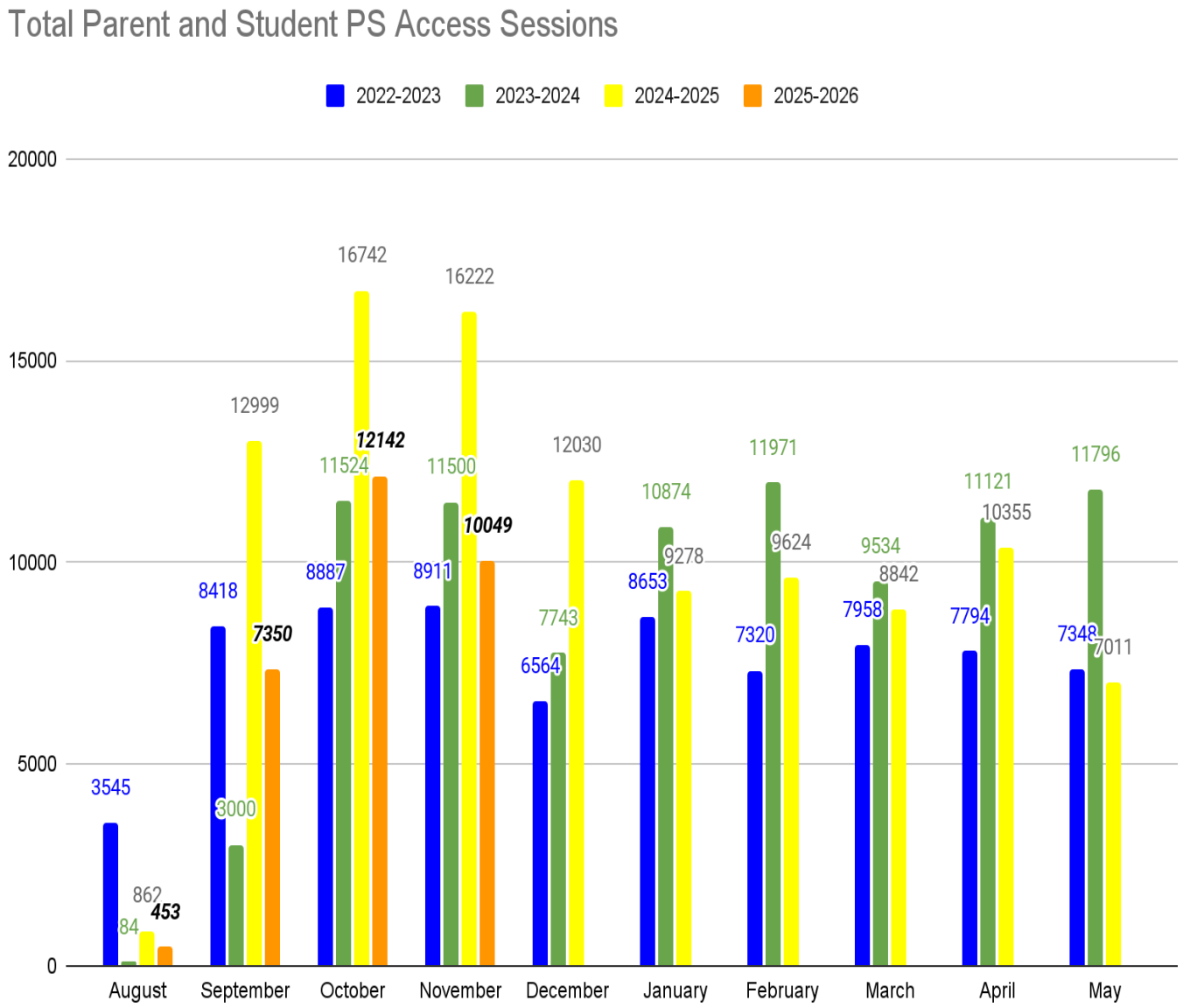
No Change - Continue to build on the District's Data Protection Policy by implementing many of the information security processes covered in the virtual Chief Information Security Officer course I am now certified in. I am identifying many policies that either need added or updated to ensure compliance with industry standards. I have submitted a few drafts of these policies for consideration by the Policy Committee.

No Change - Network diagraming for our entire network infrastructure in support of District Data Protection Policy. Division of our large layer two network into multiple Virtual Local Area Network segments to improve speed and security of our connected devices and network as a whole. This will also allow better protection of NPS owned equipment from equipment joining the guest side of our network. I have received the quote from our Juniper Switches vendor for support on this monumental task and am reviewing my budget for availability of funds.

PowerSchool Online Enrollment

As of 30NOV25 the SY25-26 New Student Enrollments forms completed are at 130 (47 for Kindergarten) and the SY25-26 Returning Student Enrollment forms (launched on 31JUL25 - Closed 30NOV25) completed are 482 of 556 (86.7% complete) for a total of 612 of 669 K-12 Student records (91.5%) submitted through online enrollment. This is 10.25% higher than this same period last SY and the highest level of completed forms since the inception of online enrollment for NPS in SY19-20.


PowerSchool Student Information System Access Data. Percentage of access by Parents or Students for last month
Mobile App
Web access
Signed Up to Receive Weekly / Daily Reports
NES
NBMHS
ACSA
EXT
10.7
7.6
89
21.6
89.7
75.8
53.33
68.9
22.2
24.3
73.7
0
25
50
75
100


Total Parent and Student PS Access Sessions
2022-2023
2023-2024
2024-2025
2025-2026
20000
15000
10000
5000
0
August
September
October
November
December
January
February
March
April
May
3545
84
862
453
8418
3000
12999
7350
8887
11524
16742
12142
8911
11500
16222
10049
6564
7743
12030
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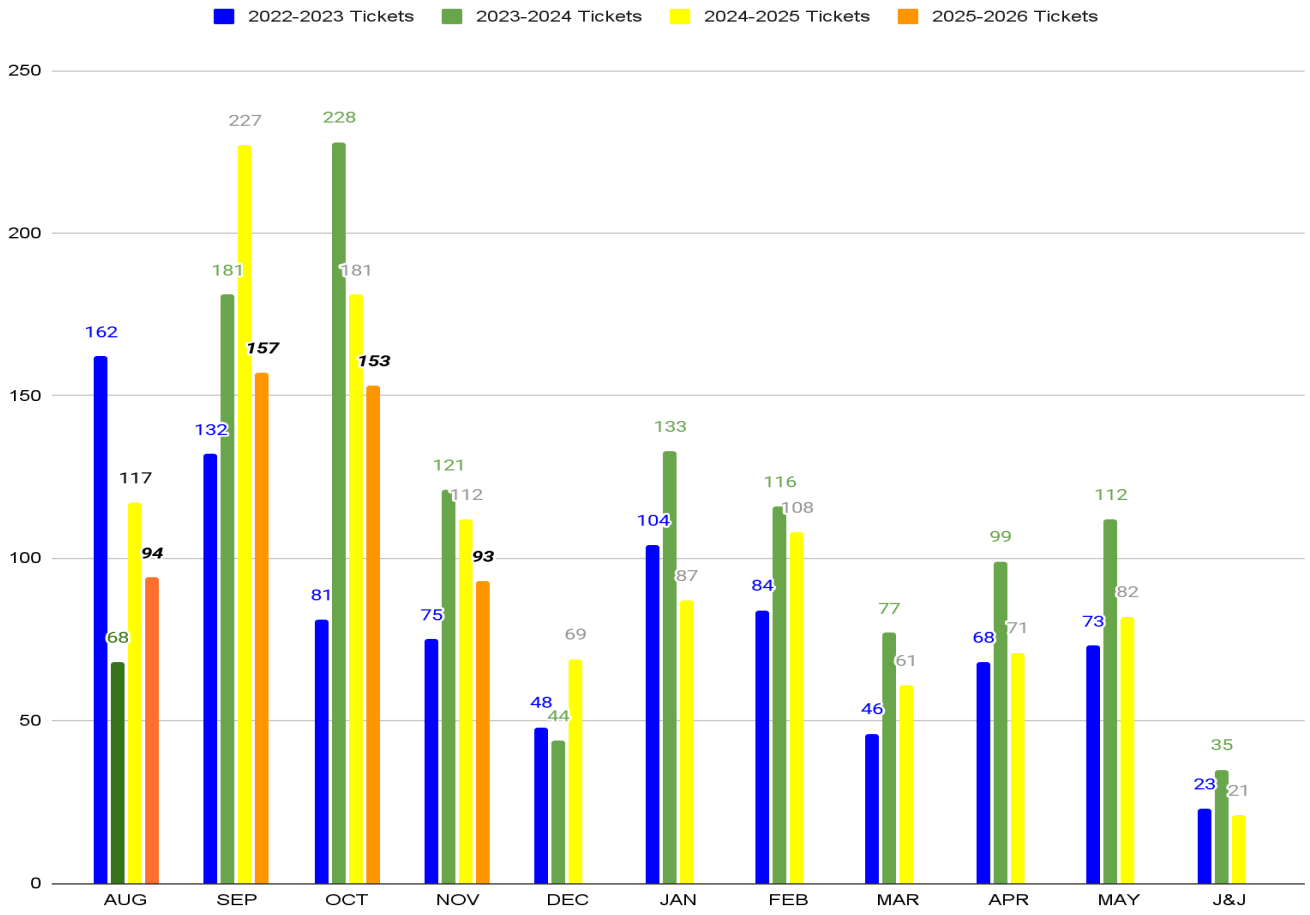
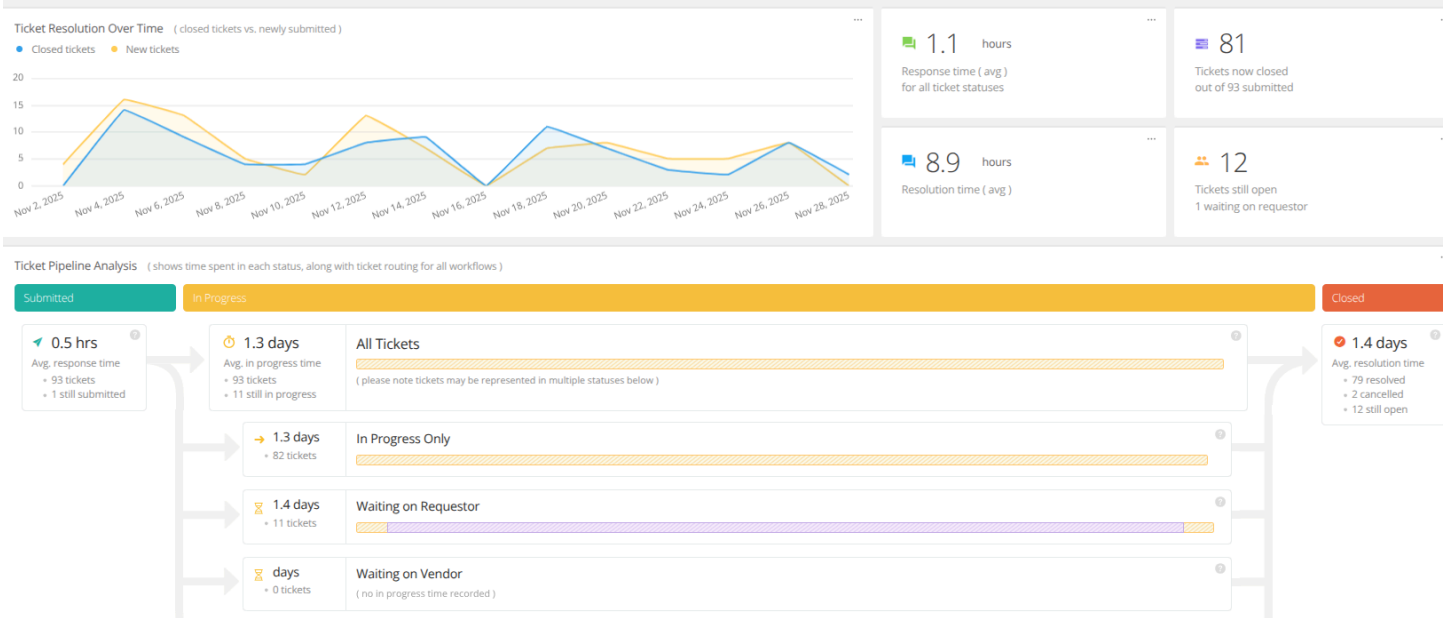
7348
7011
11796

Part of the Technology Department's role is to maintain the Technology Web Help Desk for staff to request repairs, training, and troubleshooting. Last month we closed / resolved 81 out of 93 (89%) tech requests submitted through the system. Our average response time was 1.1 hours and average resolution time was 8.9 hours.