

Policy Committee Meeting
Tuesday, September 22, 2026 4:30 PM

Dr. Matthew Prophet Education Center
501 N. Dixon St.
Portland, OR 97227

Agenda

1. Call to Order / Introductions
2. Public Comment - 5 *Two-Minute slots* *To sign-up for public comment email
PublicComment@pps.net or call 503-916-3741
3. Discussion: 2026-27 Committee Work Plan
4. Discussion: Schools Beyond Screens Digital Device and Screen Use Policy Draft
5. Discussion: Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy
6. Other Business and Future Agenda Items
7. Adjourn

26-27 WORKPLAN FOR SUBSTANTIVE POLICY CHANGES

INITIATIVE / POTENTIAL POLICY	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
Screen time / Healthy Technology										
Artificial Intelligence										
STAFF initiated: Climate Crisis Response Policy (update to address air quality)										
STAFF initiated: Comprehensive Health & Wellness Policy (updated policy)										
Alternative Transportation										
Vegetarian Options										
Use of Student Images (FERPA)										

Review Policy 1.70-020-P for review timeline: "The Board or Board committee shall strive to review all policies at least once every four (4) years . . ."

COMPLETED 2025-26

SCHOOLS BEYOND SCREENS PORTLAND DIGITAL DEVICE AND SCREEN USE POLICY DRAFT

Sept. 15, 2026

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

A. Purpose. This Policy establishes rules for the evaluation, deployment, and use of digital technologies and screen-based devices within Portland Public Schools. It supports [PPS's Graduate Portrait](#) and Portland Public Schools' mission to provide an equitable, high-quality education by safeguarding students' physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development, and by ensuring that adopted technologies enhance, rather than diminish learning outcomes and instructional time.

Through clear, consistent, age-appropriate expectations, this Policy reflects a shared responsibility among schools, families, and students to promote academic focus, critical thinking, and healthy, lifelong learning habits, preparing students to be responsible digital citizens throughout their school years and beyond.

B. Scope. This Policy applies to all faculty, staff, students, and administrators across all school grade levels and programs.

II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These guiding principles were conceived with the whole child in mind, centering around the question of what is truly best for all children's learning and development.

A. Research-backed Pedagogy. Neuroscientific research shows that effective learning requires sustained focus, deliberate effort, and emotional, and relational connection.¹ Students require a balance of direct instruction, social interaction and collaboration, physical activity, and hands-on learning. Technology use should not replace these essential experiences. Reading comprehension is often lower when on a screen rather than paper. Multitasking and ²gamification can diminish learning. Whenever possible, independent research should be used to ³evaluate the efficacy of digital tools.

¹ [Written Testimony of Dr. Jenny Radesky and Written Testimony of Dr. Jean Twenge](#), Hearing before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation (Jan. 15, 2026).

² American Psychological Association. (2026). [Children's and adolescents' learning with educational technology](#); Tiffany Munzer, et al., [Digital Ecosystems, Children, and Adolescents: Policy Statement](#). Pediatrics February 2026; 157 (2): e2025075320. 10.1542/peds.2025-075320

³ Michael D. Hanus, Jesse Fox, [Assessing the effects of gamification in the classroom: A longitudinal study on intrinsic motivation, social comparison, satisfaction, effort, and academic performance](#), Computers & Education, Volume 80, 2015, Pages 152-161, ISSN 0360-1315, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2014.08.019>.

B. Teacher-led Instruction First: Learning is the most effective when directed and guided by skilled educators and meaningful human interaction. Technology should support and enhance ⁴ teacher-led instruction, not replace the essential role of educators in fostering engagement, relationships, and learning.

C. Adaptability. Cognitive skills and habits of mind enable students to adapt to evolving circumstances and future technological trends. Teaching students to think deeply enables them to use any tool; teaching students to use a specific tool limits them to that tool.

D. Real-life and Multi-sensory Practices. Analog learning methods—including whole book reading and handwriting as well as paper based math and use of manipulatives—reliably produce stronger comprehension and retention than digital methods.⁵

E. Student Health and Well-Being. Excessive device use has been shown to be correlated with poor attention, distraction, anxiety, depression, myopia, and sleep disruption among children and adolescents. Students deserve learning environments that minimize distractions and maximize ⁶ engagement. Portland Public Schools devices and systems should prioritize curriculum-aligned educational resources and prohibit access to content that does not directly support learning.

F. Equity and Inclusion. Excessive reliance on edtech can reinforce inequity and widen the achievement gap. The new “digital divide” will be defined by access (or lack thereof) to high quality, screen-free instruction. However, students will need to have access to meaningful ⁷ opportunities to engage with technology, including for tech education, assessments, differentiated learning, instructional accommodations, and accessibility supports while ensuring that no group of students experiences disproportionate exposure to passive or excessive screen time. Use of devices for students with diverse needs, including but not limited to students with disabilities and English Learners, gifted learners, and students requiring specialized instructional support, shall be protected.

G: Set educators up for success. Educators need robust support, including time for professional development around research-backed analog instruction and differentiation methods, use of

⁴ Written Testimony of Dr. Jared Cooney Horvath, Hearing before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation (Jan. 15, 2026).

⁵ Dr. Jared Cooney Horvath, *The Digital Delusion*; [New York Times](#), *Kids Rarely Read Whole Books Anymore, Even in English Class.*

⁶ Meri, R., Hutton, J., Farah, R., DiFrancesco, M., Gozman, L., & Horowitz-Kraus, T. (2023). [Higher access to screens is related to decreased functional connectivity between neural networks associated with basic attention skills and cognitive control in children](#). *Child Neuropsychology*, 29(4), 666-685; Ha A, Lee YJ, Lee M, Shim SR, Kim YK. [Digital Screen Time and Myopia: A Systematic Review and Dose-Response Meta-Analysis](#). *JAMA Netw Open*. 2025;8(2):e2460026; Tiffany Munzer, et al., [Digital Ecosystems, Children, and Adolescents: Policy Statement](#). *Pediatrics* February 2026, 157 (2): e2025075320. 10.1542/peds.2025-075320.

⁷ The Atlantic, [The Best Parenting Hack Is Being Rich](#) (Aug. 2026); UNESCO. (2023). [Global education monitoring report 2023: Technology in education: A tool on whose terms?](#); Faith Bonniger et al., National Education Policy Center, [Fit for Purpose? How Today's Commercial Digital Platforms Subvert Key Goals of Public Education](#).

technology-based curriculum with intention and confidence to support student learning, and teaching digital literacy effectively.⁸

H.. Technology Education vs. Technology-Delivered Education. Technology Education ("TechEd") is distinct from Education Technology ("EdTech"). TechEd refers to a curriculum of computer literacy and may include, among other things, typing and research instruction. EdTech refers to digital tools, software, platforms, and devices used to deliver core subject content.

I. Transparency. Educators need clear guidelines on acceptable digital platforms, devices, and screen use. Families need clear communication at the start of each school year about what to expect regarding screen time, educational app and tool use, and the data privacy policies governing these tools.⁹

J. Data privacy. Some data can help show when and why a learner is struggling, but the same information can be used for marketing, product development, or other purposes that do not directly benefit the learner. Policies should protect learners, only allowing vetted products and tools with compliant data collection and privacy policies.¹⁰

III. STANDARDS FOR SCREEN USE IN INSTRUCTION

A. Proven Benefit Standard. Screens shall be implemented only when other methods of meeting curricular objectives have been found inadequate.

B. Multi-Sensory Learning Priority. Screens shall be used only for specific, approved purposes and shall not replace hands-on, experiential learning.

C. Paper-Based Materials. Paper materials shall be the default for all reading, writing and math instruction and assignments.

IV. GENERAL RULES AND RESTRICTIONS

The following rules shall apply to all digital device and screen use, except as dictated by Individualized education plans (IEPs), 504 plans, or Personalized education plans (PEPs):

A. Screen-free K-2. Individual screen use shall be prohibited for students in grades K-2, except as required by state law.

B. Centralized Device Use for 3-8. Screen use shall be limited to dedicated computer labs or supervised computer carts for grades 3-8.

⁸ American Psychological Association. (2026). [Children's and adolescents' learning with educational technology](#).

⁹ UNICEF, [Child Protection in Digital Education](#)

¹⁰ The Markup, [This Private Equity Firm Is Amassing Companies That Collect Data on America's Children: Vista Equity Partners has been buying up software used in schools.](#); NBC News, [Google's work in schools aims to create a 'pipeline of future users,' internal documents say.](#)

C. K-8 Screen-Free Periods. Recess, lunch, music, library, art, physical education, and passing periods, shall be screen- and device-free for grades K-8 by default. Digital device and media use by students during these times, including movies, videos, gaming or streaming content may be allowed with administrative approval.

D. Screen-Free Lunch and PE for Grade 9-12. The use of computers during high school lunch periods shall be restricted to specific classrooms or library areas specifically designated as study halls.

F. Offline Homework. Homework assignments shall be offered in a paper format whenever possible. Internet connectivity shall not be required for the completion of homework assignments.

G. Use only district approved digital tools and apps. District approved digital tools/apps will be vetted and approved to ensure they are safe, effective, and legal. Use of pps teacher/student accounts to sign up for online accounts, digital tools, or apps outside of this process is prohibited.

H. Prohibition on Advertisement and Sales. No advertisements shall appear on any computer device or projected screen at school. Any device used at school, including those used by teachers or administrators, must be installed with premium ad blockers. Furthermore, students and families shall not be required to use any app or website that pushes “paid upgrades,” “premium services,” “in-app purchases,” or similar features.¹¹

I. Educational Use of Video, Visual Media, and Other Content. District devices shall only be used for curriculum-aligned educational purposes that promote active student engagement during the school day. Video and device use should not be used as a substitute for teacher-led instruction, classroom engagement, or active learning experiences, and should be followed by opportunities for discussion, reflection, application, or other forms of student interaction. Non-educational use including passive consumption for entertainment, or video streaming, shall be prohibited and blocked without administrator approval. Background video or visual media¹² not aligned to active instruction should not be used. When not in active use, devices and projection screens should be off and away.

J. Prohibition on Screen-Time as Reward. Individual digital device use or screen time shall not be used as a reward, incentive, or behavioral reinforcement for students.¹³

¹¹ American Psychological Association. (2026). [Children’s and adolescents’ learning with educational technology](#). ¹² Wall Street Journal, [Screens Have Taken Over Classrooms. Even Students Have Had Enough. Educators question whether the rapid shift toward more technology has benefited learning](#); New York Times, [How Much Screen Time Is Your Child Getting at School? We Asked 350 Teachers](#).

¹³ Deci, E. L., Koestner, R., & Ryan, R. M. (1999). [A meta analytic review of experiments examining the effects of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation](#). Psychological Bulletin, 125(6), 627–668.

K. Data Collection. Students' personal data (including, but not limited to, health records, grades, behavior, test scores, immigration status, birth location, household income, and SSNs) shall not be harvested, packaged, or sold by apps or learning management systems. Any apps¹⁴ accessible to students must publish their complete terms of service and privacy policies. The District is not permitted to consent to these terms on behalf of students and families.

L. Platform and Content Restrictions. The District shall configure devices and systems with approved, curriculum-aligned applications and websites using an **allow list model**. This should effectively restrict access to platforms and websites primarily designed for entertainment or passive consumption.

The District will block access to student-led use of YouTube, social media, and streaming platforms, AI/LLM chatbot platforms (ie ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.), along with non-approved gaming platforms. Exceptions may only be permitted for educator-directed¹⁵ instructional use when a platform directly supports curriculum-aligned learning objectives, and follows an administrator approval process.

M. Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Large Language Models (LLMs). Access to generative AI is prohibited on student-facing, district-issued devices until Board/District adopts an AI policy and research-backed AI literacy curriculum is implemented district wide.¹⁶

V. TIME LIMITATIONS ON DEVICE USE

A. Maximum Limits for Screen Use for K-12 (excluding TechEd). Total in-class screen time shall not exceed the following:

- **PK through Grade 2:** No routine use.
- **Grades 3-5:** Maximum twenty (20) minutes **per day, not to exceed 100 minutes per week.**
- **Grades 6-8:** Maximum forty-five (45) minutes **per subject, per week; not to exceed (315) minutes per week**
- **Grades 9-12:** Maximum sixty (60) minutes **per subject, per week; not to exceed (480) minutes per week.**

These limits apply to use of individual devices by students as well as “passive screen time” (i.e. teachers showing videos to the class). They do not apply to the use of static, projected materials (i.e. teachers projecting a document or slideshow for common reference).

¹⁴ NBC News, [Google's work in schools aims to create a 'pipeline of future users'](#)

¹⁵ The Conversation, [The 'one chatbot per child' model for AI in classrooms conflicts with what research shows: Learning is a social process](#); Ben Williamson et al., National Education Policy Center, [Time for a Pause: Without Effective Public Oversight, AI in Schools Will Do More Harm Than Good](#).

¹⁶ [3 reasons why 'going slow to go fast' is the right approach for AI in schools](#) (Brookings Institute, Sept 2026); NPR, [The risks of AI in schools outweigh the benefits, report says](#).

B. Exceptions: Exceptions to the time limitations set forth in this Section may be granted under the following circumstances: (i) IEPs, 504 plans, or PEPs. (ii) emergency situations requiring immediate communication or safety measures; (iii) temporary teacher substitutions where prepared lesson plans necessitate screen-based instruction; (iv) special assemblies featuring guest speakers or presentations that require audiovisual components; (v) other special circumstances approved in advance by the principal.

C. Instructional Flexibility. The District recognizes that some courses and learning experiences may require greater use of technology to achieve their instructional objectives. Screen time guidance should be applied with consideration for the unique requirements of courses such as computer science, graphic design, digital media arts, yearbook, engineering, career technical education pathways, film studies, and other technology-intensive programs. In these courses and programs, technology use may exceed general screen time recommendations when it is directly connected to curriculum, student creation, design, programming, production, research, or other active learning experiences. Such use should remain purposeful, instructionally aligned, and consistent with the goals of this policy.

VI. PROHIBITION OF ONE-TO-ONE DEVICES

A. Prohibition on One-to-One Devices. District shall not issue individual devices to K-8 students. All student access to digital devices shall be limited to shared devices in dedicated computer labs or supervised computer carts as set forth in Section IV of this Policy.

B. Availability of “Home only” Devices for Optional Check-Out. The district will establish an “Opt-In” system where families may choose to receive a district-issued device for home use only, rather than requiring devices to travel between school and home daily.

This will be on an as-needed basis, with written permission from a parent or guardian, for school-related work or access to online services. This will ensure equity in at-home access to computers and online services for all students, regardless of socioeconomic status.

C. Exceptions. Exceptions to this prohibition may be granted when the student has a documented need requiring individual device access such as students under 504, PEPs, or Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), where use of assistive devices is explicitly required.

VII. Parent and Guardian Rights

A. Informed Consent. Parents and legal guardians will have the opportunity for annual informed consent for their children to use EdTech at school, including for the use of a school issued device and apps listed in the PPS digital toolkit.

For true informed consent, parents and guardians shall receive information regarding their child's

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use of digital tools, including estimated/actual total weekly time their child spends on a device; a complete list of apps, programs, Google Workspace Services, that are used for learning, including whether any tool or platform incorporates generative AI; information as to how those apps, programs, and websites were vetted to ensure they meet the standards and guidelines to have been deemed appropriate for educational and instruction use; and relevant data share/privacy policies.¹⁷

C. Opt-Out Rights. Parents/guardians may opt their student out of the use of specific digital tools or platforms—including any tool or platform that incorporates generative artificial intelligence—out of taking a device home, or out of device use altogether. If parents/guardians do not make the active annual choice to opt out, students will use digital tools and devices according to the standard curriculum.

The District requires schools to ensure that students whose parents or legal guardians have opted them out will be reasonably and meaningfully accommodated with paper-based lessons, homework, instructions, and assessments.

VIII. DIGITAL TOOL VETTING AND APPROVAL PROCESS

The District, in collaboration with the Technology Advisory Committee, will develop a formal, transparent rubric and vetting process to evaluate ed tech and digital tools. The rubric shall consider targeted learning objectives, cognitive processes, student data privacy and safety, independent efficacy research, and time bound requirements, adopting new student-facing digital products only when there are proven benefits over analog alternatives, and shall include a process for teachers and staff to request approval for a new tool or app.¹⁸

IX. TECHNOLOGY AUDIT PROCESS

A. Regular Technology Audit. The Office of Internal Performance auditor shall conduct annual audits of all digital tools and technologies currently in use across all grade levels and programs. These audits shall evaluate: (i) continued compliance with approval criteria; (ii) actual learning outcomes achieved; (iii) any reported adverse effects on student privacy, learning, physical and mental health; (iv) budget impacts. The Technology Advisory Committee (discussed below) shall review audit findings and make recommendations.

B. Removal of Tools. Any digital tool found to not meet approval criteria shall be removed from use within ninety (90) days of such determination.

¹⁷ ACLU, [Digital Dystopia: The Danger in Buying What the EdTech Surveillance Industry is Selling.](#); UNESCO. (2023). [Global education monitoring report 2023: Technology in education: A tool on whose terms?](#)

¹⁸American Psychological Association. (2026). [Children's and adolescents' learning with educational technology.](#) 7

X. FACULTY AND STAFF SUPPORT

A. **Ongoing Professional Support.** Educators shall have access to appropriately-compensated training regarding children's use of digital devices and platforms and associated risks and benefits.

XI. STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION AND OVERSIGHT

A. **Technology Advisory Committee.** The District shall maintain a Technology Advisory Committee that ideally includes technology personnel, educators, administrators, psychologists, students, and parents. The Committee shall monitor how technology is implemented throughout the District, evaluating impacts on the learning and well-being of students and the community.

B. **Committee Responsibilities.** The Technology Advisory Committee shall: (i) work with district to develop a digital tool rubric (ii) review and recommend updates to this Policy annually; (iii) evaluate proposed new technologies prior to adoption; (iv) monitor research and developments in educational technology and child health; (iv) collect information from parents, faculty, and staff regarding technology use; and (v) report findings and recommendations to the school board..

XII. MONITORING, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

A. **Policy Review.** The Technology Advisory Committee shall review this Policy annually and make suggestions to the board to update as necessary based on current research, stakeholder feedback, and operational experience. The policy will be updated as needed to reflect new research, implementation feedback, equity analyses, and emerging tools and information. The first annual review shall include feedback from students, educators, administrators, staff, parents, and families regarding policy implementation and perceptions of screen time usage, including focus groups and/or a School Experience Survey question.

B. District Annual Report to the Board

The District shall provide an annual report to the Board, presented no later than [month/timeframe — e.g., the end of each school year or start of the following year], detailing implementation of this Policy. The report shall include, at minimum:

1. **Screen Time Data.** A summary of average student screen time across the District, compared against the goals and benchmarks established under this Policy.

2. Digital Tools and Platforms in Use. A current inventory of approved applications, digital tools, and commonly used websites utilized for instructional purposes and associated costs. Data on learning outcomes for each tool should be presented as well.

3. Digital and AI Literacy Curriculum. An update on the implementation and status of digital

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and artificial intelligence literacy curricula, including progress made, instructional outcomes, and consistency of implementation across schools.

4. Data Privacy Incidents. A summary of any student data privacy issues or incidents that arose during the school year, including the nature of each issue and the steps taken to address or mitigate it.

5. Monitoring and Filtering Systems. An update on the effectiveness of device monitoring and content-filtering systems, including efforts to ensure device use remains educational, minimizes access to distracting or non-instructional content, and maintains a safe digital environment for students. Include filtering mishaps and mitigation strategies.

6. Emerging Research. A summary of relevant, current research on educational technology, screen use, and child development, and how such research may inform future updates to this Policy.

7. Disaggregation of Data. Wherever possible, data provided under this section shall be disaggregated by classroom, grade band, individual school, and historically underserved student groups, to allow the Board to identify disparities in implementation, access, or outcomes.

Note:

For further reading and supporting materials, please visit our recommended reading list here:

<https://schoolsbeyonscreens.com/c/portland/learn-more>

APPENDIX A: OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT INITIATIVES

Below is a selection of districts that have approved or enacted policies to limit or reduce the use of screens and educational technology products. [For a current, comprehensive list, see here.](#)

IN CALIFORNIA:

- **Los Angeles Unified School District** The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) passed a sweeping policy placing strict limits on classroom screen time and banning student use of generative artificial intelligence on district-owned devices
- **Beverly Hills Unified School District** The Beverly Hills Unified School District (BHUSD) unanimously approved Board Policy, titled “Intentional Technology Use in the Classroom, Digital Learning, and Artificial Intelligence Education,” to limit screen time and regulate tech and AI use by grade level for 2026-27 school year.
- **San Marcos Unified School District** YouTube has been blocked for all K-8 students. Teachers can still embed links in Google Classroom for academic purposes.
- **Orange County Public Schools, Simi Valley Unified, and Fresno Unified** Transitioned to a school-based cart model for all TK-8 or TK-5 students. Devices are now stored and accessed at school rather than being assigned to individual students for home use.

IN OTHER STATES:

- **New York City** New York City Public Schools implemented a one-year moratorium (temporary pause) on student-facing generative artificial intelligence (AI) for grades 2K through 8 and strict daily screen time limits for younger students for the 2026–2027 school year, as outlined in the [NYCPS Guidance on Artificial Intelligence](#).
- **Baltimore County Public Schools (Maryland)** Elementary Schools discontinued one-to-one device practice. A reduced number of devices is provided during the school day and these are kept at school. Middle Schools no longer allow students to bring devices home.

IN OTHER COUNTRIES:

- **Sweden** After acknowledging the clear scientific evidence that digital tools impair rather than enhance student learning, the entire country has moved students off digital devices and reinvested in printed books and handwriting on paper.
- **Madrid, Spain** The regional government of Madrid has limited the use of computers and tablets to a maximum of one hour per week for students in grade 2 or below, 90 minutes per week for students in grades 3 and 4, and two hours per week for students in grades 5 and 6. Elementary school teachers are also banned from assigning screen-based homework.
- **Victoria, Australia** The state of Victoria has introduced 90 min daily screen time limits for kids in grades 3-6 and has eliminated the use of screens for grades TK-2.