

ELEMENTARY TECHNOLOGY

Information about K-6 Technology Use

At Westside Community Schools, technology use will be **intentional** and **educational**, ensuring students are **active participants** in learning. From this guiding principle, we are committed to implementing high-quality tools that are purposefully designed to have a positive impact on student growth.

Our approach is intended to put teachers in the driver's seat, support families with transparent information, and keep student wellbeing at the center of every decision we make.

What we do

WCS uses technology to improve learning outcomes, meet state established learning standards across the curriculum, to include specific technology and computer science objectives, and provide experiences that wouldn't otherwise be possible. In spring 2026, we studied how many minutes the average student uses a device each day. iPad use is at teacher discretion, so the number of minutes can vary depending on your child's classroom.

At the elementary level, students use the iPad across the curriculum to complete creative activities, engage with digital resources, review and practice key concepts, and complete assessments. This can allow more personalization to help meet each individual learner's academic needs.

How we do it

Technology use in our district is intentional and educational, ensuring students are **active participants** in learning rather than passive consumers. Every student in grades K-6 has access to a device at teacher discretion. Each student also has access to a Logitech Crayon stylus for handwriting, note taking, drawing, and interactive learning.

We analyze our use of technology on an annual basis. Based on the recent recommendations from our District EdTech Committee, **starting in August 2026, iPads will no longer be used during indoor or outdoor recess or any free time during the day. YouTube access will also be restricted to 3rd-12th graders and used for teacher directed educational purposes only. YouTube Shorts will be disabled on all K-12 devices.**

25 Minutes

Approximate daily iPad use for WCS Kindergarten students

Less than 1 hour

Elementary students spend an average of less than one hour a day on iPads each school day.



Technology is a tool, not an end in itself.

**A SAFE,
RESTRICTED
EXPERIENCE**

Content Keeper

District wide internet filtering keeps our student use educational and appropriate

Apple Classroom

Gives teachers real-time visibility and control over student devices during instruction

Why we do it

At WCS, we believe every student deserves an exceptional education and the opportunity to reach their fullest potential. That belief has guided our work for generations, leading us to establish one of the first Special Education departments, as well as a robust gifted and talented program. Today, our dedicated educators collaborate with experts across disciplines to deliver best-practice instruction, celebrate growth, and help every student make meaningful progress. Innovative tools further support this work by adapting to each student's learning level, reinforcing essential skills, and giving teachers real-time insights to personalize support. Our internal research supports the effectiveness of these tools. **By combining expert instruction, purposeful technology, and a steadfast belief in every child, we ensure every learner is supported, challenged, and empowered to achieve more than they thought possible.**

Research in Nebraska and across the country shows schools with the highest levels of IXL usage outperformed others. At WCS, research has shown a positive correlation between IXL progress and increased gains in MAP student achievement. These gains extend across all learners. IXL has shown meaningful impact for students with special needs and provides valuable extension opportunities for high-achieving students. You can check out national IXL research conducted by third-party researchers, including Johns Hopkins and others, as well as studies by IXL staff. <https://www.ixl.com/membership/teachers/research>

Technology — a shared responsibility

WCS is committed to being a thoughtful steward of your child's screen time during the school day, and we encourage families to carry that same intentionality into the home. With clear expectations, open conversations about media use, and a focus on balance, we can make sure technology serves our children well - inside the classroom and beyond. **The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) updated its guidance in January 2026, shifting focus from how long to the quality and context of digital media use.**

AAP SCREEN-TIME GUIDANCE

Under 18 months	Avoid screen use except video chatting (e.g., FaceTime with family).
18-24 months	Introduce only high-quality content; always watch together - no solo media use.
Ages 2-5	Limit to one hour per day of high-quality programming.
Ages 6 & older	Set consistent limits on time and content; ensure media doesn't replace sleep, activity, or family connection.

TIPS FOR FAMILIES

- Model healthy screen habits yourself - children notice and follow what adults do.
- Watch and explore digital content together when possible.
- Create tech-free times at home, such as during meals and one hour before bedtime.
- Reach out to your child's teacher with any questions about how devices are used.
- Ask your child what they used their iPad for at school today - it opens great conversations.

For school-age children, excessive or unmonitored screen time is linked to sleep disruption, poorer academic performance, and less physical activity. For teens, risks extend to anxiety, depression, and less time with family and friends.