2025-26 Annual Report – Technology Advisory Committee
Margaret Larkey
Executive Director of Technology

Introduction

The 2025–26 school year was a productive one for the Technology Advisory Committee (TAC), bringing together students, families, educators, and staff to examine how technology supports teaching, learning, and operations across the district. Across five formal meetings and multiple feedback channels, the TAC surfaced consistent themes around alignment, equity, responsible use, and future readiness. This report synthesizes those insights and offers recommendations for cabinet-level consideration.

Purpose and Process

The TAC purpose is to provide community-informed guidance on technology strategy, investments, and implementation. Hybrid meetings (in person at EdTec or virtually via Teams) were held in September, November, January, March, and May, combining presentations, small-group discussions, and open feedback via Padlet. Topics included budget alignment, screen time and student well-being, artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, and major system initiatives such as the Student Information System (SIS) modernization.

Throughout the year, a consistent throughline emerged: stakeholders value technology as essential to modern learning, but expect greater clarity, balance, and coherence in how it is deployed.

Key Theme 1: Alignment of Technology Investments

TAC members broadly believe district technology investments are intended to align with instructional goals, but they expressed difficulty clearly tracing that alignment at a detailed level. The strategic plan is viewed as high-level, making it challenging to connect specific expenditures to measurable outcomes.

At the same time, there is strong consensus around several “non-negotiables”:

- Student devices are foundational to curriculum access and engagement.
- Cybersecurity and student safety must remain top priorities.
- Core systems (communication platforms, SIS, learning tools) must be reliable and integrated.

The committee emphasized the importance of transparency and clearer storytelling around how budget decisions connect to student outcomes. There is also a strong call to maximize value by evaluating underused tools and prioritizing investments that directly impact teaching and learning.

Key Theme 2: Equity and Consistency

Equity surfaced as one of the most urgent concerns. While student access to devices is generally consistent, significant variation exists in classroom technology and staff equipment. Examples

include differences in display technology (interactive boards vs. projectors), availability of spare devices, and staff laptop quality.
This inconsistency impacts both instructional quality and staff experience. TAC members recommended:

- Establishing clear minimum standards for classroom technology.
- Implementing a predictable device refresh cycle.
- Conducting periodic audits to ensure equitable distribution across schools.

Equity was also framed more broadly to include access to support, training, and family-facing resources, particularly for multilingual communities.

Key Theme 3: Simplification and Coherence

A recurring concern is that the district's digital ecosystem feels fragmented. Families, students, and staff often navigate multiple platforms for communication, instruction, and support.
The TAC strongly advocates for consolidation:

- Reduce the number of overlapping applications.
- Invest more deeply in a core set of tools (e.g., Microsoft ecosystem).
- Expand single sign-on and unified user experiences.
- Provide more training on existing tools rather than continuously adding new ones.

The goal is a more intuitive, streamlined environment that increases adoption and reduces frustration.

Key Theme 4: Screen Time and Student Well-Being

The November meeting and supporting research highlighted widespread concern about screen time. While stakeholders recognize the necessity of technology, they emphasized the need for intentional and balanced use.
Key insights include:

- "Quality over quantity" should guide technology use.
- Screen time expectations should vary by grade level and subject.
- Students benefit from a mix of digital and non-digital learning experiences.
- Families need clearer guidance and tools to manage device use at home.

Research reviewed by the TAC reinforces these concerns, linking excessive screen time to impacts on sleep, attention, mental health, and physical well-being, while also acknowledging benefits when technology is used purposefully.
Recommendations include:

- Developing district guidance on healthy screen use by grade band.
- Increasing communication with families about monitoring tools and expectations.
- Incorporating digital wellness into instruction and advisory programs.
- Creating opportunities for "off-screen" learning experiences.

Key Theme 5: Responsible Use and Policy Awareness

Although the district maintains comprehensive policies on acceptable use, digital citizenship, and online learning, TAC feedback suggests that awareness and understanding are inconsistent. Many families sign agreements but do not retain or revisit the information. The committee recommends:

- Regular, accessible policy refreshers for students and families.
- Simplified, multilingual summaries of key expectations.
- Ongoing classroom conversations about responsible use.

This reflects a shift from compliance-based approaches to ongoing education and partnership.

Key Theme 6: Artificial Intelligence and Future Readiness

The March meeting focused on AI, signaling its growing importance. TAC members are both interested and cautious, emphasizing the need for clear guidance, ethical safeguards, and educational opportunities.

The district has taken initial steps through participation in the Microsoft Elevate Washington initiative, providing funding and collaboration opportunities to explore AI applications.

Key priorities identified by the TAC include:

- Establishing clear expectations for AI use by students and staff.
- Ensuring data privacy and compliance.
- Providing professional learning for educators.
- Teaching students AI literacy, including critical evaluation of outputs.

There is strong agreement that AI should enhance—not replace—human judgment, relationships, and learning processes.

Key Theme 7: System Modernization and Operational Excellence

The TAC reviewed progress on major initiatives, including:

- Student Information System modernization.
- Cybersecurity improvements and training.
- Expansion of instructional technology through levy funding.

These efforts are viewed positively, particularly where they improve reliability, security, and user experience. Continued focus on implementation, training, and communication will be critical as these systems evolve.

Recommendations for Cabinet

Based on TAC input, the following actions are recommended:

1. Strengthen alignment and transparency between technology spending and strategic priorities.
2. Accelerate efforts to address inequities in classroom and staff technology.
3. Simplify the digital ecosystem by consolidating tools and improving integration.
4. Develop and communicate clear guidance on healthy technology use.
5. Expand family engagement through accessible, multilingual resources.
6. Establish a comprehensive framework for responsible AI use.
7. Maintain momentum on system modernization and cybersecurity.
8. Embed equity considerations into all technology planning and investment decisions.

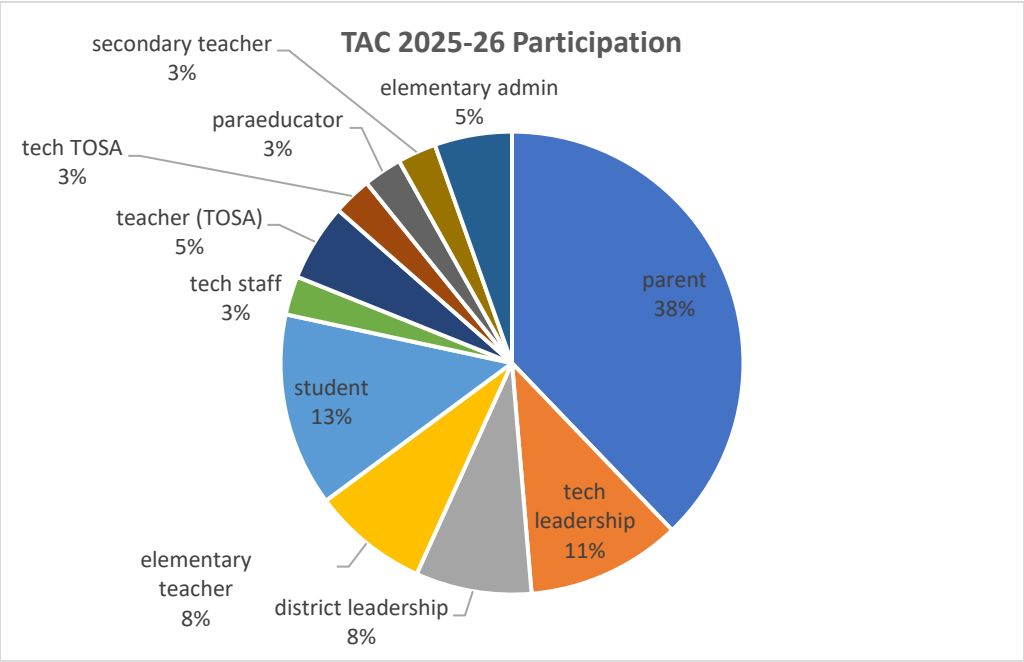
Conclusion

The TAC's work this year underscores a clear message: technology is essential to modern education, but its effectiveness depends on thoughtful implementation, strong partnerships, and a focus on human impact. By aligning investments, simplifying systems, supporting families, and preparing for emerging technologies, the district is well-positioned to meet both current needs and future challenges.

The committee's contributions reflect a community committed to getting this balance right, and their guidance provides a strong foundation for continued progress.

This report was drafted using Microsoft Copilot Analyst AI Agent and source data from meeting agendas and group discussion notes

Appendix A: Distribution of TAC members



Appendix B: Meeting Attendance

