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Dear Parents of Rising K-2 Students,

We are writing to inform you of an important strategic shift in our instructional approach for our youngest learners. Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, our school district will be transitioning to a **Chromebook-free learning environment** for all students in kindergarten through second grade.

This decision is the result of careful study, recognizing the critical developmental needs of students in these foundational grades. Our primary goal is to ensure maximal learning and holistic development, which necessitates a renewed focus on direct, human-centered interaction.

The Importance of Limiting Early Childhood Screen Time

The research is clear regarding the critical importance of minimizing screen time for young children in favor of physical, social, and direct interaction. Experts, including Dr. Jared Horvath, a leading educational neuroscientist, emphasizes that true, deep learning and memory consolidation are often best achieved through active manipulation of materials, face-to-face dialogue, and collaboration—activities that screens often displace.

Our focus is on maximizing *teacher-to-student* and *student-to-student interaction*. These interactions are vital for developing essential social skills, language proficiency, critical thinking, and the ability to focus in a shared physical space. The K-2 classroom should be a rich environment filled with hands-on resources, engaging activities, and teacher-led explicit instruction.

District-Wide Commitment to Reduced Screen Time

This shift for K-2 is part of a larger, ongoing effort across the district to re-evaluate and reduce excessive screen time at all grade levels. We have been and will continue to purposely purchase physical textbooks and instructional materials rather than the digital versions. Moreover, we have been actively focusing on integrating technology thoughtfully and intentionally, rather than simply for convenience or default instruction. This instructional shift acknowledges that although technology is an important tool, it should support, not supplant, proven instructional methods centered on human connection.

In addition to reducing screen time, our K-6 program will be revisiting "ed tech" programs such as Reflex Math, IXL, etc. that are designed to gamify learning which often translate to quick, fast bursts of information and token digital rewards. These programs are associated with quick hits of dopamine and reducing long-term attention spans, neither of which is beneficial to brain health.

Maintaining Robust Technology Education

We want to assure you that this change does *not* mean we are neglecting strong technology education and digital literacy skill-building. Our approach is quite the opposite. Instead, our comprehensive technology education pathway begins in the fifth grade and continues through high school, ensuring all students develop sophisticated digital literacy, coding, and technical skills.

By dedicating our K-2 classrooms to foundational human interaction and moving specific digital skill instruction to later grades, we are following an approach that is absolutely necessary to ensure our students receive the full developmental benefits of human-to-human interaction and maximal learning during their most formative years.

We are excited about the increased opportunities this change will bring for deeply interactive learning for our youngest students. This strategic shift will ensure that our youngest learners are receiving quality instruction with research-based practices that protect brain health during this critical development stage.

Sincerely,

Greg Taranto, Ph.D.
Superintendent

Mark Abbondanza, Ph.D.
Assistant to the Superintendent K-6