

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendent Greg Baker
FROM: Bill Palmer, Jessica Wallace
DATE: August 11, 2026
SUBJECT: Early childhood Technology Work Group recommendations

Background

In spring 2026, Bellingham Public Schools convened an Early Childhood Technology Work Group comprised of early learning teachers, library media specialists, an instructional coach and administrators, including directors and elementary principals.

Our task was to:

- Develop a coherent, developmentally appropriate set of guidelines for the use of technology in early childhood programs across the district (birth–grade 2).
- Examine the current 1:1 iPad model in grades K and 1
- Make recommendations to Educational Technology regarding a model for student/iPad density.

Guidelines: After reviewing recent publications from the American Academy of Pediatrics¹, the Journal of Children and Media², and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)³, the work group established this statement to guide instructional technology decisions.

Use of technology in our early childhood classrooms:

- Play based learning is centered to develop academic, social and emotional skills.
- We commit to intentionally using technology tools to support instructional outcomes in alignment with state standards and our Bellingham Promise.

¹ [Early Childhood Development and Screen Time Toolkit](#)

² [How educational are “educational” apps for young children? App store content analysis using the Four Pillars of Learning framework | Request PDF](#)

³ [ps_technology.pdf](#)

ECE Ed Tech Workgroup Recommendations August 2026

- We prioritize active construction (students create, problem-solve, and physically or socially interact with digital tools) and avoid passive consumption (like watching videos without facilitation or repetitively tapping screens with no creative or cognitive return).
- Learning with technology is facilitated by the teacher with intentionally planned training, opportunities for interaction, and ongoing guidance.
- Inquiry and child driven play, oral language opportunities, physical movement, emotional regulation supports, and face-to-face social time are essential to child development and cannot be replaced by technology.

The work group also defined four categories of screen time to inform communication between families and educators about how instructional technologies may be used in early childhood classrooms:



Students build specific skills and knowledge through active construction in personalized learning, assessment, and research tools, or through facilitated classroom interactions with digital media .

Interactive Learning



Students capture and share their thinking, and/or publish creative content in age-appropriate digital platforms like Seesaw .

Creative Production

 Digital resources may be used to support physical shifts in the day (short multi-sensory routines to anchor transitions). Transition Support	 Projected images support executive function and may be used to reinforce routines through visual schedules, digital timers, or using the document camera. Environmental Support
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iReady

Bellingham has leveraged the 'iReady' platform from Curriculum Associates in several areas of our instructional technology use in Early Childhood classrooms. iReady includes two components:

- iReady Inform is a computer adaptive assessment given at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year in math and reading.
- iReady My Path is a personalized learning program that includes a customized path of interactive lessons that can be used in math or reading.

Recommended iReady guidelines

After reviewing state screening guidelines and recommendations for technology use in early childhood, the work team made the following recommendations for iReady use in Kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms:

Kindergarten: iReady Inform (state required screener) for reading will be given in winter and spring assessment windows. iReady Inform will no longer be given for math in Kindergarten.

Kindergarten students will not use iReady My Path personalized instruction.

First Grade: iReady Inform for reading and math will be given in fall, winter, and spring assessment windows.

For First Grade: iReady personalized learning can be used as a tool for guided practice.

- First grade teachers can provide iReady personalized learning for reading and math if individual practice is needed.
- Time boundaries: limit total use (math and reading) to 10 minutes / day (instead of 10 minutes for each).
- If a child can decode readily, then they should read books instead of using iReady.

Recommended guidelines for iPads in K and First Grade

Because iPads originally procured during 2020 remote learning are needing to be replaced, the work group reviewed our K-1 iPad program and recommends the following changes to the classroom iPad cart model. Because we focused on the use of classroom iPads, the work group decided to delay conversations about second grade technology use until the fall to align with the review of elementary school laptop model for second-fifth grade.

- Kindergarten: Each classroom will be provisioned with one classroom-based iPad for use with Seesaw and some assistive technology apps.
- First grade: Each classroom will continue to be provisioned with an iPad cart
- For iReady Inform: K students would have a short testing window in winter and spring (at different times from first grade) to complete the reading portion. K teachers would borrow first grade carts for one week to complete this task.
- For Pebble Go: K teachers can arrange to borrow carts to correspond with instructional windows where students are doing research in Pebble Go on iPads.
- Reimage / update all K-1 iPads to prioritize iReady, PebbleGo, and Seesaw apps

This process has been an important step in responding to local and national concerns about instructional technology use, especially following school closure measures during the pandemic. We look forward to hearing your feedback on these initial steps towards recalibrating our instructional technology platform. Please let us know if you have any questions pending your approval of this recommendation.