Fresno Unified School District

COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS · 70TH ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE

Fresno USD's Elementary Laptop Shift

How Academic ROI Drives Strategic Decision-Making

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FUTURE READY STARTS HERE

Fresno Unified School District



THE CONTEXT

We sustained 1:1 after the pandemic. Then we asked what it was returning.

68K+
students served districtwide

3M+
maintenance records analyzed

6,800+
students, families, and staff surveyed

$9.1M
in repair, loss, and theft costs in 2024–25

The question was no longer whether we could sustain 1:1. It was whether the model was delivering the access and instructional value we intended.

Sources: district enrollment, device maintenance records, and family and staff surveys, SY2024–25.

ACADEMIC RETURN ON INVESTMENT (A-ROI)

A-ROI changed the question

We had been asking

- How do we reduce breakage?
- Better cases? Screen protectors?
- Device-care education?

A-ROI asked instead

- Is this working as intended?
- For whom?
- At what cost?
- What does the evidence tell us to do next?

OUR A-ROI PROCESS

Plan

Collect and analyze evidence

Share findings and act

WHAT THE EVIDENCE CHANGED

What looked like a device-management problem was an instructional problem.

OPERATIONAL EVIDENCE

Device conditions

Breakage, loss, and aging devices.
Inconsistent check-in and check-out processes across sites.

STAKEHOLDER VOICE

Families and staff

Families questioned young students carrying laptops home.
84% of elementary staff said home laptops were not necessary or only somewhat necessary.

FINANCIAL EVIDENCE

Where cost landed

Elementary schools generated 50% of maintenance costs.
$4M of the annual exposure is elementary alone.

Broken, forgotten, and unavailable devices were costing students instructional time.

The reframe

The evidence supported a different elementary delivery model.

The decision

Sources: district family and staff surveys, and device return and cost data, SY2024–25.

THE ELEMENTARY SHIFT

From evidence to action

Individual take-home devices

Assigned to students
Carried between home and school

Classroom-based sets + 10% surplus devices

Checked out to teachers
Stored in classroom carts

Surplus devices keep a broken laptop from interrupting a lesson.

EARLY RESULTS · WHAT TRANSFERS

Early results suggest the model is working differently.

Schools that returned to class sets, compared with the same schools over the same period last year.

97%

fewer repairs

75 in 2025–26, down from 2,160

100%

Fewer lost and stolen devices

0 in 2025–26

97%

lower costs

$15K in 2025–26, down from $527K

4.0 / 5

staff rating

Majority-positive staff and family feedback; families 3.6 / 5

The larger lesson is not about laptops. Evidence should help leaders decide whether to improve the current model or change it.

Data from November 2025 through April 2026; includes schools that had completed the transition.