Equity Advisory Meeting - October 14, 2026

There were 12 members present at the first meeting for the year on October 14. Agenda item 5 invited the committee members to consider questions related to the use of Purposeful Technology K-5. This page contains the key themes of what was discussed by the group.

Purposeful Technology K-5 Discussion

Questions:

1. When is it appropriate for students to use technology?
2. Considerations for students who don't have technology access at home?
3. How can technology be used to accelerate student learning (to close gaps)?

Key themes generated with Copilot assistance:

Parent Focus Group Summary: Technology Use in K–5 Education

Based on the discussion, participants explored three primary questions:

1. What role should technology play in K–5 classrooms?
2. How should schools think about technology access and screen time, particularly for young students?
3. How can technology be used to accelerate learning while maintaining strong instruction and foundational skills?

Theme 1: Technology Is Essential for Accessibility and Inclusion

Participants strongly supported technology when it serves as an accommodation or communication tool for students with disabilities.

Key Ideas

- Communication devices are critical for students who are nonverbal or partially nonverbal.
- Technology can support student independence and self-advocacy.
- Assistive technology should be available throughout the school day.
- Technology supports should be individualized based on student needs and IEP requirements.
- Technology can provide access to learning that might otherwise be difficult for some students.

Theme 2: Technology Can Increase Engagement and Motivation

Participants shared examples of technology making learning more engaging and interactive.

Key Ideas

- Interactive programs can make learning more enjoyable.
- Technology can provide alternative ways to learn skills.
- Educational games can motivate students who might otherwise disengage.
- Students often respond positively to technology-supported learning.
- Technology can support different learning styles and interests.

Theme 3: Technology Should Have a Clear Educational Purpose

One of the strongest themes throughout the discussion was that technology should be intentional and connected to learning goals.

Key Ideas

- Technology should support learning objectives.
- Technology use should be deliberate rather than automatic.
- Schools should be able to clearly explain why technology is being used.
- Technology should be used when it improves learning, accessibility, or engagement.
- Participants distinguished between educational technology and technology used simply because it is available.

Theme 4: Concerns About Excessive Screen Time and Overstimulation

While participants acknowledged the benefits of technology, many expressed concern about excessive screen exposure, particularly for younger children.

Key Ideas

- Some students become overly focused on screens and have difficulty disengaging.
- Excessive use can contribute to overstimulation.
- Families and schools may have different expectations regarding screen time.
- Young students may need stronger limits and structure around technology use.
- School technology use can influence children's expectations for technology use at home.

Theme 5: Human Interaction Should Remain Central

Many participants expressed concern that increased technology use could reduce opportunities for developing social skills and human connection.

Key Ideas

- Elementary school is a critical time for students to learn collaboration, communication, and relationship-building.
- Students need opportunities to interact and solve problems together without relying on technology.
- Human interaction should not be replaced by screens.
- Technology should enhance rather than replace social learning experiences.
- Collaboration skills should be taught before students are expected to collaborate through technology.

Theme 6: Foundational Skills Still Matter

Participants repeatedly emphasized the importance of maintaining traditional academic skills alongside technology use.

Key Ideas

- Students should continue practicing handwriting.

- Paper-and-pencil learning remains valuable.
- Students need opportunities to develop spelling, writing, and mathematical reasoning without technology.
- Foundational skills should continue to be taught even as technology advances.
- Brain development benefits from a balance of digital and non-digital learning experiences.

Theme 7: Active Technology Use Is More Valuable Than Passive Technology Use

Participants responded positively to the distinction between active and passive technology use.

Active Uses Participants Supported

- Coding
- Simulations
- Creating media
- Design projects
- Goal-based learning
- Peer collaboration
- Problem-solving activities
- Critical thinking tasks

Passive Uses Participants Questioned

- Digital worksheets
- Repetitive screen-based tasks
- Unreflective content consumption
- Activities that require little imagination, participation, or thinking

Key Insight Participants were generally more supportive of technology when students were creating, designing, collaborating, or solving problems rather than simply consuming digital content.

Theme 8: Technology Should Supplement, Not Replace, Teachers

Participants consistently emphasized that meaningful adult interaction remains critical.

Key Ideas

- Technology alone is insufficient for student learning.
- Effective interventions often combine technology with teacher or adult support.
- Human relationships remain central to learning.
- Technology should support instruction, not substitute for it.
- Students often benefit most when technology is part of a broader instructional approach.

Theme 9: Technology Can Help Accelerate Learning When Used Strategically

Participants recognized that technology can provide personalized support for students who need additional assistance.

Key Ideas

- Technology can provide targeted interventions.
- Virtual supports may increase access to individualized instruction.
- Technology can supplement reading and academic interventions.
- Students can receive additional support during independent work time.
- Technology can help accelerate learning when paired with appropriate instruction and support.

Theme 10: Schools Need Clear Guidelines and Expectations

Participants expressed interest in districtwide guidance around technology use.

Key Ideas

- Schools should define age-appropriate technology use.
- Expectations should vary by grade level and developmental stage.
- Families would benefit from clear communication and guidance.
- Technology use should be intentionally planned rather than left to individual preference.
- Schools should continue evaluating technology practices as needs and tools evolve.

Theme 11: Equity and Access Matter

Participants discussed students who may not have reliable access to technology outside of school.

Key Ideas

- Students should have equitable access to technology during the school day.
- Homework should not depend on access to technology at home.
- Technology expectations should acknowledge differences in family resources.
- Schools should work to ensure technology does not create additional barriers to learning.
- Technology decisions should help level the playing field for students.

Theme 12: Academic Expectations and Mastery

Participants broadened the discussion by connecting technology use to larger questions about student learning and academic expectations.

Key Ideas

- Students should master foundational skills before moving on to more advanced work.
- Technology alone cannot solve learning gaps.
- Academic support should focus on helping students progress while maintaining high expectations.
- Literacy, writing, and comprehension remain essential skills regardless of the technology available.
- Participants discussed the importance of balancing support, intervention, and accountability.

Overall Takeaways

Areas of Strong Agreement

Participants generally agreed that technology should:

- Support students with disabilities and individualized needs.
- Increase access to learning opportunities.
- Be used intentionally and for a clear educational purpose.
- Support, rather than replace, teaching and learning.
- Promote active engagement, creativity, and problem-solving.
- Be implemented in ways that are developmentally appropriate.

Ongoing Concerns

Participants expressed concerns about:

- Excessive screen time.
- Overstimulation, especially for younger students and some students with ADHD.
- Reduced opportunities for social interaction.
- Loss of handwriting, spelling, and foundational academic skills.
- Overreliance on technology for instruction and intervention.
- Differences between school technology use and family expectations at home.

Overall Message

Participants were not opposed to technology in K–5 education. Instead, they emphasized the importance of finding a balance between technology, human interaction, foundational skills, and student well-being. The strongest message throughout the discussion was that technology should be used thoughtfully, strategically, and purposefully to support student learning while preserving the essential developmental experiences that children need to thrive.