

Los Angeles Unified School District

**Using Technology with Intention:
Establishing Guidelines for Student
Screen Time Policy**



May 19, 2026

I. Purpose

This policy affirms the District's commitment to equitable access to technology while promoting responsible, purposeful, and age-appropriate use of digital devices and applications. It is intended to provide clear research-based expectations and guardrails for student screen time that support high-quality instruction and ensure that technology enhances, rather than replaces, effective teaching and learning.

II. Authorization

This policy is issued pursuant to the authority of the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools, including Board Resolution Using Technology with Intention: Establishing Guidelines for Student Screen Time (Res-048-25/26), and consistent with applicable provisions of the California Education Code and existing District guidance regarding instructional practice, student well-being, and the responsible use of technology. (See Attachment B)

III. Background

Los Angeles Unified is committed to fostering focused learning environments that support student achievement, engagement, and overall well-being. As digital devices have become prevalent in schools, the District aims to ensure purposeful integration that supports instructional goals while limiting non-instructional use during the school day.

A. Mission and Vision

Guided by its mission to provide an equitable, high-quality education for all students, this policy reflects a shared responsibility among schools, families, and students to promote digital responsibility, academic focus, and healthy learning habits. By establishing clear expectations and consistent practices, the District seeks to create learning environments that maximize instructional time, support student success, and prepare students to use technology thoughtfully and responsibly in school and beyond.

B. Research

This policy is informed by research examining the effects of educational screen use on student learning, attention, social-emotional development, and well-being. Findings consistently indicate that:

- instructional quality matters more than access to devices alone
- targeted, curriculum-aligned tools may support learning when used intentionally
- technology does not replace strong, teacher-led instruction
- age-appropriate use and adult supervision are critical to ensuring safe and effective learning experiences

C. Consultation and Recommendations

This policy is informed by consultation with independent experts in their field. The District has also sought input from staff, educators, students, parents, and labor partners. The District is committed to continuing its engagement with its partners and constituent groups.

IV. Guiding Principles

Technology use within the District is guided by the following principles:

- ### A. Instruction First:
- Technology is most effective when intentionally integrated into teacher-led instruction. Devices and digital tools are used to support, not replace, strong teacher practices.

- B. Screen Value Over Screen Time:** The District prioritizes the quality, purpose, and impact of technology use over the total number of minutes. Technology is used when it enhances learning and limited when it does not.
- C. Developmentally Appropriate Use:** Technology use reflects students' age, developmental readiness, and ability to self-regulate, with stronger guardrails in early grades and gradual independence over time.
- D. Education-Only Use by Design:** District devices and systems prioritize approved, curriculum-aligned tools, while limiting or blocking access to non-educational content that may distract from learning.
- E. Balance and Whole-Child Development:** Students require a balance of direct instruction, social interaction and collaboration, physical activity and hands-on learning. Technology use does not displace these essential experiences.
- F. Equity and Inclusion:** All students have access to meaningful opportunities with technology, especially for differentiated learning and instructional accommodations, while ensuring that no group of students experiences disproportionate exposure to passive or excessive screen use.
- G. Family Partnership and Transparency:** Families are essential partners, and the District is committed to clear communication and shared responsibility in supporting healthy technology use.
- H. Continuous Improvement and Accountability:** The District monitors, evaluates, and refines technology use based on data, research, and community input to ensure positive outcomes for all students.

V. Screen Time and Device Use Guidance

A. Screen Time Guidance

The District shall establish grade-span screen time guidance designed to support instructional goals and student well-being. Screen time during the school day shall be primarily instructional, time-limited, supervised, and aligned to learning objectives. (See Attachment A)

Non-instructional and recreational use of District devices during the school day shall be discouraged.

The District shall prohibit elementary and middle school student use of District-issued devices during non-instructional school time (e.g., passing periods, lunch, recess), as determined and supervised by school sites, with exceptions for school-approved work.

Specific recommended and maximum screen time ranges by grade span and/or subject will be issued through District administrative guidance and updated annually. Such guidance shall delineate expectations for instructional use during class time as distinct from non-instructional time to support student well-being and balanced use.

The District shall issue screen time guidance and best practices to schools offering online course options, ensuring that students achieve necessary educational objectives while also establishing clear guardrails to prevent digital fatigue from excessive device use.

B. Device Access

Access to one-to-one (1:1) devices and/or shared technology shall be developmentally appropriate and aligned to students' age, grade level, and instructional needs. The District may differentiate device models and limited 1:1

access in earlier grades, while supporting increased independence in upper grades. (See Attachment A)

The District shall eliminate the use of District-issued devices for students in Early Education through first grade, except for District and State -mandated assessments and for students enrolled in an LAUSD Virtual Academy program. (See Attachment A)

For students in grades two through five, the District shall encourage schools to prioritize the use of laptop carts and/or computer labs, where available, and to limit the use of one-to-one devices.

Nothing in this policy precludes student access to devices when required for District- or state-mandated assessments, accommodations, or instructional needs.

C. Device Use

Schools are encouraged, when instructionally appropriate, to intentionally balance digital learning with non-screen instructional strategies, including the regular use of paper-and-pencil assignments, hands-on activities, off-screen homework assignments, and discussion-based learning to support student engagement, fine-motor development, and academic focus.

To minimize reliance on student devices, the District shall ensure that all District-approved curricula include sufficient physical textbooks for all students.

D. Safe and Responsible Use

To support safe, responsible, and effective use of technology, the District shall establish recommendations and strategies for digital citizenship instruction.

VI. Educational vs Non-Educational Use

District devices shall be used for curriculum-aligned educational purposes that promote active student engagement during the school day. Non-educational use including passive consumption for entertainment, gaming, or video streaming, shall be prohibited and blocked, except when explicitly authorized for instructional or accessibility reasons.

VII. Platform and Content Restrictions

The District shall configure devices and systems to prioritize approved, curriculum-aligned applications and restrict access to platforms primarily designed for entertainment or passive consumption.

The District will block access to student-led use of YouTube, social media, and streaming platforms, along with non-approved gaming platforms. Instructional exceptions for gaming may be authorized when directly aligned to instructional objectives and implemented in a time-limited, supervised manner.

VIII. Equity, Access, and Differentiation

Technology use supports differentiated instruction and accessibility while remaining balanced with non-screen instructional approaches. Students shall continue to have access to developmentally and instructionally appropriate District-provided devices and digital tools. Use of devices for students with diverse needs, including but not limited to students with disabilities and English Learners, shall be aligned with educational goals and support services.

IX. Exclusionary Clause

To ensure compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the restrictions set in the proposed policy shall not apply when digital tools are required to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

Exemptions: Access to digital tools is permitted without restriction when necessary to implement an IEP or Section 504 Plan, provide assistive technology (AT), or meet accessibility needs. This includes, but is not limited to:

- **Communication:** Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices and software.
- **Accessibility Tools:** Speech-to-text, text-to-speech, word prediction, audiobook, magnification software, eyegaze technology, and symbol supports.
- **Input/Access:** Switch access and other adapted input devices.
- **Instructional Accommodations:** Digital tools and platforms specifically required for instruction, assessment, or Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as documented in a student’s IEP.

X. Parent and Guardian Rights

Parents and guardians shall receive clear information regarding their child’s use of digital tools, including consent options and procedures to request limitations on screen-based instruction, consistent with District requirements and applicable by law.

- A. Consent to Use Digital Tools** The District shall update its processes that allow parents and guardians to consent and opt-in to specific digital tools or applications used during the school day, including AI platforms, as applicable.

XI. School Site Implementation Expectations

Schools are expected to implement this policy through instructional planning and consistent enforcement of District guardrails, while exercising professional judgment to meet student needs. The District shall issue school-site guidance and best practices to support coordinated, school-wide implementation, including strategies to monitor cumulative screen time, align technology use across classrooms and content areas, and promote consistent, balanced instructional practices.

XII. Monitoring, Accountability, and Continuous Improvement

The District shall monitor device use and screen time trends using available data systems to inform continuous improvement. This policy shall be reviewed annually at a public meeting of the Board of Education.

Appendix A Screen Time and Device Use Guidelines

Grade Level Span	Phased Implementation	*In-School Screen Time Guidance	Device Access and Use	
			In-School	At Home
Early Ed	Beginning August 2026	Limits: 0 minutes per day	Default to “No 1:1 device,” but with access to device carts for assessments and IEP mandates; Virtual Academy exempted	***Default to “No 1:1 Take-Home Device” • Implementation begins August 2026
Kinder				
1st Grade				
Grades 2-3	Beginning November 2026	Limits: 0-20 minutes per day	Classrooms will operate using any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **1:1 Device Model • Shared Device Model • Computer Lab model 	
Grades 4-5		Limits: 0-30 minutes per day		
Grades 6-8	Beginning January 2027	Recommendations: 60-120 minutes per day	1:1 Device Model	
Grades 9-12		Recommendations: 90-180 minutes per day		

*Instructional exemptions apply; mandated assessments, IEP mandates, and Virtual Academy exempted

**Parental Opt-Out options apply

***Parental Opt-In options apply, when available

Appendix B
Board Resolution (Res-048-25/26) Alignment

Resolution Requirements	Policy Sections
<p>Be informed by research, best practices, and input from experts in the field, labor partners, staff, educators, students, and parents and include recommendations and guardrails for screen time usage by grade level and subject, and student disability category (e.g., no device use during Physical Education courses or differentiated screen time for a student on the autism spectrum)</p>	<p>Section III Background - A. Mission and Vision; B. Research and Consultation</p> <p>Section IV Guiding Principles</p> <p>Section V Screen Time and Device Usage Guidance - A. Screen Time Guidance</p> <p>Section VIII Equity, Access, and Differentiation</p>
<p>Prioritize student screen time based on its educational purpose and quality, with valuable learning experiences that cannot be replicated offline prioritized over passive screen use</p>	<p>Section IV Guiding Principles</p>
<p>Articulate best practices of technology use in instruction and provide guidance on how to use student devices most effectively, along with analog alternatives where possible</p>	<p>Section XI School Site Implementation Expectations</p>
<p>Address equity and access considerations and include recommendations and guardrails on the use of laptop carts, one-to-one devices, active screen time, passive screen time, and visual media (including videos used for instruction or played in the background);</p>	<p>Section VIII Equity, Access, and Differentiation</p> <p>Section V Screen Time and Device Usage Guidance - B. Device Access</p> <p>Section VI Education vs Non-Educational Use</p>
<p>Provide maximum daily and weekly in-school screen time limits for students delineated by grade level (e.g., no more than one hour total a day or 5 total hours per week for 3-5th graders), ensuring developmentally appropriate and research-backed screen time limits at all levels with less screen time for younger students</p>	<p>Section V Screen Time and Device Usage Guidance - A. Screen Time Guidance & Attachment A</p>
<p>Eliminate the use of student digital devices for early education through first grade, except for District-mandated formative assessments and for students enrolled in LAUSD Virtual Academy;</p>	<p>Section V Screen Time and Device Usage Guidance - B. Device Access & Attachment A</p>
<p>Encourage schools to utilize laptop carts and/or computer labs for second through fifth grade, while reducing the use of one-to-one devices</p>	<p>Section V Screen Time and Device Usage Guidance - B. Device Access & Attachment A</p>

Prohibit elementary and middle school student device use during passing periods, lunch, and recess with limited exceptions for teacher-approved school work	Section V Screen Time and Device Usage Guidance - A. Screen Time Guidance & Attachment A
Prohibit and/or block student-led use of YouTube and other video streaming platforms on District provided devices	Section VII Platform and Content Restrictions
Consider prohibiting and/or blocking the use of non-instructional gaming platforms (e.g., Roblox and Fortnite) on District provided devices and networks and continue to block social media platforms	Section VII Platform and Content Restrictions
Clarify opt-out procedures for technology use during the school day	Section X Parent and Guardian Rights
Ensure equitable access to technology by allowing families to opt in to the use of District-issued devices at home	Appendix A
Operationalize how parents and guardians can annually consent/opt-in for each Google application on the Consent to Use Digital Tools form rather than submit a blanket opt-in for all applications listed	Section X Parent and Guardian Rights - A. Consent to Use Digital Tools
Encourage the use of paper and pen assignments and physical textbooks	Section V Screen Time and Device Usage Guidance - C. Device Use
Ensure all District-approved curricula includes sufficient physical texts for all students	Section V Screen Time and Device Usage Guidance - C. Device Use
Encourage off-screen homework assignments, when homework is assigned, especially for elementary and middle school students;	Section V Screen Time and Device Usage Guidance - C. Device Use
Provide recommendations and strategies to safely prepare students to utilize and/or create digital tools	Section V Screen Time and Device Usage Guidance - D. Safe and Responsible Use
Develop and share schoolwide guidance outlining best practices for reducing and monitoring student screen time—including systematic coordination among teachers—to prevent excessive cumulative screentime;	Section XI School Site Implementation Expectations
Be reviewed and approved annually at a public meeting of the Board and updated as needed based on new and emerging technology, with the first annual review to include feedback from educators on the rollout and implementation;	Section XII Monitoring, Accountability, and Continuous Improvement