Dan Bentson, Technology Director
Board Report - Technology
March 22, 2016

We have recently acquired quite a few new devices that are running on our wireless network. The most common configuration is to order a cart (Anthro YES Cart) and 30 Chromebooks (CTL NL6). The cart serves as a centralized and mobile storage solution as well as a charging station. The staff have developed quite a few different ways of deploying these "30 pack" carts. The complications of sharing these devices plays out in a surprising number of ways. Our original model was a straight forward, tried and true, and time honored method using a single point of checkout. That system worked well initially but the demand on the devices as well as the demand for smaller, more flexible combinations has made it clear to us the wisdom of placing the control of the devices as close as possible to the people for whom they were intended. The closer this happens to the classroom (and the less bureaucratic the system) the more effectively they can be used. This ultimately leads to a higher utilization as well as the other benefits of local control of resources such as these.

The elementary school has gotten three carts (the PTO made a donation equal to the cost of a full cart of Chromebooks) and the high school got 2 additional carts as well. Taken together, this was an unanticipated addition of 150 devices being put directly into classrooms and into the hands of kids. With a some advance planning and great organization, Brian and Joel processed these new orders with an efficiency that is being improved with each new batch that they process.

The devices that we are acquiring now are popular because of their capability and flexibility. They are light, they turn on quickly, they have a full keyboard and trackpad, wireless Internet connection, built-in camera and speakers, and they run reliably and quickly. This combination of flexibility and the (what would was unimaginable just a few years ago) features makes them a great fit for an awful lot of situations. We are seeing some needs for systems with increased monitor size as well as some interest in a "work station" style device, but for the vast majority of the needs we have, the chromebooks we have are providing a valuable service.