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LHS Laptop Meeting Questions

First of all, for those with unanswered questions, let me thank you for sending your concerns. I'm sorry I didn't address your concerns at one of our presentations. I will be including them in future presentations.

Let me try to address these questions in the order they were received.

1. Are laptops really needed? The short answer is, yes.

For over 20 years educators have been discussing how to get some kind of device into the hands of students for instruction. Computer labs proved difficult to access or schedule and the value of the instructional resources (software) available were questionable.

Today we are experiencing a tidal wave of shifts in how instructional content is delivered; examples include everything from textbook publishers who only provide certain resources digitally to new learning approaches like the "flipped learning" in Kahn Academy. Teachers are being challenged daily to find ways to connect students to what is meaningful for their learning and to help them organize themselves to use their time wisely when the world is at their fingertips. Digital instructional resources improve every year and the frustrations associated with finding an immediate way, in the classroom, for students to access digital content increases each year as well.

Government leaders spend their time discussing the best ways to get a laptop, tablet, or Chromebook for each student, not whether they should have access to one. Internet capable devices are a must in today's learning environments for delivering instruction and for giving learners more say over the time, place, path and pace for studying.

After reviewing device options, the laptop was chosen for high school students because of the need at their level to create and publish information, not just consume (or interact with) content.

2. Have there been studies... Many and there will be many more.

Our website for 1:1 learning references several examples, studies, and resources about how digital learning has impacted student achievement. You may access this information directly at <http://www.elearning21csd.org>. Some links under teacher training and information that may interest you are:

- The [American RadioWorks](#) report produced a couple of years ago.
- The [Horizon Report](#) produced each year to show trend in digital learning.
- The [ISTE](#) website that always has an abundance of research.
- The [Framework for 21st Century Learning](#) for a digital learning overview.
- The [Employability Skills Framework](#) for how all of this comes together.

3. Studies about reading off of hard copy vs. a computer screen... Again, many and there will be many more.

As a school district, we are very sensitive to this issue. Textbooks are being purchased in both formats to address sensitivity to reading on a screen. Without proper adjustments screen reading has been known to cause eyestrain and some individuals are more sensitive to this than others. To make material more accessible to learners who need print media, efforts continue to purchase printed textbooks.

4. Social media concerns...

Social media continues to be a concern for all of us. We are not currently blocking Facebook or YouTube because of teacher requests to use these. We are blocking SnapChat, Pinterest, Instagram, and others. I like to think of filters like a crossing guard at a busy street. We know students will have to cross, so even with someone on duty, we must work together to every day, every crossing to ensure their safety.

We are required by both CIPA and COPPA to use policy, filters, and supervision to minimize the chance for students to be exposed to pornography, exploited, or abused through the access to the internet given to them at school. The filters in place in our schools are the best available, but we continue to remind everyone that no filter can be relied on at all times. We are encouraging those looking for added protection to enable "Restricted Mode" at the bottom of the YouTube window and to use "Settings" for Facebook to control apps, ads, videos, etc. We are also prepared to create more restrictive settings when we are made aware of individual needs.

The need for home and school partnerships-as well as other community partnerships is greater than ever as access increases. We share your concerns with media additions. Efforts to simply block access do not prevent the possibility of falling victim to pornography or other additions. We must work together to update best practices, educate each other in the ways to protect ourselves, and to stay informed about resources that will help if our efforts fail. In a world constantly reaching out to our children with undesirable content, we must work together to prepare them to counter the dangers they face.

5. Locker security?

For a number of reasons we do not consider lockers a secure place for a laptop:

- Not all students have a locker and many who do are sharing them with someone else.
- Lockers may be targeted if someone notes that students are storing their laptop in them at a certain time each day or overnight.
- Overnight storage also prevents the laptop from being charged for use the next day.

Because lockers are unreliable as laptop storage, we are providing carts in supervised locations for students to store laptops. Carts will be located in classrooms and other locations where there is direct supervision by adults and cameras, in the best situations. In the event a student gets the wrong laptop from a cart, name labels, barcodes, and serial numbers will be used to get the laptop back to the correct owner.

6. Students who do not want to take a laptop home or who have been asked to leave them at school...

Laptops do not need to go home. For homework assignments requiring a laptop, we have staff remaining until 4:00 p.m. The late access to laptop support staff allows students time to work on assignments after school and still have a place to secure their laptop for the night. We also have staff on hand in the morning before school, so picking up a laptop will not make students late to school. We will adjust the time staff is available if the times we have scheduled do not work.

7. Are laptops required?

Laptops are being used to connect students to resources at school that they otherwise could not access. Even if programs like Microsoft Office and Adobe are available at home, students will need a way to sign in to lesson materials, content (including videos), additional textbook resources, and programs like Canvas throughout the day. Students will have access to a laptop at school whether or not they need them at home.

8. Could the money for these laptops have been used somewhere else?

No, the money purchasing these laptops comes from a grant through the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED). Logan High School is participating in the last of a series of statewide pilot projects exploring the best way to approach one-to-one learning in our schools. As a state, Utah expects all schools to prepare for one-to-one learning. Funding all schools for laptops, tablets, and/or Chromebooks has been discussed in every legislative session for the last five years. We are currently participating in another study ordered by the legislature last year through SB222. The Logan laptop project is a piece of a much larger puzzle that may involve as much as \$120 million dollars in one-time funding and additional annual funding for technology to sustain digital learning in Utah schools. Additionally, Logan benefits from participating in the GOED project because many of our construction costs count as the matching funds that were required to get this grant.

Funding for the laptops was never intended to take away from funding for teachers and does not affect class sizes at Logan High School or in any of our other schools. Laptops are meant to be a tool to help educators and students and should be used to enhance student learning.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David A. Long". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

David A. Long

Director of Education and Technical Services
Logan City School District