# Public Hearing on Budget: Change APS’ Device Policy

Hello, I’m Camille, speaking on behalf of APE. Since APS has a structural budget deficit, we ask the Board to consider changing its device policy:

1. The preK-2nd grade 1:1 policy should be canceled. It is wholly unnecessary and was introduced as an emergency measure in 2020.
2. The 1:1 policy for 3rd -5th graders should be reduced to fewer devices shared by the whole school, if not also eliminated.
3. Grades 6 and up should transition to PC laptops, to promote word processing and keyboarding over videos and swiping.

The 1:1 iPad policy costs APS millions, not only in purchases but also in ongoing repairs and replacements. **PC laptops cost much less than iPads** and have many advantages. Savings from reducing devices should be reallocated to Tier 1 Support—hiring more teachers and reducing class sizes.

Neurology and education research agrees that elementary-level skills are more effectively taught [using multisensory methods](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257811381_Neumann_M_M_Hyde_M_Neumann_D_L_Hood_M_Ford_R_2011_Multisensory_methods_for_early_literacy_learning_pp_197-216_In_G_Andrews_and_D_L_Neumann_Eds_Beyond_the_Lab_Applications_of_Cognitive_Research_in_Memo),[[1]](#footnote-1) i.e. incorporating physical movement with auditory and visual information. iPads produce overly visual input, which a) causes staring for extended periods of time, [increasing myopia and near-sightedness](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/nov/14/eyeballs-screens-vision-nearsightedness-myopia)[[2]](#footnote-2), and their bright screens b) [increase alertness similar to the effect of caffeine](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9420367/),[[3]](#footnote-3) which can overstimulate kids. Excessive tablet usage [negatively impacts social, linguistic and motor skill development](https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-022-12701-3) in young children, whose nervous systems are still developing.[[4]](#footnote-4) Further, middle schoolers are especially vulnerable to [the negative impacts of screen addiction](https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2023/04/25/1171773181/social-media-teens-mental-health)[[5]](#footnote-5); social media usage leads to serious mental health issues like anxiety and depression. Using iPads—essentially large smartphones—at school is priming students of all ages to become addicted to phones. Finally, [tablets and phones increase ADHD symptoms](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-023-44105-7), while computers do not.[[6]](#footnote-6)

APS says it uses “the right tool at the right time, for the right purpose”, but it feels like **we’re using technology just to use technology**. PC laptops are more appropriate for learning—they promote “producing over consuming,” and at a quarter of the cost. We’ve learned a lot in 4 years; now is the right time to roll back tablets and focus on our strongest tool—our teachers.

1. Neumann, Michelle & Hyde, Merv & Neumann, David & Hood, Michelle & Ford, Ruth. “Multisensory methods for early literacy learning.” Chapter 9, Beyond the Lab: Applications of Cognitive Research in Memory and Learning. 197-216. 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Reed, Betsy. The Guardian. Why staring at screens is making your eyeballs elongate—and how to stop it.” Nov 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Wonga, Nikita A., Bahmania, Hamed. "A review of the current state of research on artificial blue light safety as it applies to digital devices." Beliyon, August 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Salima Kerai, Alisa Almas, Martin Guhn, Barry Forer & Eva Oberle. BMC Public Health. "Screen time and developmental health: results from an early childhood study in Canada." Volume 22, Article number 310, 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Doucleff, Michaeleen. NPR. “The truth about teens, social media and the mental health crisis”. April 25, 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Wallace, Jasmina; Boers, Elroy; Ouellet, Julien; Afzali, Mohammad H.; Conrod, Patricia. Nature, Scientific Reports. “Screen time, impulsivity, neuropsychological functions and their relationship to growth in adolescent attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder symptoms.” Article 18108, October 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)