

# DISTRICT 45

## Balancing Innovation, Learning, and Student Well-being

From Early EdTech to Emergency Adoption to Responsible  
Stewardship

May 19, 2026

# The Educational Technology Landscape Was Already Changing

## Trends in Educational Technology

Before 2020:

- Many districts were already moving toward 1:1 devices.
- Publishers increasingly bundled curriculum with digital platforms.
- Online assessments and learning management systems were expanding.
- Schools were investing in digital communication and instructional tools.

During COVID:

- Remote learning made devices essential overnight.
- Digital tool adoption expanded rapidly.
- Screen-based learning increased significantly.
- Districts had to make fast decisions during an emergency.

After the Pandemic

- Schools began evaluating which tools genuinely improve learning.
- Districts shifted from emergency adoption to intentional implementation.
- Greater attention was placed on:
  - screen time,
  - student well-being,
  - digital balance,
  - and instructional value.
- Schools began refining digital ecosystems to focus on essential, high-impact tools.

## District 45 Educational Technology

2017-2018

- 1:1 Chromebooks
- K-5 stayed at school, 6-8 went home
- 4 year replacement cycle

2020 - Remote Learning

- K-8 Chromebooks go home
- Shift to 3 year replacement cycle

2022 - 2023

- K-5 Chromebooks shift back to primarily remain at school

2023-2024

- Change in the replacement cycle from 3 years to 4 years

2025-2026

- Middle school Chromebooks collected over the summer

# Technology Is Not the Goal. Learning Is.



Students thrive through relationships, creativity, discussion, and hands-on experiences.



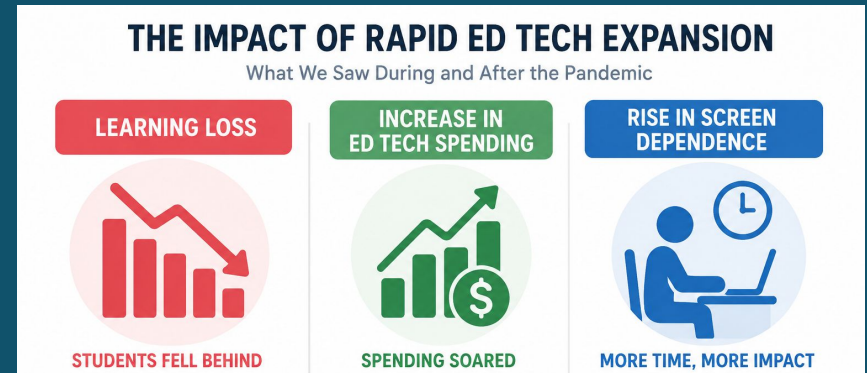
Technology should support learning – not replace human connection.



District 45 is committed to balanced, developmentally appropriate technology use.

# Educational Technology Expanded Rapidly

- Pandemic conditions and funding accelerated edtech growth nationwide.
- Schools adopted many tools rapidly out of necessity.
- Educators began asking deeper questions about effectiveness and balance.



# Lessons Since COVID



- Technology is essential for access and communication.
- More screen time does not automatically improve learning.
- Not all digital tools provide educational value.
- Students need balance between digital and non-digital experiences.
- Teachers need guidance, training, and clear expectations.
- Districts must continue to prioritize privacy, safety, and instructional purpose.

# Our Philosophy: A Healthy Tech Diet

**Goal:** Long-term well-being, balance, and nourishment.

**Approach:** Focus on *quality, variety, and moderation* rather than strict restriction.

Just like fruits, vegetables, proteins, and whole grains make up a balanced plate, children's screen use should mix:

Educational tech	→	fruit and vegetables	→	essential for growth
Creative use	→	proteins	→	building skills and confidence
Social use	→	healthy carbs	→	fueling relationships
Entertainment	→	occasional treats	→	okay in moderation

The emphasis is on sustainable habits and positive engagement.

Outcome: Kids learn to regulate themselves, build digital literacy, and develop healthy lifelong habits around technology.



# Responsible Technology Use Means We:

## Stay Balanced

- Blend intentional screen-based learning with hands-on activities.

## Build Strong Minds

- Use tech to support critical thinking and collaboration.

## Develop Digital Citizenship

- Teach responsible, ethical, and safe technology use.

## Protect Well-Being

- Reduce screen fatigue and support social-emotional development.

## Prepare Students for the Future

- Build modern skills thoughtfully and intentionally.



# Responsible Technology Use Includes Strong Student Data Protections

## Educational Value

- Does it provide meaningful instructional value?

## Student Privacy

- How is student data collected, stored, and protected?

## Legal Compliance

District 45 follows:

- FERPA – protects student educational records
- COPPA – protects children’s online privacy
- SOPPA – requires schools and vendors to safeguard student data

## Security & Accountability

- Vendor agreements
- Approved tool lists
- Ongoing review processes

As technology use expanded, protecting student privacy became increasingly important. District 45 reviews digital tools for instructional value, privacy protections, legal compliance, and student safety before approval.

# Our District Approach

Responsible technology use is not about using more tools — it is about using the right tools, for the right purpose, at the right time.

We Are Prioritizing Tools That:

## **Support Student Learning**

- Directly improve instruction and feedback
- Increase accessibility and differentiation
- Strengthen communication and organization
- Inform instruction through adaptive assessment tools

## **Reduce Redundancy**

- Fewer overlapping platforms
- Focus on proven mature products

## **Protect Student Well-Being**

- Encourage thoughtful, purposeful screen use
- Preserve time for discussion, writing, reading, collaboration, and hands-on learning

## **Support Sustainability**

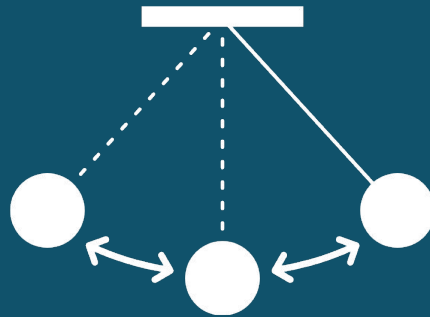
- Focus resources on tools with lasting instructional value

# Avoiding Overcorrection

Thoughtful transitions matter just as much as thoughtful adoption.

## Overdependence

- excessive screen time
- tool overload
- distraction



## Overcorrection

- reduced accessibility
- logistical strain
- loss of instructional supports

# Anticipating the Adjustment Period

- Shifting technology habits takes time, patience, and support.
- Thoughtful transitions matter just as much as thoughtful adoption.
- Students may need time and support as technology routines evolve.
- Rebalancing digital and non-digital learning is a process, not an overnight change.

Reducing reliance on technology requires explicit routines, patience, and support.

# Instruction & Planning Considerations

- Increased teacher lesson preparation time
- Rebuilding non-digital instructional systems
- Loss of efficiency in feedback, differentiation, and communication
- Reduced access to adaptive, accessibility, translation and language supports
- Scheduling access to devices

# Instructional Efficiency & Staff Support

Many digital tools currently support:

- lesson planning,
- differentiation,
- translation and accessibility,
- family communication,
- assessment analysis,
- progress monitoring,
- and documentation.

# DISTRICT 45

## 2025-2030 STRATEGIC PLAN

RESPONSIBLE  
RESILIENT  
READY TO EXCEL

### MISSION

Empowering all learners to cultivate hope, build confidence, and realize their full potential.

### VISION

District 45 will serve as a supportive and collaborative community where all students are responsible, resilient, and ready to excel.

### DISTRICT GOALS



WE VALUE: BELONGING • LEARNING • SAFETY • TRUST • COMMUNICATION • COMMUNITY



District 45 graduates demonstrate:



Our Portrait of a Graduate is a visionary framework that identifies the knowledge, skills, and character traits all students should develop by the time they complete their D45 education.