

Laptops or Chromebooks – which is best for my class?

Every year more of our uses of computers become available on the web. This makes it possible to use a less powerful device (a Chromebook) and still accomplish much of our work. Instead of logging into the SD28 network, Chromebook users only log into Google, making for a very fast login and allowing students to continue their work at home. Chromebooks also have long battery life, usually lasting at least a full day. The disadvantages are that they do not access the SD28 network and cannot be used for any purpose involving personal information.

Laptop users can also use G-Suite. Any student using G-Suite (Google Docs, Drive, Gmail, etc) must have a signed permission form, including a parent signature for grades K-8. No personal information can be saved to G-Suite.

It is easy to move documents between G-Suite and Microsoft Office.

A Chromebook is not a replacement for a teacher's classroom computer and students will still need access to some normal computers (desktop or laptop), but for much of their work a Chromebook will suffice. At this point we do not support printing from Chromebooks.

We expect that managing a bank of Chromebooks will be significantly easier for both classroom teachers and Computer Services. As shown in the table below, there are many factors to consider when selecting a laptop or Chromebook. Schools should not consider ordering Chromebooks for teachers with no experience with Google G-Suite.

Feature	Laptops	Chromebooks
Runs Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Powerpoint)	Yes	No
Runs other Windows programs	Yes	No
Browses the web with Google Chrome	Yes	Yes
Runs Google G-Suite (Docs, Sheets, Slides, etc.)	Yes	Yes
Startup time	~ 2 minutes	~20 seconds
Battery life	1-3 hours	7-10 hours
Print to SD28 printers	Yes	Possibly in the future, but not this year
Save files on SD28 network	Yes – With MS Office Yes – With G-Suite	Possibly in the future, but not this year
Work on same documents at home and at school (or anywhere with Internet access)	Yes - With G-Suite No – With MS Office	Yes
Share documents for collaborative work	Yes - With G-Suite No – With MS Office	Yes
Save files with personal information	Yes – With MS Office	No
Require signed parent permission for K-8 or signed student form for 9-12	Only if signing into Google	Yes
Save files in Google Drive (no personal information)	Yes	Yes
Send and receive email with Groupwise or Gmail	Yes	Yes
Run Google Chrome Apps	Yes	Yes
Time for Computer Services to set up	2 hours	20 minutes
Can be repaired by Computer Services	Often	Unlikely
Requires annual re-imaging by Computer Services	Usually	No
Weight	2-3 lbs	3-5 lbs
Users must log into:	SD28 Network (and possibly Google Cloud)	Google cloud
Price (for student use)	Off-lease (3 years old) \$350 - \$400	New \$200 - \$350