Chromebooks Pilot Proposal
submitted by Heather Cook and the CPSC Tech Team

Function: This proposal is for the acquisition of 18 Chromebooks for use at the 4th grade level (*6 per classroom w/ the option for a 1:1 ratio*) to support research and investigation in Science, Math and PBL.

Benefits: Currently the 4th grade students have access to classroom computers that are made up of donated discards from Duke Surplus and CPSC Community members. They range in age from 4-8 years old. Because of their age and previous use, these machines have limited functionality. They are in need of consistent maintenance, are no longer able to access current updates for software and offer a host of other roadblocks when it comes to accessing information and documenting research in the classroom. When these machines eventually give out, we have nothing to replace them with and no current means to acquire additional machines.

Space

By upgrading the 4th graders to a set of Chromebooks, these roadblocks would not only be alleviated, but additional benefits would come out of the pilot program. The first and major one is space. At CPSC our classrooms are limited in size and often require a lot of materials, sculptures, instruments and other equipment to live in them to support our investigative method of learning. By removing the desktops that are in each classroom currently and replacing them with Chromebooks that can be stored in a locked file cabinet, we will be freeing additional space for students and their teachers to work, play and create within their classroom.

Access & Collaboration

Secondly, by moving to a Chromebook, students will become trained and well versed in utilizing Google Drive, which is a cloud-based storage space for documents, photos and videos. By learning this platform, students will have greater access to their documents throughout the CPSC school and really anywhere that they can access the internet. This accessibility can free students to work on any computer in the school on their research as well as share their work with their family and friends. Collaboration is another key function of the Google Docs app within Google Drive. This allows students, teachers and parents to work together on documents from near and far. We have already seen great success with this model at the 5th grade level and feel that it could be a vital component to supporting PBL with our 4th grade teachers and students.

Cost Effectiveness

While the machines that are currently in 4th grade have come to us at no upfront cost, the continued cost to maintain and repair them has been great. The service hours of troubleshooting, repairing connections, uninstalling/reinstalling, etc take up a great deal of time and often leave the machines unusable to the students and teachers for days at a time. By moving to something new, that comes at an extremely reasonable price, we can remove this service cost and help keep access up for the students and their teachers.

Limitations: Chromebooks are not supportive of multimedia production. The audio, video and even photo integration is mostly limited to storage and retrieval. If and when our students or teachers want to create a movie, Prezi or multimedia slideshow, it will continue to be important that they have access to machines that have these capabilities. Right now we have 3 iMacs and 8 MacBook Airs available for general use to support these needs.

Cost: $3,664.00 (16 @ $229* ea. retail)

We have an inquiry in with their education department to find out about any possible discounts for purchase/lease.