

Community Education Council District 14

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RESOLUTION FOR INTENTIONAL AND LIMITED SCREEN TIME IN DISTRICT 14 AND NYC PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Whereas, Community Education Council District 14 (CEC14) is charged under New York State Education Law to represent the interests, well-being, and educational outcomes of students and families in District 14; and

Whereas, District 14 students and educators regularly utilize digital products during the school day to access instructional platforms, individualized interventions, assessments, communication systems, and digital content, including but not limited to i-Ready, Amira, HMH Writable, and Google Classroom; and

Whereas, many of the digital tools used in District 14 have a weak evidence base,¹ and most have not been shown, through independent research, to be effective at improving educational outcomes; and

Whereas, i-Ready is used in District 14 as a diagnostic tool and a personalized learning tool in both ELA and math, even though the largest studies of i-Ready do not indicate any benefit from using i-Ready for ELA,² and show mixed results for math,³ and even though a 2025 study indicated⁴ that the previous year's state test result was a more accurate classification tool than i-Ready's diagnostic, and even though Michigan⁵ and California⁶ have dropped i-Ready as an ELA screener; and

Whereas, the District 14 Superintendent has expressed that “general guidance to schools has been approximately 30–45 minutes per week of technology-supported instruction in literacy and 30–45 minutes per week in mathematics,”⁷ yet many parents and students report that students have access to devices for independent use throughout the school day; and

¹<https://www.d14intentionaltech.org/evidence>

²<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED644618>

³<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED619487>

⁴<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/15345084251338860>

⁵<https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/Literacy/K-12-Literacy-and-Dyslexia-Law/K-3-Valid-and-Reliable-Screening-and-Progress-Monitoring-Assessment-List.pdf>

⁶<https://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/el/le/yr24ltr1217.asp>

⁷Email from Dr. David Cintron to D14 parent on July, 9, 2026.

Whereas, parents, students, and teachers have raised significant concerns about the amount of screen time students are exposed to, as evidenced by over 290 signatures on the District 14 intentional technology petition;⁸ and

Whereas, there is a rich body of research about high-quality, evidence-based, non-digital instructional methods that could be used instead to address common instructional issues; and

Whereas, in District 14 casual familiarity with technology is emphasized, but there is no district-wide curriculum for crucial, specific technology-related skills such as typing that would allow students to gain true fluency in technology; and

Whereas, during the school day students often find ways around guardrails on devices to access non-educational apps or websites such as YouTube; and

Whereas, ensuring that screen use is intentional, high-quality, and fits within developmentally appropriate time limits is a shared responsibility between parents and schools; and

Whereas, emerging national policy trends demonstrate growing concern about excessive screen exposure in schools⁹ and the need for clear, developmentally grounded limits; and

Whereas, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) adopted a 2026 resolution establishing grade-level screen-time limits, restricting device use during non-instructional time, and limiting or prohibiting device use for early elementary students¹⁰, signaling a major shift toward safeguarding student well-being and academic engagement; and

Whereas, studies indicate an association between excessive screen use and decreased white matter in the brains in young children¹¹; and

Whereas, research in neuroscience and education demonstrates that learning is strengthened through active, social, and hands-on engagement¹² and cautions that passive or excessive screen-based instruction may reduce retention, attention, and deep learning;¹³ and

Whereas, while access to and fluency in technology are essential skills in the modern world, excessive screen time has been associated with myopia,¹⁴ increased anxiety and depression,¹⁵ reduced inhibitory control,¹⁶ reduced attention span,¹⁷ difficulty with emotional regulation,¹⁸ lower academic

⁸<https://www.d14intentionaltech.org/home>

⁹<https://www.hhs.gov/press-room/secretary-kennedy-announces-hhs-action-reduce-harmful-screen-use-protect-children-online.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.lausd.org/apps/news/article/2190886?categoryId=23516>

¹¹ https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2754101#google_vignette

¹²<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0747563225002948>

¹³<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9076497/>

¹⁴<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11846013/>

¹⁵<https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2025/06/screen-time-problems-children>

¹⁶<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/cognition/articles/10.3389/fcogn.2023.1018096/full>

¹⁷<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35430923/>

¹⁸<https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2025/06/screen-time-problems-children>

achievement,¹⁹ and weakened cognitive development,²⁰ and reading comprehension is lower on screens;²¹ and

Whereas, equity in education requires a high-quality, evidence-based education as well as protection from the risks associated with screen use and excessive reliance on digital platforms;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that CEC14 calls upon District 14 and the New York City Department of Education to develop and implement a system wide Screen Time Policy that:

1. Establishes the following common sense, developmentally appropriate limits, with some contingent exceptions for IEP/504 accommodations, in collaboration with D14 public school teachers:
 - Early Childhood (3K-Grade 2): no routine screen time²², maximum of 0-15 minutes/day only if necessary
 - Upper Elementary School (Grades 3-5): maximum of 30 minutes/day, not to exceed 90 minutes/week
 - Middle School (Grades 6-8): maximum of 30 minutes/week per subject
 - No screen use during recess, lunch, or transitions
 - Limits should not be viewed as a goal. Schools should be allowed to further limit access to screens if pedagogically appropriate.
 - Any screen time should be for a specific learning objective.
2. Prioritizes high-quality, evidence-based, teacher-led instruction, with limited and intentional use of technology:
 - Requires that digital products be used only if high-quality independent research has demonstrated that they enhance learning outcomes
 - Requires that direct teacher instruction, discussion, independent thinking, small group instruction, and pen-and-paper work be prioritized when scheduling the school day
 - Requires that district and DOE leaders clearly explain which problem a specific digital program is expected to solve, the quality of the evidence for its use, the students it is expected to serve, and why this solution is preferable to the available non-digital alternatives
 - Requires that district and DOE leaders give an honest and transparent accounting of the benefits and costs (e.g. financial costs, impacts on instructional time, software-training requirements, device management) for every digital product used in a classroom
 - Requires that district and DOE leaders identify clear, specific, age-appropriate technology skills such as typing and spreadsheet use that students should learn, and make a plan for teaching them

¹⁹<https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/19/9/5430>

²⁰<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9113848/>

²¹<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1747938X18300101>

²²Where screen time is understood to include personal screen time use and passive videos shown on the smart board, but make exceptions for other forms of smart board use such as instructional materials

- Requires that any devices students access independently have a whitelist policy (a short list of enabled apps or websites), rather than a blacklist policy, to ensure student safety and focus
- Requires that take-home devices are, by default, not required at any grade level, but families can opt in, to ensure equitable access to technology
- Requires that families be allowed opt out of specific Google services & applications (such as Gemini) on those devices
- Prohibits all advertising and commercial content on school-issued devices
- Provides specific funding to schools so that teachers have the physical materials—books, access to printing, paper, etc.—needed to successfully implement the aforementioned screen time limits

3. Genuinely empowers communities:

- Each School Leadership Team (SLT) should develop a school plan for overall screen use for their communities that supports parents and children, and then communicate widely to families.
- Each school should maintain a publicly accessible technology-use statement that accurately lists any student-facing software, the purpose of that software, the grade levels in which it is used, the devices that students access, and estimated duration (in minutes) of daily and weekly use.
- Where non-digital alternatives to screen-based instruction are feasible and educationally sound, schools, teachers, and families should have the discretion to choose them instead.

4. Enforces accountability and oversight:

- Each district's CEC should distribute an anonymous annual survey for principals to assess technology use and verify that information communicated by district leadership is accurate.
- Each district's CEC should commit to providing a way for teachers and parents to anonymously report issues related to technology that is centrally monitored and regularly reviewed by district leadership and reported out at public meetings.
- District leadership should, every two years, publicly report on the efficacy of every digital product, examining whether it is successfully addressing the instructional problem it was implemented to solve, and stating whether its ongoing use is warranted.
- The DOE should add questions to the annual NYC School Survey that allow families to express their opinions about technology use at their schools.