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MCCPTA Resolution on Intentional, Effective, and Safe Use of Technology, including Artificial Intelligence, in MCPS Schools

Whereas our children are at a critical stage of cognitive development, building foundational skills in reading, writing, critical thinking, cognitive reasoning and interpersonal and emotional skills that will serve them throughout their lives, and the activities they participate in during those brief, formative years irreversibly impacts the formation of neural pathways in their brains;

Whereas multiple studies indicate that the use of modern artificial intelligence (AI)[i] dependent on Large Language Models (LLMs) such as generative AI and agentic AI impairs cognitive development and critical thinking skills in both students and adults, because generative and agentic AI promotes significant "cognitive offloading" (using external devices to perform mental tasks), while true learning requires active cognitive engagement through the exertion of mental effort;[ii]

Whereas generative AI and agentic AI are tools that have different design incentives and carry different risks than calculators or chalk. For example, calculators and chalk don't provide factually wrong answers, dangerous or deadly feedback, or otherwise mislead users;

Whereas generative AI features are already on school Chromebooks, and are being rolled out in many programs and apps accessible to students in advance of any clear MCPS AI guidelines, AI literacy curriculum, or notice to and consent by parents and caregivers;

Whereas adopting "emerging technologies" such as generative AI and agentic AI before we've fully assessed the risks and established clear guardrails could further erode learning in an ecosystem in which children are already exposed to excessive screen time both inside and outside of school.[iii] This is especially true for middle and high school students who are required to do a significant amount of in-class work and homework on Chromebooks, home computers and laptops, and sometimes even their phones. This trend has persisted despite MCCPTA's landmark Digital Balance Resolution dated January of 2023,[iv] calling for MCPS to "[m]ake a system-wide effort to significantly limit screen time in classrooms, unless it provides an educational benefit or helps support the learning needs of students receiving services and/or accommodations;"

Whereas AI exacerbates existing concerns with student data privacy and security,[v] as existing software often fails to protect student data from being shared with advertisers and data brokers. Moreover, AI may potentially permanently embed student data into language models through use for training, and information shared with AI may follow students throughout their lives and be used to make legally significant decisions about them without their knowledge or consent;[vi]

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Whereas the pervasive and default use of digital tools and screens, including one-to-one Chromebook use in the classroom, has not yielded the educational outcomes promised by technology companies, and instead, has shown a demonstrably negative correlation with student performance;[vii] [viii] [ix] [x]

Whereas comprehension and retention of material tends to be significantly higher with print than with screens,[xi] screens tend to isolate students from each other and the teacher, depriving them of social skills and collaborative problem-solving; and screens force teachers to compete with distractions such as games and pornography[xii] on school devices; and

Whereas the MCCPTA Technology Committee conducted a survey[xiii] on perceptions of school Chromebook use, and preliminary findings indicate that over 70% of respondents feel that Chromebooks are used too much and have concerns about the way Chromebooks are permitted to be used in class, and almost 90% would like to see increased use of textbooks, workbooks, pencils, and paper in place of screen-based instruction and homework; **so, therefore be it**

Resolved, that with respect to **technology generally**, the Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA) urges Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) to

- **Pause student-facing generative AI and agentic AI features,** including turning off all generative AI tools (including AI assistants and chatbots) on all programs, apps and platforms by default, until MCPS creates an accountability framework for all digital tools – as described below - that ensures that such tools will boost, not undermine, student learning;
- **Conduct a "tech audit"** whereby a representative sample of teachers and students track their tech use for a set period (e.g. one week) to get an honest picture of current tech use;
- **Conduct a cost-benefit analysis** that charts annual expenditures on digital technologies as compared to academic performance over a period of time, both generally and more specifically (for example, investments in IXL compared to math performance based on specific metrics), to ensure that adoption of digital tools actually supports learning over non-digital methods;
- **Create a Tech-Use Taskforce** that includes multiple stakeholders (administrators, teachers, parents, students) from every school level (elementary, middle, high) to develop a clear EdTech philosophy that guides decision-making on digital tools and ensures that digital tools are effective and safe;
- **Establish an accountability framework for use of digital tools** (including use of AI tools) that is applied in advance of adoption of a tool, that includes 1) identifying what the specific goals are for the tool, 2) establish clear metrics where success is not defined just by whether the tool is used, but by measuring growth in targeted areas among students using the tool versus control groups, 3) use the data gathered during one period

to redesign guidelines to measure the next to mitigate improper use; and 4) set intervals to assess whether the digital tool should be maintained or abandoned due to failure to maintain a meaningful impact on student learning;

- **Reintroduce friction so that use of digital tools is intentional** rather than by default, such as isolating Chromebooks to a cart that needs to be checked out by the teacher for specific purposes, or limiting computer use to a lab setting, promoting "tech-free days" and setting specific time-limits of tech usage;[xiv]
- **Ban data harvesting by default** by insisting on and enforcing strong contractual language with tech vendors to include a prohibition on use of student data for advertising, product development, profiling, as well as consolidating student data across EdTech tools; and
- **Formalize an opt-out process for families**, one which ensures that their children receive equivalent curricula, instruction, learning outcomes, and educational experiences, because many families have made the conscious effort to limit their children's exposure to screens, and have identified over-use of screens at school as a chronic problem they have been unable to address through self-advocacy.

Resolved, that with respect to **student-facing AI**, the MCCPTA urges MCPS to:

- Create age-appropriate AI education that focuses on educating students *about* AI as a fast-evolving technology, to include the various risks, and potential options for mitigation, rather than a "how to" or "best practices" for using tools that will quickly become outdated or obsolete and whose use likely undermine learning goals;
- Ensure that digital literacy includes situating the use of AI within an ethical context, taking in account the fact that generative AI is founded on the unauthorized use of intellectual property, exploited labor, environmental damage, and enshrinement of existing structural biases;
- Implement strict usage limits and monitoring for any approved AI tools, with specific guidelines for when and how they may be used, ensuring they supplement rather than replace fundamental learning processes; and
- Provide transparency to the community about all AI tools being used in classrooms, including their data collection practices, error rates, and safety measures.

Resolved, that with respect to **non-student facing uses of AI**, the MCCPTA urges MCPS to:

- Develop strict guidelines regarding use of AI to grade, assess, or otherwise classify or characterize a student that ensures parents and caregivers are thoroughly informed about the use, purpose and functions of any AI tools or systems adopted by MCPS teachers and staff and that clear guidelines are issued to ensure that bias and unfairness do not result,

and/or are identified and addresses by MCPS expeditiously as well as a transparent appeals process should parents disagree with the determinations or outcome; and

- Ensure that any use of AI to make recommendations that replace human decision-making, will have human review, and that there will be procedures in place for intervening in the AI's operation, or halting it through a "stop" button or similar mechanism, when appropriate.

Resolved, that the MCCPTA urges MCPS to conduct public conversations in the form of town halls, engagement sessions, etc. with all stakeholders about the goals of public education,[xv] how current use of technology in classrooms is either promoting or inhibiting those goals, and present a stated vision with best practices for handling technology that supports the critical skills our students need.

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[i] Artificial Intelligence" refers to a machine-based system designed to operate with varying levels of autonomy, and given certain objectives (either explicit or implicit) interacts with data to generate predictions, recommendations, decisions, material, information/data (including text, images, videos, computer code, etc.), or effects (to include influencing physical or virtual environments) – collectively "Output(s)" -and includes but is not limited to large and small language, machine learning and deep learning models.

[ii] Nataliya Kosmyna, Eugene Hauptmann, Ye Tong Yuan, Jessica Situ, Xian-Hao Liao, Ashly Vivian Beresnitzky, Iris Braunstein, Pattie Maes, "Your Brain on ChatGPT: Accumulation of Cognitive Debt when Using an AI Assistant for Essay Writing Task," MIT Media Lab, Jun. 10, 2025, *available at* https://arxiv.org/pdf/2506.08872. *See also* Brad Littlejohn, *Teaching to the Tech*, American Compass, *available at* https://americancompass.org/teaching-to-the-tech/, fn 44 (Andrew R. Chow, "ChatGPT May Be Eroding Critical Thinking Skills, According to a New MIT Study," *Time*, June 23, 2025; Yizhou Fan et al., "Beware of Metacognitive Laziness: Effects of Generative Artificial Intelligence on Learning Motivation, Processes, and Performance," *British Journal of Educational Technology* 56, no. 2 (2025): 489–530; Michael Gerlich, "AI Tools in Society: Impacts on Cognitive Offloading and the Future of Critical Thinking," *Societies* 15, no. 1 (2025): 6) (examining AI usage across age groups and finding a significant negative correlation between frequent AI tool reliance and critical thinking abilities. Younger participants showed the strongest dependence and lowest critical thinking scores. The relationship was also non-linear. Moderate AI use showed minimal cognitive impact, but excessive dependency produced measurable decline."

[iii] Today's children spend on average 7 to 7.5 hours a day on entertainment media despite research showing that screen exposure should be limited to as little as 30-60 minutes a day, inclusive of all screens. Audrey Mir, "Screen Time is Stolen Time: A French neurologist shows that screens and kids shouldn't mix," *City-Journal*, Mar. 8, 2023, *available at https://www.city-journal.org/article/screen-time-is-stolen-time.*

[iv] Taimarie Carasa, " First Parent-led Digital Balance Resolution in the U.S. Passed in Montgomery County," The Sentinel, Feb. 10, 2023, available at https://www.thesentinel.com/communities/first-parent-led-digital-balance-resolution-in-the-u-s-passed-in-montgomery-county/article_6a1ba696-a9a4-11ed-b5ae-bf5c1ff75c5f.html. The MCCPTA Digital Balance Resolution is available at https://mccpta.sharepoint.com/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2FShared%20Documents%2FMCCPTA%20Digital%20Balance%20Resolution%20%28APPROVED%2001%2D24%2D23%29%2Epdf&parent=%2FShared%20Documents&p=true&ga=1.

[v] According to a 2022 report issued by Internet Safety Labs, "Nearly all apps (96%) share children's personal information with third parties, 78% of the time with advertising and monetization entities, typically without the knowledge or consent of the users or the schools, making them unsafe." 2022 K12 Edtech Safety Benchmark: National Findings – Part 1, Internet Safety Labs, Dec. 13, 2022. ISL has an "App Microscope" that assesses the risk

level of different apps, and Canvas (which is the platform for MyMCPSClassroom) was assessed as "Critical Risk," and StudentVue (powered by Synergy) was assessed as "Medium Risk."

[vi] Congressional Research Service, "Generative Artificial Intelligence and Data Privacy: A Primer," May 23, 2023, available at https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/R/PDF/R47569/R47569.5.pdf.

[vii] "[L]arge scale international assessment data, such as that provided by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), suggest a negative link between excessive ICT (information and communications technology) use and student performance." UNESCO, 2023 Global Education Monitoring Report, "Technology in Education: A Tool on Whose Terms?", p. 83, *available at* https://gem-report-2023.unesco.org/. As early as 2015, studies showed that "students who use computers very frequently at school do a lot worse in most learning outcomes, even after accounting for social background and student demographics." OECD, "Students, Computers, and Learning: Making the Connection," Sept. 15, 2015, *available at* https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/students-computers-and-learning_9789264239555-en.html.

[viii] Salmerón L, Vargas C, Delgado P, Baron N. Relation between digital tool practices in the language arts classroom and reading comprehension scores. Read Writ. 2023;36(1):175-194. doi: 10.1007/s11145-022-10295-1. Epub 2022 May 7. PMID: 35571994; PMCID: PMC9076497 (showing that amount of daily use of digital devices was negatively related to scores on a reading comprehension test).

[ix] Larry D. Rosen, L. Mark Carrier, Nancy A. Cheever, "Facebook and texting made me do it: Media-induced task-switching while studying," Computers in Human Behavior, Volume 29, Issue 3, 2013, Pages 948-958, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.12.001, *available at* https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0747563212003305 (showing that students studied less than 6 minutes before switching to social media, messaging friends, and engaging with other digital distractions).

[x] Eric D. Ragan, Samuel R. Jennings, John D. Massey, Peter E. Doolittle, "Unregulated use of laptops over time in large lecture classes," Computers & Education, Volume 78, 2014, Pages 78-86, ISSN 0360-1315, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2014.05.002, *available at* https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0360131514001158 (showing that when using a laptop during class, students typically spend 38 minutes of every hour off-task).

[xi] "Children Derive Deeper Meaning from Printed Texts Than Screens, According to New Brain Study from Teachers College, Columbia University," Press Release, available at https://www.tc.columbia.edu/marcomm/what-we-do/media/press-releases/2024/children-derive-deeper-meaning-from-printed-texts-than-screens/.

[xii] Common Sense Media found that nearly a third of teens have viewed pornography during the school day. Of these teens, 44 percent had viewed it on a school-issued device. Common Sense Media, "Teens and Pornography," 2022, *available at* https://www.commonsensemedia.org/sites/default/files/research/report/2022-teens-and-pornography-final-web.pdf.

[xiii] The MCCPTA Technology Committee launched a survey on November 20, 2025 to gather community feedback on school Chromebook use. Communications were sent to listservs of all PTA presidents, delegates, and the technology listserv, and local PTAs were encouraged to share with their communities through newsletters, etc. Responses received prior to January 10, 2026 were compiled into a report, available here:

[xiv] Farah Mokrani, "Madrid bans screens in primary schools: New rules for digital devices from September," Euro Weekly, July 29, 2025, available at https://euroweeklynews.com/2025/07/29/madrid-bans-screens-in-primary-schools-new-rules-for-digital-devices-from-september/ (describing new rules setting strict screen time limits for students in public and private schools).

[xv] Stan Winborne & Karl Johnson, "The Question You Need to Ask Before Crafting Any New Ed-Tech Policy," Education Week, Nov. 24, 2025, *available at* https://www-edweek-org.ezproxy.baylor.edu/technology/opinion-the-question-you-need-to-answer-before-crafting-any-new-ed-tech-policy/2025/11.