



Empowered Learners Initiative: Frequently Asked Questions for Families

What is the Empowered Learners Initiative?

The Empowered Learners Initiative (ELi) is a comprehensive three-year investment by Mayor Bowser to close the digital divide and prepare every DC Public Schools (DCPS) learner to be an informed and engaged digital citizen. The initiative includes a focus on access to technology, enhanced DCPS curriculum, teacher professional development, and information and access for families.

Who will receive devices?

Students in grades 3, 6, and 9 will receive a device to use at school in School Year 2019-2020. In School Year 2020-2021, students in grades 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 10 will receive a device to use at school. Our goal is to offer a device to every student in grades 3-12 in School Year 2021-2022. Students in grades PK-2 will have a 3:1 student to device ratio.

Will students be able to take their devices home?

Devices will not go home during School Year 2019-2020. We will gather feedback on this policy from families, educators, and other stakeholders after the first year.

When will schools receive their devices?

Devices are being delivered to schools across all eight wards in phases, and schools will receive information about their delivery schedule in March 2020. Each school has completed a plan for distributing devices to students once they are delivered to the school.

What kind of devices will schools receive?

Students will use the Microsoft Surface Go, which is a hybrid laptop and tablet. The Microsoft Surface Go was selected because it is compact, durable, and includes a camera, stylus, and long battery life.

Who owns the device?

All devices are property of DCPS. However, devices will be assigned to individual students to use at school.

What happens if the device is lost, stolen, or damaged?

All devices are covered under a warranty. DCPS has additional devices in reserve, so that we can make quick replacements if devices are lost, stolen, or damaged.

Are students and families financially responsible for the device?

Students and families are not financially responsible for lost or damaged devices. We trust that our students will act responsibly with their personal learning devices. We are communicating clear expectations to students about how to use and care for their device through the *Student Technology Responsible Use Agreement* that all students must sign.

If a student fails to follow any of these rules, they may face consequences under DCPS discipline rules and policies, and their access to DCPS devices and the DCPS network may be restricted. Families will be asked to sign the agreement as well, confirming that they have reviewed the agreement with their student.

What will a typical day school day look like for students once student devices are delivered to schools?

Teachers are receiving training and curriculum support so that they can use these devices to enhance students' learning experiences. These devices do not replace the expertise of our educators, who will continue to provide our students with opportunities for engaging, hands-on learning. Students will use the devices to explore the topics they are learning and express themselves in new ways including participating in virtual discussions with their classmates, conducting online research, creating videos to demonstrate their learning, and more.

Will students still use textbooks now that they have technology devices?

Students will continue to have access to textbooks where they are still used in the DCPS curriculum. Over time, however, DCPS has been replacing traditional textbooks with digital resources that offer more up-to-date material and broader access to authentic and interactive resources.

For more information visit: <https://dcps.dc.gov/page/technology-dcps>