

Hello LCUSD families,

Our tech team sees a lot of different Chromebooks in classrooms and at our repair desks, so we've put together a quick Chromebook buying guide to help you narrow down your options. We do not support or allow Macs, PCs, or tablets on campus. This allows us to send crucial updates, allow connection to our high-speed campus wifi, provide access to premium online apps, and ensure that all internet traffic is school-appropriate. We appreciate your partnership to support our classroom Chromebook program.

Here is the executive summary:

- Find a device with 8Gb of RAM (you'll see 4Gb, this is ok for the younger students)
- Hard drives can vary from 16Gb-128Gb. No need to spend extra here. The kids have unlimited Google Cloud storage.
- Most models are between \$200-\$400, with top brands being Acer, HP, Dell
- Touch screen is a nice option, but not necessary for school applications
- If possible, find a device with USB C charging. That is a more universal adapter.
- The Smart Tech [insurance](#) is a good deal!
- Target carries a lot of good options as well. [Check these out!](#)

Get Chromebook buying suggestions from these websites.

[Getting your first Chromebook? Here's a website with reviews](#)

[Best Chromebook 2025](#)

[Wirecutter Chromebook Review 2025](#)

Tier 2: Lots of bells and whistles

More Chromebooks are adding advanced features like touchscreens, 360° folding screens, dual cameras, and styluses to write directly on the screen. These features bridge the gap between a laptop and a tablet, and may fit more with watching videos or creating home-movies or retouching photographs. These laptops are also able to install Android apps, giving your Chromebook the functionality of a phone or tablet. Cool features? Definitely, but none are required for school use. You may see some good deals around this time, as retailers bring prices of these fuller-featured devices down from around \$450-\$500 into a lower-priced range.

Tier 3: Simple and effective

Most of our students use Chromebooks in this category. Chromebooks of this sort use tried-and-true technology, the build quality is generally solid, and they come with lower price tags, generally between \$200-\$350. These devices usually have a "clamshell" design, meaning the screen does not flip around. Why choose a device like this? Like your uncle said when defending his 1973 Ford LTD, with fewer fancy features, there's less to break. Hinges on the screens are often more robust, cracked screens are easier to replace, and off-the-shelf parts and accessories are easier to find. These devices provide all that is required for your students to research, type, and collaborate in any grade.

Tier 4: The bargains

You may see ads for door-buster sales, touting a \$99 Chromebook if you arrive at 5am. We'd recommend staying away from these Chromebooks. Do they work? Yes, but you'll notice the compromises very quickly. They typically are powered by a cell-phone grade processor, have lower-resolution screens, and generally are not built to sustain the rigors of the classroom and backpack.

Tier 1: The premium devices

Chromebooks come in a variety of flavors. For those with refined tastes, Google produces a device called the Pixelbook. It's a triumph of design and quality, and comes with built-in Google Assistant. For about \$999, it's very impressive. Dell sells a few "enterprise"-level Chromebooks, priced around \$1400, made with higher-quality internal hardware and intended for adults in a professional setting. However, we don't encourage this purchase or think it is necessary. We just want you to know you'll see this one out there. We even moved this to the end of the list to let you know this is overkill.

What to look for:

Chromebooks are much more efficient than traditional laptops, which means their performance specs don't need to be as highly rated as a Windows PC. 4GB (four gigabytes) of RAM is the most common, and plenty for classroom tasks. Some higher-end devices may have 8GB or even 16GB RAM, allowing for more tabs to be open or more processes to be running at the same time.

You probably have a drawer full of different charging cables somewhere in your house. In 2022, you'll see more devices featuring USB-C connections, which connect peripheral devices like screens, mice, and printers, and also allow for charging. We'd recommend buying a Chromebook that has USB-C charging, if only for the convenience of having multiple charging options.

Build quality is definitely a consideration, especially if your child will be stuffing their device into a backpack or a locker. If you can, handle and play with the device before buying, but if not, look for devices that boast "ruggedized" structure, with rubber-coated corners and increased drop resistance. These devices may not look as sleek, but they'll be much more durable. Kind of like a 1973 Ford LTD.

Chromebooks also come in a variety of sizes, defined by the diagonal measurement of the screen. Most Chromebooks screens are about 11 inches. That's the perfect compromise between ease of typing on the keyboard, screen visibility, size, and weight. I've seen 5th graders with 15" Chromebooks, and the device is almost as big as the kid. They don't need to be that big.

We have a relationship with our local [Target](#) store, who has agreed to set up a hands-on display so you can try out the devices before buying. However, you are free to buy a device from any vendor. Wherever you buy, we recommend purchasing an insurance policy through [Smart Tech](#). For around \$35, this policy will cover drops, spills, and theft. These added policies are sometimes a chance for stores to "upsell" and make a few extra dollars, however we at LCUSD see a lot of drops and spills, and we know how much the repairs can cost. The Smart Tech policy covers repairs with zero-deductible, meaning no unexpected costs out of your pocket. If you're unable to purchase a Chromebook, LCUSD offers an equity device program, where we check out a Chromebook to your student, free of charge, just like a textbook. We send out details about this option in the summer before each school year.

Can we talk honestly?

Chromebooks are excellent tools for learning, but we know that tech devices can also be status symbols. We see elementary students with thousand-dollar Pixelbooks, which, in our humble opinion, is overkill for a 10-year-old. Especially for younger students, a Chromebook can be a good first step in learning how to care for a high-value possession. Even if it's possible to buy a child the fanciest device, it's still going to be used for the mundane tasks of Google Classroom and Brainpop. The learning is more important than the device. We recommend a solid, reliable Chromebook that can be used for learning tasks, not one that is, say, carved from pure diamonds. It's still just a Chromebook, and it'll still be stuffed into a backpack.

What about other devices?

Many parents ask us if they can forego the Chromebook and buy their child a Macbook to use in class. At this time, we do not support or allow Macs, Windows PCs, or tablet computers in class. This is due to a number of reasons, but primarily we choose Chromebooks for their simplicity for classroom tasks and our ability to manage the devices from the school: we can push out new software, provide internet filtering at school, and manage online testing, which is currently something that many teachers are using for test security. We want the technology to be so simple that it fades into the background and does not distract from teaching or learning.

Tech Support!

We offer free tech support for all students, at each school site or by submitting a support ticket at help.lcusd.net. If your Chromebook has an issue, we can take a look! Sometimes we can fix it for free, or we can give you a diagnosis before you take it to an outside repair shop.