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Minnesota Association of School Administrators

2026 minnesota education technology brief



Background & Purpose

Conversations about student technology use and screen time have become increasingly common across Minnesota communities. Current research such as the 2025 PISA Report, the Blaschke Report, American Psychological Association, and other widely accepted published articles suggests that not all screen use is the same and that educational technology should be evaluated based on purpose, instructional value, and learning outcomes rather than a single measure of screen exposure. The 2026 Minnesota Education Technology Survey was conducted to better understand the current reality of technology use in Minnesota schools and provide school leaders with data to inform policy, governance, and community conversations.

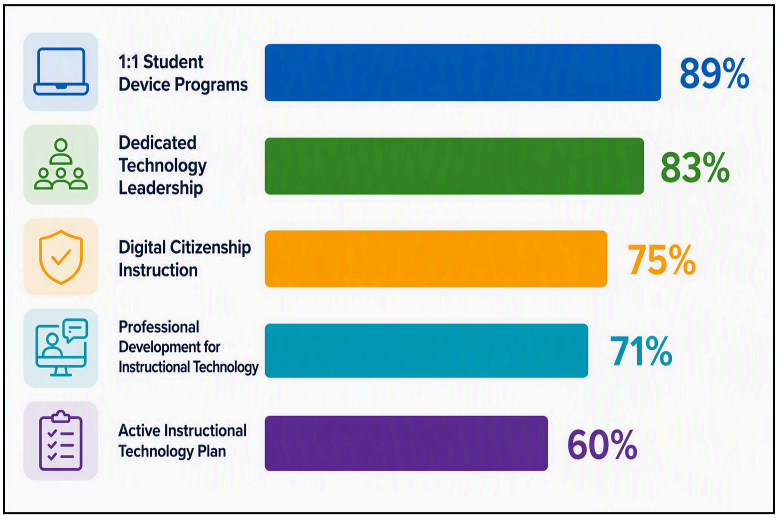
Method & Sample

The survey was administered to all Minnesota public school districts between June 29 and August 7, 2026. Responses were received from 134 educational organizations, including 128 of Minnesota's 329 public school districts (39%) and six additional public education entities. Respondents represented all nine Minnesota service cooperative regions, providing broad statewide representation.

Overall Takeaway

Minnesota schools are pursuing a balanced instructional technology model, not a technology-first model. Technology is primarily used to support learning, accessibility, differentiation, and instructional goals while maintaining significant use of traditional resources such as books, paper, hands-on learning, and teacher-directed instruction. Device use increases intentionally by grade level, and most districts continue to balance digital and non-digital learning experiences. At the same time, public interest in school technology use remains significant, highlighting the importance of communication, governance, and digital citizenship education.

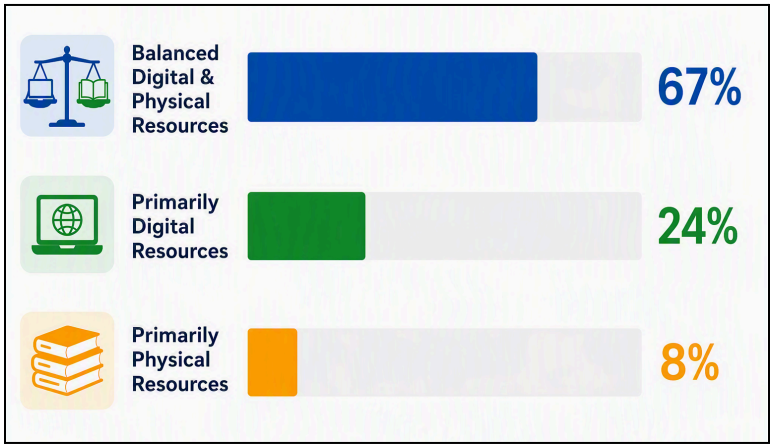
Key Findings at a Glance



Responding districts indicate that, 89% operate a 1:1 student device program, 83% have a dedicated technology leader serving in a cabinet or cabinet-adjacent role, 75% provide formal

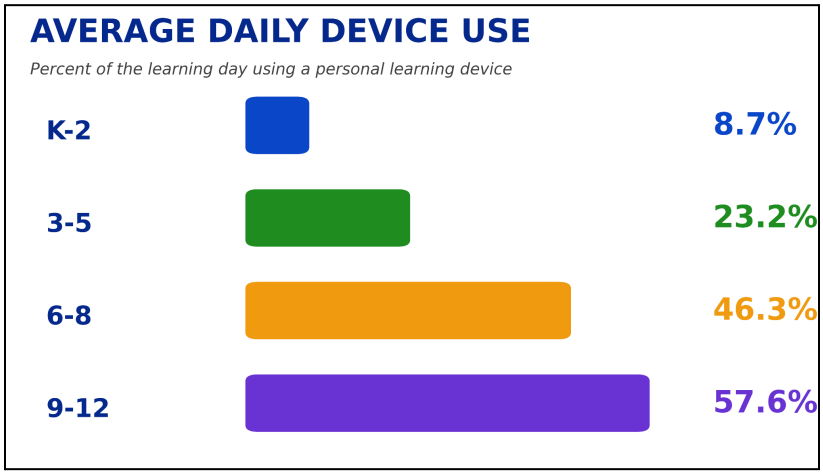
digital literacy and citizenship instruction for students, 71% provide regular professional development for teachers on technology integration, and 60% have an active instructional technology plan.

Learning Remains Balanced



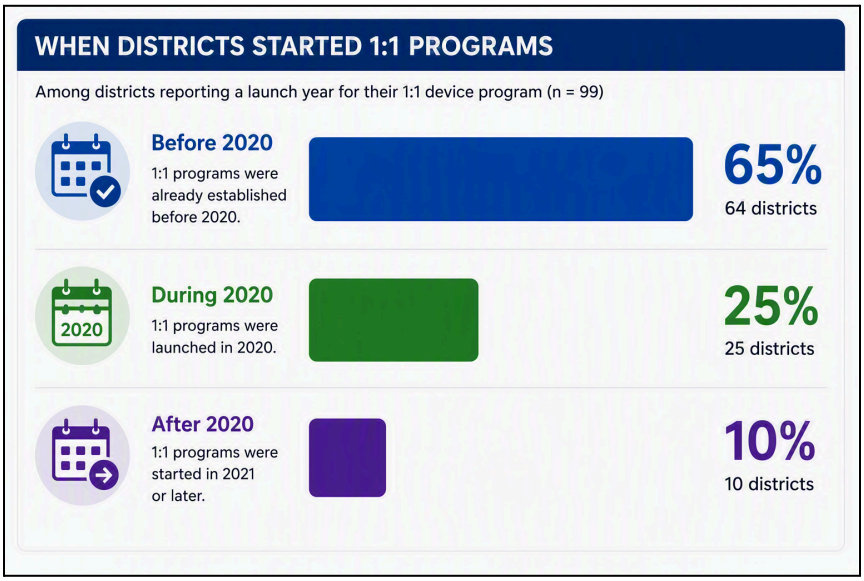
Two-thirds of responding districts report maintaining an approximately even balance between digital and traditional instructional resources, indicating that classrooms continue to utilize a variety of learning tools rather than relying exclusively on screens.

Technology Use Increases by Grade Level



Technology use grows progressively across grade spans. Elementary students use devices more selectively, while middle and high school students use devices nearly every day as part of regular learning activities. Students in elementary (K-5) spend an average of 3.6 days/ week on a device, middle school (6-8) spend an average of 4.9 days/ week, and high school (9-12) an average of 5 days/ week. This same progression follows how much time a student spends per day with primary (K-2) averaging less than 10% of their day, intermediate (3-5) averaging 10-25% of their day, middle (6-8) averaging 25-50% of their day, and high (9-12) averaging 50-75% of their day.

1:1 Programs Were Established Before the Pandemic



Among districts reporting a launch year, nearly two-thirds had already implemented 1:1 programs before 2020. The pandemic accelerated implementation for many remaining districts, with approximately one-quarter launching programs during 2020.

Community Interest Remains High

41% of districts report receiving questions from community members regarding technology use and screen time in schools.

Research from the Consortium of School Networking, the Benton Institute for Broadband & Society, as well as the Spark & Stitch Institute to name a few suggests these conversations are most productive when educational technology is discussed separately from smartphones, social media, and entertainment media. The evidence points toward focusing on instructional purpose, quality of learning experiences, and student well-being rather than screen minutes alone.

Potential Implications

Minnesota districts have invested deliberately in both technology access and educator capacity: eighty-nine percent operate 1:1 programs, most established before the pandemic accelerated adoption elsewhere, and seventy-one percent provide regular professional development on technology integration. The greater question is whether that training is anchored to a plan built to sustain the district's mission and vision.

While districts have made substantial investments in student device access and technology leadership, the systems needed to sustain and maximize those investments are less consistently in place:

- 60% have an active instructional technology plan.
- 71% provide ongoing professional development focused on instructional technology.

- 38% have less than one full-time equivalent dedicated to instructional technology support.
- 29% have no dedicated instructional technology support staff.
- Only 36% of districts have all three foundational elements in place:
    - An active instructional technology plan
    - Ongoing professional development
    - Dedicated staffing to support instructional practice

Notably, nearly one-quarter of districts provide instructional technology professional development without a guiding technology plan. These findings suggest that Minnesota districts have largely built the infrastructure for technology access, but many have an opportunity to strengthen the planning, professional learning, and support systems needed to ensure technology investments translate into consistent and impactful instructional practice.

Leadership Consideration

The survey and supporting research point toward five practical considerations for district leaders:

1. Ensure a clear and current instructional technology vision with an aligned instructional technology plan.

2. Focus on learning outcomes, not screen counts. Research consistently emphasizes purpose and quality of use over total time spent on devices.

3. Maintain balanced instructional approaches. Minnesota districts continue to combine digital and traditional learning resources to support different learning objectives.

4. Invest in educator capacity. Professional learning, instructional design, and leadership structures remain critical to successful technology implementation.

5. Strengthen digital citizenship efforts. Most districts provide student instruction, but opportunities remain to better engage families and communities.

6. Lead proactive community conversations. Public questions about technology use are likely to continue and should be addressed through transparent governance and communication.

Project Leads and Acknowledgments

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