# Parent/Guardian Guide for Purchasing Robust Student Devices

Educators in Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools are seeing first-hand the power of technology to enhance learning for students. The use of technology allows students to engage in learning tasks that promote greater understanding and that were previously inconceivable. Today, devices can be personalized for each individual adding special support to learning as needed. With this in mind schools are developing plans to encourage students to Bring in their Own Robust Devices (**BYORD**) and incorporate their use on a broad scale in all subject areas.

How to choose the best device for your child? Products like the iPad Mini, the Microsoft Surface, various Android tablets like the Nexus and the Galaxy, netbooks, Chromebooks, and laptops, are adding a lot of choices and confusion. Choosing the right device begins first and foremost with the question "What tool will best support my child in achieving the learning outcomes that are presented in class?" This means that what might be best for one student might not be best for another. We thought it might be helpful to outline some specifications about what any device you buy your children should have if you'd like them to use it for schoolwork. Although we won't recommend specific models or kinds of devices, we encourage you to buy a device that features the following for best learning results.

- Wireless networking capability (the district provides filtered wireless access in all buildings for students)
- A microphone
- An external keyboard for entering text
- An audio output for earbuds or headphones
- A minimum of 6 hours of use from one battery charge
- A full-functioning, recent Chrome web-browser that will allow access to Google Apps for Education tools and documents.
- A sturdy carrying case that will protect the device
- An integrated camera that takes both still photos and video
- The ability to run Flash software

Although these features are less essential, you might consider getting a device with:

- A virus protection program, such as Norton or Macafee, if purchasing a Windows or Macintosh desktop or laptop computer.
- Machine-based productivity software (such as Microsoft Office, Open Office, or iWork).

  *Note that you can get education versions of some software packages at reduced costs- use your child's school ID card

There is no 'perfect' device, however the following are examples of devices that meet the criteria above:

1. Laptop (ex. Macbook Pro, Macbook Air, Acer Aspire, HP Laptop, Toshiba Satellite Laptop)
2. Chromebooks (ex. Asus Chromebook, Acer Chromebook, HP Chromebook. Samsung Chromebook)
3. iPads (iPad2, iPad Air, iPad mini). You may have this at home and it will work for many school-based applications but not all.