

October 29, 2015

Deputy Superintendent

Selecting and Evaluating Digital Tools and
Third Party Services

To: All Staff

From: Linda T. Wise
Deputy Superintendent

All Howard County Public School System staff are encouraged to integrate authorized digital tools into instructional content areas when appropriate to engage students in authentic learning experiences. All staff are required to follow proper processes and procedures for selecting and evaluating digital tools.

- Before using and/or purchasing any instructional software and online resources, regardless if it is **free or paid**, staff must check approved software and authorized third-party digital tools, which is accessed from the school system website (<http://www.hcpss.org/third-party>). Instructional software and online resources not on these lists may be considered by completing an authorization form (<http://tinyurl.com/kcysds4>), which ensures that the digital tools conform to established criteria for the curriculum content area, 508 COMAR compliance, data privacy, security, account set up and technological system requirements. After the review by all necessary offices, staff will be notified in a timely manner if the digital tool is approved for purchase. Use of or purchases of digital tools should not be made until approval is given.
- Only instructional materials, including supplemental materials, using approved procedures and subject area selection criteria may be purchased for use with students. Instructional materials are defined as: items such as books, other printed matter, multimedia, computer software, online resources (third party services), and realia, which are used as a part of the instructional process.
- Principals are responsible for ensuring that only approved instructional materials, including supplemental materials and third party services, are used in their schools.

The following HCPSS policies include detailed information, which influence the selection and evaluation of digital tools and online instructional materials for staff and student use.

- Policy 3040: Technology Security
- Policy 4050: Procurement of Goods and/or Services
- Policy 4080: Disposition of Property
- Policy 7010: Personnel Records
- Policy 8040: Selection of Instructional Materials
- Policy 8080: Responsible Use of Technology and Social Media
- Policy 9050: Student Records

Should you have any questions, please contact the Office of Instructional Technology and Library Media at 410-313-7141.

LTW/ELB/jah