

# **New Bedford Public Schools installs \$3.8 million in new technology**

With most New Bedford Public Schools opening for their first day of classes on September 1, technicians and specialists of NBPS Technology Services Department have been busy throughout the summer carrying out their department's annual IT Refresh Program for the coming 2022-2023 School Year. The comprehensive districtwide upgrade represents an investment of more than \$3.8 million in technology to support students at an optimal level, states Robert P. Tetreault, Chief Technology Officer in charge of Technology Services.

"We are committed to investing in the tools students need to thrive in modern educational settings," Mayor Jon Mitchell said. "These mobile devices were essential during the pandemic, and they have become a permanent fixture of the student experience."

Superintendent Thomas Anderson stated, "Technology's critical role in teaching and learning is indisputable as the pandemic has shown. Students need the most effective tools available to increase achievement in all areas. These latest upgrades continue our ongoing work to provide access in education for every student – all students get what they need to grow academically and to thrive socially and emotionally."

Tetreault notes, "Over 3,000 new Chromebooks are being issued to all Keith, Normandin and Roosevelt Middle School students. We leveraged the funding through the Emergency Connectivity Fund, a federal program. These Chromebooks represent an investment of \$1,183,000."

In their bunker-like tech lab in the basement of the Paul Rodrigues Administration Building, technicians have been

readying thousands of new student devices for delivery throughout the district. In addition to the Chromebooks, the upgrade includes:

- 900 new student laptops; 100 units going to Whaling City Junior/Senior High School with the balance allocated to New Bedford High School to cover the incoming freshman class. Any surplus units will replace ageing devices. For the laptop purchase, the federal government contributed \$360,000, or \$400 per unit (the program cap per device). The district paid the balance of \$234,000 for a total investment cost \$594,000. All incoming Grade 9 students receive new laptops.
- 2,000 new Chromebooks are going to various elementary schools to replace devices that are aging out, as Tetreault notes, "It is critical that we keep our technology up to date." This allocation follows the 1,200 new Chromebooks issued to elementary schools last year.
- \$2 million upgrade of the district's Wi-Fi infrastructure. Over 1,400 new wireless access points are being installed in every school building to replace existing older Wi-Fi equipment. Tetreault notes, "This upgrade will provide every classroom with its own wireless access point to ensure that we have strong wireless connectivity for every instructional space in the district. This includes new switching systems to connect to central administrative platforms and mainframes."
- Additional Educational Interactive Touch Screens for instructional spaces based on school need. This is in addition to more than seven hundred 65-inch touch screens in operation installed last year.
- Additional security and surveillance systems at selected schools.
- Upgrades to the overall system's redundancy processes to strengthen contingency response to unanticipated down time.

- Additional hot spots: Technology Services continues to provide at no charge for NBPS families in need “hot spots” for home internet access for educational purposes. If a student is in need, they should reach out to their school and IT will provide access. Qualifying families should reach out to their respective schools to begin the process of receiving a hot spot.