Evaluating Interactive Technology Solutions

Questions to Ask

With the wide array of available education technology solutions, evaluating and comparing them can be challenging. Below are several questions to help guide your discussions with providers to address features that affect learning outcomes, teacher adoption, as well as product quality, safety and value.

Touch and Writing Experience

- ☐ Is writing on the display as easy as picking up a pen without selecting a tool from a menu?
- ☐ Can users select objects with a finger, write with a pen and erase with their fist or palm without needing to select a tool from a menu?
- ☐ Does the display have differentiated pens, allowing multiple users to write in different colors at the same time?
- ☐ Does the interactive display support tactile learning by automatically recognizing a variety of classroom tools, such as pens, rulers and blocks?
- ☐ Can multiple users write, erase and use touch gestures at the SAME time with a connected Windows® or Mac® device?
- ☐ Does the solution offer the same number of simultaneous touch points across Windows and Mac platforms?
- ☐ Does the display support multiple touch points and gestures, plus automatically recognize pens, erasers, touch, and palm erase with Chrome OS™?
- ☐ Can users write notes into third-party files, such as PDF and PowerPoint® and save them in the native format?
- ☐ Can users toggle between third-party applications without needing to save notes?
- ☐ Can users move annotations created in third-party applications?

Embedded Android Experience

- ☐ Does the company offer a consistent lesson delivery platform in desktop, online and the embedded Android™ solution?
- ☐ Does the solution offer lesson synchronization with cloud content?
- ☐ Does the whiteboard allow multiple users to use different tools simultaneously, search and insert images or YouTube videos, or insert interactive measurement tools and widgets?
- ☐ Can you screen share using native Android (Google Cast), iOS® (AirPlay) and Windows (Miracast), or through a dedicated app when networks are troublesome?
- ☐ How easy is it for users to write over applications, save annotations and return to their work?
- ☐ Is the solution secure against threats from third-party applications downloaded by teachers or students?
- ☐ Can administrators centrally deploy apps to the embedded Android using remote management.
- ☐ Does the solution offer automatic over-the-air software updates?
- ☐ Does the solution allow users to freeze the image on any video input, permit ink annotations on top and save their work?
- ☐ Does the solution offer a live visual preview when switching between video inputs?

Interactive Display

- □ Is there an option to add a fully integrated computer that includes Windows 10 Pro?
- □ Are the interactive displays ENERGY STAR® certified for all sizes?
- □ Is the interactive display commercial grade (e.g. rated to 50,000 hours)?
- □ Does the interactive display company invest in accelerated life testing (ALT) to ensure long-term quality?
- □ Does the interactive display manufacturer use fully heat-tempered glass?
- □ Is the display electrostatic discharge (ESD) compliant?
- □ Does the display use the latest in-plane switching (IPS) technology for maximum viewing angle and color reproduction?
- □ Does the interactive display power up when someone walks into the room?

Learning Software

- □ Can you sign in using your school Google or Microsoft® email address?
- □ Can you create lessons anywhere using either desktop software from any computer, or cloud-based software from any web browser?
- □ Can you create, deliver and share lessons with students to continue working outside of the classroom from the online software or Google Drive™?
- □ Can you deliver lessons on a front of room display from anywhere in the classroom using a device, like an iPad or Chromebook?
- □ Can you access all of your lesson content on the interactive display using a single sign-on (SSO), without a connected computer?
- □ Can you enhance existing static content such as PDF, PowerPoint or Google files to add game-based activities, assessments and collaborative workspaces?
- □ Can students contribute to the lesson, respond to planned or spontaneous assessments, and engage in interactive activities from any web-enabled device?
- □ Does the software enable simultaneous collaboration using student devices?
- □ During lesson delivery, can you switch between teacher-paced and student-paced modes?
- □ Does the software have ready-made content that can be directly inserted into a lesson?
- □ Does the company have an online lesson repository of free content that is searchable by grade, subject or standard?
- □ Can the software be provisioned using tools like ClassLink through OneRoster® and Google?

Professional Learning

- □ Does the company have a team of former educators dedicated to supporting school districts as they implement technology?
- □ What onsite professional development options are provided?
- □ Does the company offer online courses and webinars that include both functional and pedagogical professional development?
- □ Is the company able to support you with outcomes-based research and post-implementation publications?

Technical Support

- □ Does the manufacturer offer comprehensive online self-serve support that includes a searchable knowledge base, moderated user communities and social media?
- □ Can you easily conference with the manufacturer's technical support?
- □ Does the manufacturer provide online technical training?
- □ Does the manufacturer offer spare parts that are readily available?

SMART.

Activities to Try

The following activities incorporate commonly used workflows and display interactions to assist you in evaluating each interactive display.

Touch and Writing Experience

- □ Open a website. Pick up a pen and begin writing.
  - ○ Do you need to launch an inking application select a tool first?
- □ Have two or more people move objects at the SAME time while someone else is writing.
- □ Have two or more people erase ink using their fist at the SAME time while someone else is writing.
- □ Have two people write, erase and move an object at the SAME time.
  - ○ Do you need to interact with a menu/toolbar?
- □ Write with pens in different colors without selecting from a menu/toolbar at the SAME time.
- □ Can more than one person write with a pen?
- □ Write over multiple active desktop applications and web browser tabs and switch between them.
  - ○ Does the ink stay in place or do you need to save annotations?
- □ Capture content without opening additional software and use in multiple formats (e.g. save as jpeg or save into a lesson).
- □ Write INTO Microsoft Office® applications and save annotations in the native file format.
- □ In Chrome OS, open a Google application. Pick up a pen and begin writing.
  - ○ Do you need to choose the pen tool from a menu?

Embedded Android Experience

- □ Customize the homepage of the embedded Android experience.
- □ Screen share from Apple®, Android and Microsoft mobile devices using the devices' native screen sharing application (no apps or additional hardware).
- □ Ink over a shared mobile device screen, save and/or discard annotations.
  - ○ Does the device remain connected and shared?
- □ Ink over any application, save and/or discard and return to working with that application.
- □ Open multiple applications, including browser, web apps, and whiteboard, and then close all applications without needing to interact with each application (clean-up/reset room).
- □ Does the display update automatically, over-the-air?
- □ Are you able to install potentially harmful applications?

Software Experience

- □ Create a game-based activity or assessment in under 5 minutes.
- □ Upload a PDF or PowerPoint and convert a page into a collaborative workspace or individual handout activity.
- □ Contribute to a shared online space from multiple devices simultaneously.
- □ Share a lesson with students to continue working on independent or collaborative content.
- □ Share a lesson from Google Classroom or your preferred LMS.
- □ Create a lesson directly from Google Drive.
- □ Quickly share a lesson with other teachers.
- □ Switch between delivering a lesson in teacher-paced and student-paced modes.
- □ Open a lesson on the interactive display without a connect computer.