



New York City Comptroller
Scott M. Stringer

NEWS

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COMPTROLLER STRINGER AUDIT REVEALS THOUSANDS OF COMPUTERS AND TABLETS LOST AND UNUSED AT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*Unopened Computers and Tablets sit in boxes, some since
2011*

New York, NY – More than 1,800 computers were unaccounted for or missing entirely and nearly 400 laptops and tablets were found unpacked and unused in ten Department of Education (DOE) locations, raising concerns that millions in computer equipment may be lost citywide, [according to an audit of DOE's inventory control](#) over nearly \$200 million in computer purchases released today by New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer.

“It is an insult to families who are desperate to access technology for their children to leave brand new computers and tablets unused in closets and storage facilities,” Stringer said. “If auditors can’t locate an average of 180 computers per DOE location, this may be just the tip of the iceberg. Every school should be prepared to use the devices they have and DOE should have a plan for where its computer hardware can best be put to use. Taxpayer dollars, and our children’s education, are too important to take this technology for granted.”

The audit examined how DOE maintained inventory controls over computer hardware purchased through two separate contracts with Apple and Lenovo. The contracts, entered into in September 2009 and July 2011 respectively, have been used to purchase over 211,000 pieces of computers and tablets worth more than \$197 million as of September 2014.

Auditors examined a sample of the computer and tablet inventory purchased from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2013 for use at ten DOE sites – nine schools and one administrative building. At one of the schools, Bronx P.S. 168, auditors examined lists provided by DOE’s Asset Management System (AMS) database, a program which contains records of the computer and tablet purchases, but is not used by DOE to maintain inventory control. At the remaining nine sites, the results of auditors’ physical findings at these sites were compared with the AMS database.

Audit findings include:

- **Missing computers and grossly inaccurate records**– DOE was unable to identify the location of 1,817 laptop and desktop computers that were supposed to be at the ten sites-1,090 that were listed as “asset location unknown” or were no longer listed at all at Bronx P.S. 168 and 727 that were not physically found at nine of the locations. The Department spent nearly \$200 million during FY12-FY13 on computers and tablets, yet does not maintain a centralized inventory system to make sure they are sent to the right places. Instead, the DOE tasks schools with creating their own annual inventory lists. These school inventory lists are not reconciled with the AMS database of purchases, leaving the DOE with inaccurate counts and unknown locations of computers and tablets.
- **No system to track tablets** – DOE spent \$26.9 million on tablets during FY 2012 and 2013 citywide, but did not keep an inventory of these purchases, even though its Standard Operating Procedures requires it to do so. According to City records, 956 tablets were purchased for eight sampled schools during the audit period, but only 703 were listed on the individual sites’ inventory records, leaving 253 unaccounted for.
- **Computers sitting in closets** – The audit found 394 devices had gone unused and unopened at the eight school sites that were physically examined. At Boys and Girls High School in Brooklyn, 78 laptops and iPads, some purchased in 2011, were found unopened.

“Parents have a right to expect that their kids have access to the technology that will prepare them for the global economy,” Comptroller Stringer said. “DOE has failed in

its duty to ensure that when taxpayer dollars are spent on computers and tablets, that technology makes it into the classroom. The City is wasting precious resources, creating a climate that invites theft, and ultimately undermining our responsibility to educate our children.”

Recommendations submitted to the DOE by Comptroller Stringer’s office included:

- **Create a centralized inventory system** – DOE should have a centralized inventory system for computer hardware that includes computer hardware purchases and delivery information, as well as the item’s current location.
- **Revise DOE’s Procedures** – DOE should ensure that all hardware purchases are included in its AMS and require schools to do annual inventory counts that are reconciled with AMS.
- **Find every computer identified as missing** – DOE should locate those computers identified as missing and take steps to ensure that other locations have accurate inventories.
- **Report any evidence of crimes** – If evidence of illegal activity is uncovered as part of the updated inventory, the DOE should immediately contact the proper authorities and cooperate with any investigation.

To read the complete audit, please [click here](#).

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