Snapdragon

GREAT SOUTHERN GRAMMAR

Behind the breakthrough

Great Southern Grammar sets creativity free in Western Australia

Key takeaways

- Great Southern Grammar (GSG) replaced student tablets with Microsoft Surface laptops powered by Snapdragon to support demanding creative and academic work.
- The new devices improved students' learning outcomes through multi-day battery life, increased performance, and reliability, reducing IT issues and saving time in the classroom.
- The rollout helped GSG modernize its device program and demonstrate what's possible for regional schools.

Key benefits

- **Nearly 75% drop** in device-related issues
- **12 to 16 hours** of battery life; enough for two full school days
- **20-minute** setup process

Customer overview

Great Southern Grammar is a regional K-12 school in Albany, Western Australia.

Industry

Education

Region

APAC

Platforms

Snapdragon® X Plus

Devices

Microsoft Surface Laptop 7 Copilot+ PCs

Microsoft Surface

Key apps

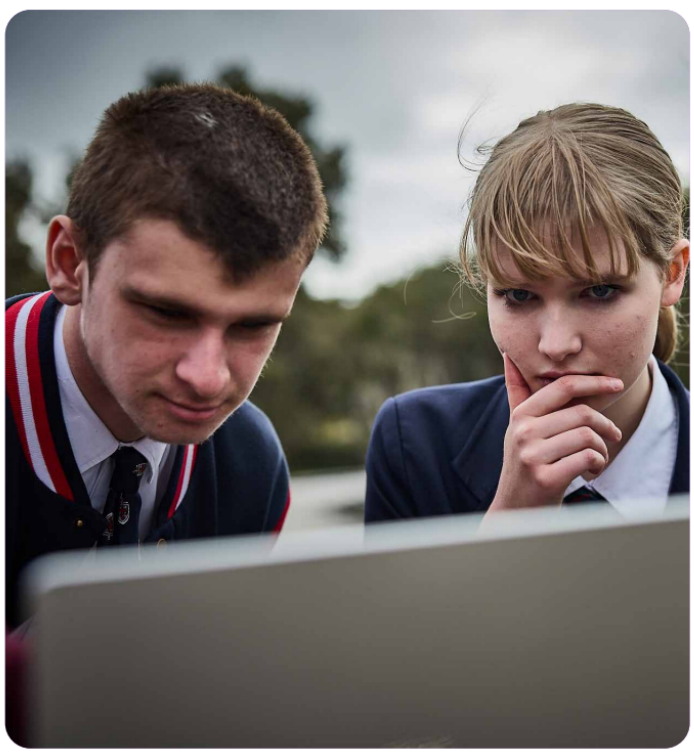
Adobe Creative Cloud
Microsoft OneNote
Minecraft Education
Python

A regional school with big ambitions

As the morning sun rises over Great Southern Grammar (GSG), students begin to make their way across 144 acres of pristine wetland and bushland. The school's breadth and beauty set the scene for an education steeped in creativity and curiosity. At the same time, the school's amazing setting on the southwestern coast of Australia poses a challenge to the students. It's remote, away from big cities, and students sometimes have to travel for hours every day to attend.

This remoteness has shaped the GSG mission. There's a shared quest to ensure that opportunity is always close at hand.

Administrators, teachers, and parents come together to make sure that students have the tools to be connected—the tools to pursue their passions and reach their full potential.



When the lab doors closed, creativity stalled

Kieran Bailey, GSG's Head of IT and Innovation and a computer science teacher, is the catalyst when it comes to the school's mission to connect its students to their possibilities. He's passionate about giving students the technology that enables an inspired learning environment where no possibility is beyond their grasp. Kieran's **passion for exploring how technology can help students thrive** has kept him at the school for nearly 20 years and, along the way, has led him to spearhead technology advancements from making GSG a certified Microsoft Surface Gold School to upgrading students to Surface PCs powered by Snapdragon.

The upgrade began when Kieran noticed a few tech barriers. Media students, in particular, were hitting a wall.

They were full of ideas. They were shooting footage. They were dreaming up projects. But whenever they left the media lab, **their creativity hit pause**.

And they weren't alone. Across grades 7–12, students were struggling with devices that simply couldn't keep up.

Kieran saw it every day: students hunched over tiny tablets in the library with their chargers spread across the floor, desperate to finish a project that their hardware couldn't handle.

That's when he knew the school's approach to student devices needed a reset—and that media students would help lead it. So he reached out to his partners at Solutions IT to start mapping out what a more powerful, future-ready program could look like.

> "In media studies, students wanted to use Adobe apps—but on our previous devices, it just wasn't possible. Those devices were too slow, too limited to handle creative work.
>
> — KIERAN BAILEY
> **Head of IT and Innovation, Great Southern Grammar**

The pilot proved the point

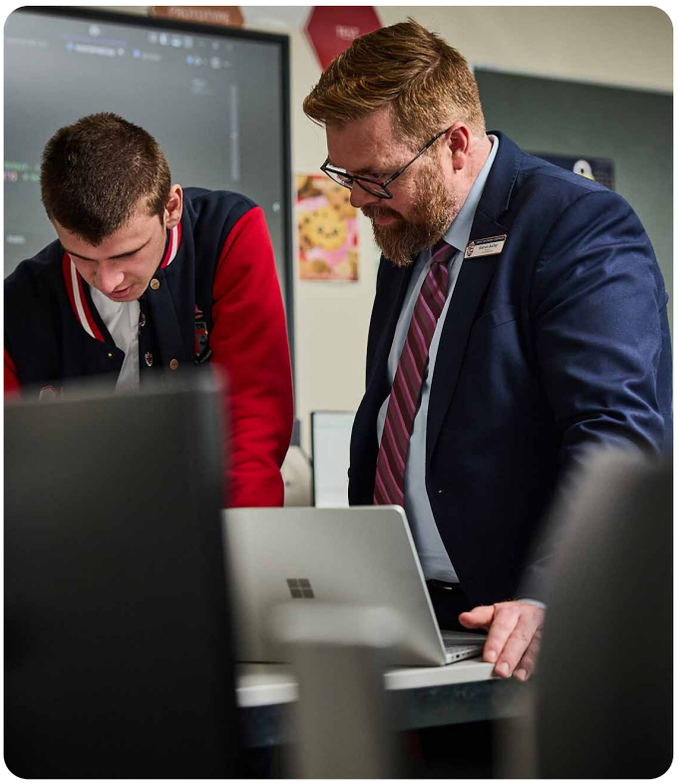
Before taking any big steps, Kieran ran a trial. He handpicked a small group of media students—students who edited videos, ran Adobe Premiere Pro, and needed more from their machines than just word processing and web browsing.

Solutions IT helped facilitate early access to Microsoft Surface Laptop 7 devices powered by the Snapdragon X Series platform—giving students a firsthand look at what next-gen performance could deliver. As a Microsoft Surface Gold School and long-time Microsoft partner, GSG saw the pilot as a strategic next step in its evolving device program.

It didn't take long for the feedback to roll in. "They could keep working on their projects, even editing creative work, wherever they were," Kieran said. "They weren't expecting to be able to do that."

This wasn't just a nice-to-have. **It signaled a turning point.** No more being tied to the lab. No more waiting. With their new laptops, students could create from anywhere: on the bus, in the library, or at home.

And it wasn't just about being able to use Adobe apps—there were no complications around application compatibility whatsoever. The laptops powered by Snapdragon offered speed, reliability, and battery life that improved the pace of the school day.



> "For the first time, students could edit videos anywhere—not just in the media lab.
>
> — KIERAN BAILEY
> **Head of IT and Innovation, Great Southern Grammar**

Rolling out devices, reclaiming class time

After the pilot, GSG deployed 250 Surface laptops powered by Snapdragon to students in grades 7–12, as well as their teachers. Battery life now stretches to 12 to 16 hours—enough for two full school days—a dramatic improvement from the old devices, which often couldn't make it through a single school day.

"Technology and devices designed for teaching and learning matter more than ever—especially as we move into an AI-powered world," said Justin Cantrill from Solutions IT. "At Solutions IT our mission is to enhance teaching and learning through technology excellence, which is why it's so rewarding to partner with schools like Great Southern Grammar who share this vision. These premium Surface devices powered by Snapdragon do more than enhance the classroom experience—they equip students and staff with the tools they need to thrive in a rapidly evolving world."

Within weeks, the impact was obvious—not just in how long devices lasted, but in how reliably they performed. "Students can launch what they need—Teams, OneNote, even Minecraft—and it just works," Kieran said. "It's quick, it's smooth, and they're straight into the learning."

"To open up Microsoft OneNote, it's up and on the screen," he said. "If a teacher wants to launch into a Minecraft activity, it's there."

Classroom time that used to be lost to charging cables and troubleshooting is now freed up for teaching and learning.

> "This is about more than devices—it was a step forward in how we prepare students for the world they're stepping into.
>
> — MATHEW IRVING
> **Principal, Great Southern Grammar**

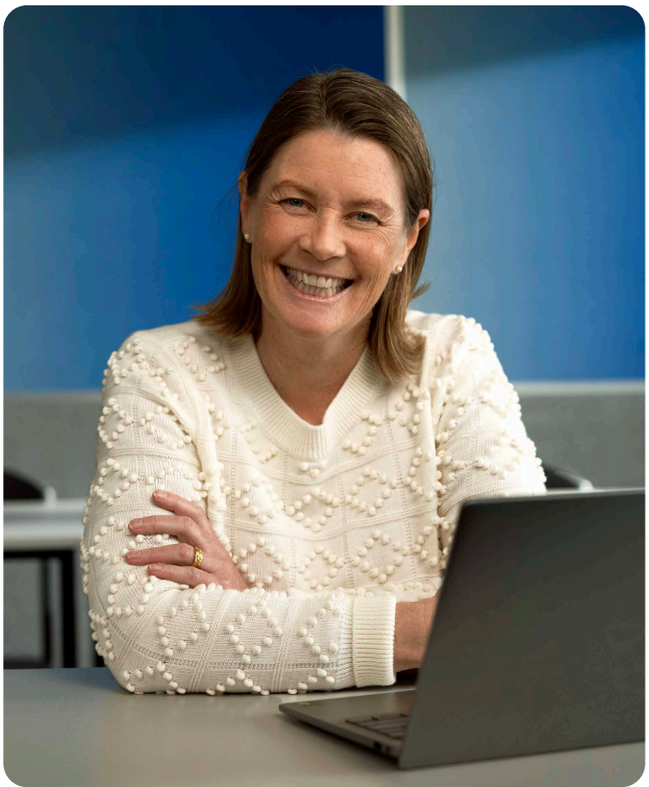
Parents noticed, too

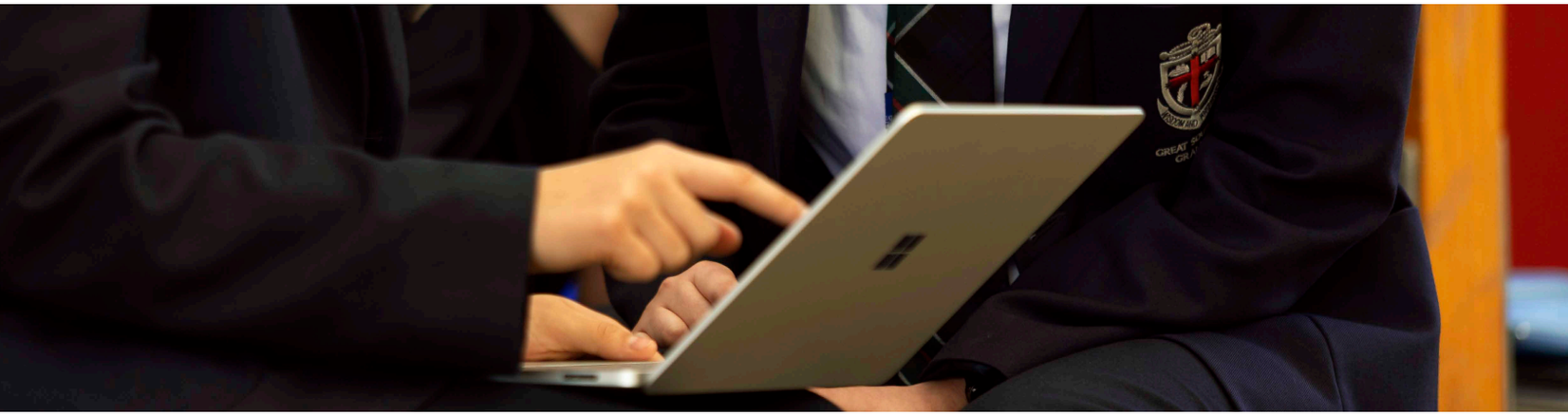
Families at GSG are closely involved in the school's technology program, and many have strong expectations about the tools their children use. Shifting to new devices was a big change—but once parents saw them in action, any **hesitation quickly gave way to enthusiasm.**

Parents appreciated that the devices weren't just sitting in backpacks. These were powerful, practical tools—visible, reliable, and actively supporting their children's education.

One parent even shared that at their child's previous school, the laptop was used only twice—once to send an email and once to print something out.

"That's not what's happening here," Kieran said. "Students are using these devices to create and collaborate in ways their parents can see."



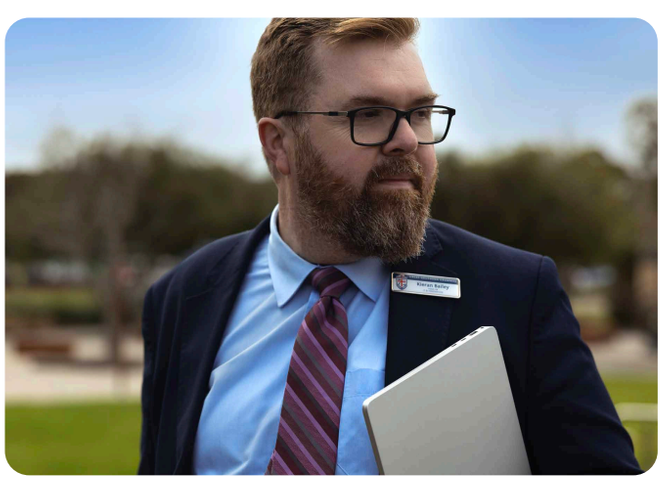


Lighter load for IT, major impact for students

GSG's IT team is small—just four individuals dedicated to empowering students through technology. **So reliability matters.** Since the transition to Surface laptops powered by Snapdragon, device-related issues have dropped by nearly 75%. "We've seen fewer issues presenting to our IT support desk," Kieran said.

Because of the switch from tablets to laptops, hardware durability also noticeably improved. Out of 250 new laptops, only three came back with cracked screens—a sharp contrast to previous years.

Deployment is faster, too. "The setup process is kind of 20 minutes, if that," Kieran said. "Students are out the door with their device ready to go."



With support from Solutions IT, GSG adopted a modern management approach that makes it easy to deploy and configure devices remotely. Combined with Snapdragon built-in security and cloud management tools, the team can keep everything running smoothly without adding to their workload.

> "With fewer issues and faster deployment, our small IT team can focus on what matters.
>
> — KIERAN BAILEY
> **Head of IT and Innovation, Great Southern Grammar**

AI in the classroom, without limits

With the speed and on-device NPU power needed for Copilot+ functionality, the **Surface laptops powered by Snapdragon are helping GSG lean into the future.** Teachers are already experimenting with AI—from building image prompts in English to code reviews in computer science.

"In computer science, we do a lot of Python programming," Kieran said. "We use it to support students in things like code reviews—to help them to review and improve—rather than do the thinking for them."

For a school focused on preparing students for a changing world, **these aren't just nice features. They're major strategic advantages.**

> "We want students to use AI to improve their work—not bypass the learning.
>
> — KIERAN BAILEY
> Head of IT and Innovation, Great Southern Grammar

Redefining what a regional school can do

For Kieran, this project was never just about devices. **It was about raising expectations**—within the school, and far beyond it.

"We want to reshape the narrative around what regional education offers," he said.

By giving students the freedom to do their best work in and beyond the classroom—and backing that with reliable tools, strong support, and a forward-looking strategy—GSG is proving that **innovation isn't limited by location.** With Surface PCs powered by Snapdragon, students now enjoy multi-day battery life, reliability, speed, and the power to create and collaborate anywhere.

> "We're showing what regional schools are capable of—and we're just getting started.
>
> — KIERAN BAILEY
> Head of IT and

Innovation, Great Southern Grammar

Feeling inspired? Discover the full power of the Snapdragon platform.

Explore now

Battery life varies significantly with device, settings, usage, and other factors.

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