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Mobile Devices Increasingly Being Seen as Tools for Learning

National Survey Explores Connection Between Use of Digital Learning Tools and College and Career Readiness

Washington, D.C. –Attitudes and policies on allowing students to use their own mobile device like a tablet or laptop at school have shifted greatly in just four years, according to the [latest report from the Speak Up 2013 survey](#) of students, teachers, administrators and parents released today. In 2010, 63 percent of principals said it was unlikely that they would allow students to use their own mobile devices in school. In 2013, that number dropped by almost half to 32 percent. In fact, 41 percent said they were likely to allow such usage today and 10 percent said they already do allow students to use their own mobile devices to support schoolwork in class.

Many education leaders are exploring how the effective use of digital tools may help address the need to prepare students for college and careers, in addition to other education reforms. The latest Speak Up report examines how technology is being used in America’s classrooms to support college and career skill preparation, and the capacity of schools and districts to support technology use in the classroom.

In addition to more educators making a connection between technology use and college and career readiness, there appears to be a financial calculation to the BYOD shift as well. More than one-third (32 percent) of technology administrators noted that having students use their own devices was an explicit school or district strategy to address ongoing budget challenges. A large majority (68 percent) of district leaders also acknowledged the cost savings of having students bring their own devices to school.

“As appealing as all the benefits of using personal mobile devices are, district leaders are still facing some serious challenges that much be addressed like student safety and district liability in case students misuse their own devices,” said Julie Evans, CEO, Project Tomorrow, the organization that conducts the Speak Up survey. “Even districts who have adopted a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy are struggling with providing devices for students who may not be able to afford them and with training teachers on best practices for teaching in a classroom where conceptually every student has a different device with various levels of functionality and content.”

The latest report, [The New Digital Learning Playbook: Advancing College and Career Ready Skill Development in K-12 Schools](#), is available via:
http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/SU13DigitalLearningPlaybook_EducatorReport.html

Additional findings presented in the report include:

- More than 40 percent of high school principals are now offering online classes for students in math, science, history and English/language arts. Only 17 percent of high schools are not offering online classes, according to school principals.
- Principals are offering online learning for multiple reasons, including providing academic remediation (66 percent), keeping students engaged in staying in school (63 percent) and providing options for students that need credit recovery (61 percent).
- Teachers who teach online classes, in particular, see a strong correlation between the use of technology and students' college and career ready skill development. More than half of these teachers say technology use helps students understand how to apply academic concepts to real world problems (58 percent), take ownership of their learning (57 percent) and develop problem solving and critical thinking skills (57 percent).
- The professional development requests of teachers are fairly common among new and veteran teachers. Even new teachers, who are presumed to be more digitally native and comfortable with technology, have a wish list of professional development support. The rookie teachers have a greater interest than other teachers in learning more about incorporating games and using social media with both students and parents.
- Parental support of mobile device as part of learning does not appear to have an economic, community type or grade level bias. Around 60 percent of all parents said they would like their children to be in a class where using one's own mobile device was allowed. Two-thirds said they would purchase a mobile device for their child to use within class, if that was allowed by the school.
- Two-thirds of community members and a similar number of parents of school-aged children expressed support for paying \$.50 more per month on their phone bill if those funds were used to increase school access to the Internet for student learning.
- One-third of elementary school teachers (32 percent) report using games in their classrooms. The top two reasons given for using games within instruction were increasing student engagement in learning (79 percent) and providing a way for teachers to address different learning styles in the classroom (72 percent).

“As schools and districts move ahead with plans to leverage technology to support college and career readiness, it is important to keep three essential factors in mind: the context of the usage of digital tools, the relevancy of those tools to the student, and how the usage, both in and out of the classroom, is supported by the overall education community,” said Evans.

The 2013 online survey – completed by more than 400,000 K-12 students, parents, teachers, administrators and community members – offers the largest collection of authentic, unfiltered input on education and technology from those ‘on the ground’ in the schools.

In fall 2013, Project Tomorrow surveyed 325,279 K-12 students, 32,151 parents, 39,986 teachers and 4,530 administrators representing 9,005 public and private schools from 2,710 districts. This year's survey also includes responses from 1,346 community members (business leaders, adults with no children in schools, etc.) The Speak Up 2013 surveys were available online for input in October, November and December 2013.

The annual survey about education and technology is facilitated through public, private and charter schools all around the country; every school is eligible to participate. The results

provide important insights about education, technology and student aspirations to individual schools, state departments of education and national leaders.

Since 2003, more than 3.4 million K-12 students, educators and parents from more than 35,000 schools in all 50 states have participated in Speak Up. The online survey is facilitated by Project Tomorrow and supported by many of our nation's most innovative companies, foundations and nonprofit organizations including Blackboard, Inc., BrainPOP, DreamBox, K12, Inc., Rosetta Stone, Schoolwires and SMART Technologies.

Project Tomorrow partners with more than 75 different education associations, organizations and think-tanks for outreach to the schools and development of the survey questions including the American Association of School Administrators, Consortium for School Networking, Digital Learning Day, Digital Promise, edWEB.net, Flipped Learning Network, iNACOL, International Society for Technology in Education, National Association of Secondary School Principals Association, Southern Regional Education Board and State Education Technology Directors' Association.

About Project Tomorrow

Speak Up is a national initiative of Project Tomorrow, the nation's leading education nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that today's students are well prepared to be tomorrow's innovators, leaders and engaged citizens of the world. The Speak Up data represents the largest collection of authentic, unfiltered stakeholder input on education, technology, 21st century skills, schools of the future and science instruction. Education, business and policy leaders report use the data regularly to inform federal, state and local education programs. For additional information, visit www.tomorrow.org.

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