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Schools' Education Technology Budgets Shrink as Need and Demand Grows

Three-quarters of School Technologists Report Smaller Budgets Than Five Years Ago; Interest Grows in BYOD Policies

Washington, D.C. – While educators and parents continue to report a growing need for technology use in education and learning, schools are struggling to meet today's needs and tomorrow's expectations, according to the latest report from the Speak Up 2012 survey released today.

Given the budget realities – with 74 percent reporting that they have smaller technology budgets than they had five years ago – administrators are re-thinking their opposition to the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) approach and districts who are piloting such a program increasing by 47 percent in just one year.

When asked in 2010 if they would allow their students to use their own devices at school for academic purposes, only 22 percent of principals said that was likely, 63 percent said it was unlikely for their school. Today, more than a third of principals (36 percent) say that a new BYOD policy for students is likely. The opposing view has now dropped to 41 percent. At the district level, an even more dramatic shift has taken place in the views of administrators on these BYOD policies. In 2011, 52 percent of district administrators said that they did not allow students to use their own mobile devices at school. This year, only 35 percent are still holding on to that district wide policy statement, with 32 percent saying that the use of student owned devices should now be at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

“Many factors are driving a new level of excitement and enthusiasm around digital conversions in schools and districts right now, and the experiences gained from a rich tapestry of recent digital learning projects are providing a host of best practices to follow,” said Julie Evans, CEO, Project Tomorrow, the organization that conducts the Speak Up survey. “However, the digital conversion of our K-12 classrooms from chalkboards to tablets requires additional capacity that will ultimately determine the success of the initiative: a strong school, district and community culture that highly values innovation, is comfortable with outcomes-based planning, and never wavers from the commitment to supporting the student's future.”

As students and teachers put greater demand on systems, issues of bandwidth are becoming a top concern. In 2010, only 10 percent of technology leaders reported Internet capacity and bandwidth as a top challenge. That increased to 34 percent in 2012. Only 15 percent of district administrators and technology leaders said they have enough connectivity to meet current needs.

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The latest report, *From Chalkboards to Tablets: The Digital Conversion of the K-12 Classroom*, is available via:

http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/SU12_DigitalConversion_EducatorsReport.html

Also, view the one-page *10 Things Everyone Should Know About K-12 Administrators' Views on Digital Learning* via:

http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/pdfs/SU2012_AdministratorTop10.pdf

With the greater interest in BYOD policies and a greater reliance on technology for learning outside of the classroom, administrators are expressing a growing concern about digital equity with 41 percent now identifying that issue as critical (vs. 12 percent in 2007). But, parents in all areas of the country are increasingly willing to purchase mobile devices for their students – and all groups have more personal access each year. Half of middle students in urban, suburban and rural communities already have personal access to tablets and the majority have personal access to smartphones as well (with a greater number of student in urban communities having access, 68 percent, than in rural communities, 56 percent.)

As more technology makes its way into schools, teachers and administrators continue to recognize the need for additional professional development and high-quality tools and resources. Teacher wants to learn how to use a wide range of emerging technologies to personalize learning and differentiate instruction for their students (45 percent). Teachers want to know more about how to identify high-quality digital content to use within instruction (31 percent), how to use tablets with their students (32 percent) and what mobile apps they should be using in the classroom (31 percent) and how to flip their classrooms to more project-based learning environments (15 percent).

Other noteworthy findings from the 2012 parent and educator report include:

- 37 percent of parents said they would like their child's school to communicate with them via text message (up from just 5 percent two years ago). Just 23 percent of teachers report texting with parents as a common practice today.
- Personal access to mobile devices among parents and educators has changed dramatically within four years. About 70 percent of parents, teachers and principals now report owning a smart phone (vs. about 25 percent in 2008). With personal use comes great acceptance of student use among all these groups.
- Lack of computers for students (55 percent) has overtaken challenges with firewalls and filters (36 percent) as a major obstacle to teachers using technology at school.
- Math and science teachers are leading the way in using digital content in their classrooms.

The 2012 online survey – completed by more than 466,000 K-12 students, parents, teachers, librarians and administrators – offers the largest collection of authentic, unfiltered input on education and technology from those 'on the ground' in the schools.

In fall 2012, Project Tomorrow surveyed 364,240 K-12 students, 39,713 parents, 53,947 teachers, 2,399 librarians, 1,564 district administrators, 3,947 school administrators and 500 technology leaders representing 8,020 public and private schools from 2,431 districts.

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Schools from urban (30 percent), suburban (27 percent) and rural (43 percent) communities are represented. More than one-half of the schools that participated in Speak Up 2012 are Title I eligible schools. The Speak Up 2012 surveys were available online for input between October 3rd and December 21st 2012.

Now in its 10th year, 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 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., DreamBox, Hewlett-Packard, K12, Inc., Qualcomm's Wireless Reach Initiative, 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 Promise, Digital Learning Day, iNACOL, International Society for Technology in Education, National School Boards Association, , National 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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