MediaRoom

Teachers' Readiness to Change Instructional Practices is Top Challenge to Implementing Educational Technology

Report Explores What Teachers Say They Need to Use Technology Effectively

San Antonio, Texas – Motivating teachers to change their traditional instructional practices remains the top challenge cited by school technology leaders to implementing digital learning or expanding technology use in schools, according to a new report released today by Blackboard and Project Tomorrow.

More than 38,000 teachers, 29,000 parents of school-aged children, and 4,500 administrators from K-12 districts across the nation shared their views on these issues as part of the Speak Up 2016 Research Project for Digital Learning. The new report from Blackboard on the findings, *Trends in Digital Learning: Building teachers' capacity and competency to create new learning experiences for students*, was released today at ISTE 2017.

"More and more education leaders realize that the sustainable success of any transformative initiative in their school is dependent upon the leadership of the teacher in the classroom," said Julie Evans, CEO of Project Tomorrow. "This report shows that digital tools, content and resources can help elevate the competencies of teachers and also provide evidence of the value technology can bring to students' learning experiences and outcomes."

New findings from Speak Up 2016 provide a unique lens for examining the current state of teacher capacity for transforming education using digital tools, and identifying promising new practices that can serve as guideposts for this journey. Speak Up data points show not only where teachers are on this journey today, but also what they say they need to be more effective, especially as it relates to preparing today's students for tomorrow.

Key findings from this year's digital learning trends report:

- Two-thirds of parents in all types of communities (urban, rural and suburban) say that the effective use of technology within the classroom provides a significant way for their child to develop college and career ready skills.
- Technology leaders (67%) say that the greatest challenge they face in implementing digital learning or expanding technology use is motivating teachers to change their traditional instructional practices to use technology more meaningfully with students.
- Teachers in blended learning classrooms are setting a new bar for transforming learning using technology. For example, 68% report that with the use of technology in their classroom they are better able to differentiate instruction for their students.
- Teachers who have experienced online and blended classes for their own professional learning demonstrate advanced uses of technology with their own students, have stronger valuations on the role

of technology within learning, and higher aspirations for leveraging technology to support transformed learning environments.

- Teachers identified five essential elements that they need to effectively and efficiently integrate digital content, tools and resources into daily instruction in their classroom: planning time, access to technology in the classroom, technology support, professional development and consistent, high quality Internet connectivity.

"We see the growing demand among parents for teachers to better integrate digital tools, content and resources in the classroom," said Todd Schmid, Vice President of K-12 at Blackboard. "For years, it was policymakers calling for change, but increasingly we are seeing parents and students taking the lead in demanding both different teaching practices and learning outcomes to prepare their children for future careers."

"The findings in this report and the questions posed at the end can be used as discussion starters to stimulate new ideas on how to best leverage a school district's most powerful asset – their teachers – to ensure today's students are well-prepared with the right skills and experiences to succeed," added Evans.

Since 2003, Project Tomorrow, a global education nonprofit organization, has facilitated the annual Speak Up Research Project for Digital Learning. A key aspect of the research project is to track the growth in student, educator and parent interest in digital learning, as well as how the nation's schools and districts are addressing that interest with innovative learning experiences in and out of the classroom. Project Tomorrow and Blackboard have collaborated since 2007 to create a series of annual reports that focus on the year-to-year trends in the use of digital learning tools to change the classroom-learning paradigm through an in-depth analysis of the latest Speak Up data findings.

To download the full report, click here.

About Project Tomorrow & Speak Up

Project Tomorrow is the nation's leading education nonprofit group dedicated to ensuring that today's K-12 students are well prepared to become tomorrow's leaders, innovators and engaged citizens of the world. The Speak Up Project for Digital Learning is a national initiative of Project Tomorrow. Since 2003, the annual Speak Up project has collected and reported on the views of more than 5 million K-12 students, teachers, administrators and parents representing more than 30,000 schools in all 50 states. This represents the largest collection of authentic, unfiltered stakeholder input on education, technology, schools of the future, science and math instruction, professional development and career exploration.

About Blackboard Inc.

Our mission is to partner with the global education community to enable learner and institutional success, leveraging innovative technologies and services. With an unmatched understanding of the world of the learner, the most comprehensive student-success solutions, and the greatest capacity for innovation, Blackboard is education's partner in change.

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