



Guide to Getting Parents on Board with Mobile Learning

The importance of family engagement in education cannot be overstated. “Research and fieldwork show that parent-school-partnerships improve schools, strengthen families, build community support, and increase student achievement and success,” [states](#) a National Education Association (NEA) brief. For students, parent support has been named the most critical factor in determining student success. And for schools, the support of parents and parent groups in the community is beneficial in a multitude of ways.

What then of the converse, when parent support is hard to come by? Not all parents are supportive of school initiatives and this can wreak havoc on new programs or endeavors that require fundraising or are dependent on per-student government monies. When the initiative is as major as allocating significant budget to outfit students with 1:1 mobile devices, parent support is paramount. How do you secure parent buy-in for major tech purchases?

Explain How Technology Functions in Education

Often lack of support stems from lack of understanding. In the example of a 1:1 device initiative, unsupportive parents might view mobile devices and individual computers as distractions or technology that better lends itself to entertainment than education. Indeed, parents who remember learning only by lecture, textbooks, and drilling may consider technology-supported lessons, such as those utilizing augmented reality, frivolous.

However, the educational community would disagree. The U.S. Department of Education has considerable resources that support the use of technology in education, including this 2017 document, [Reimagining the Role of Technology in Education](#).

Technology has been utilized for years to help make education accessible to those with special learning needs or physical handicaps. Now it's being used to better reach and engage children with different learning styles. It powerfully enhances flat images in books by enabling classroom videos and augmented reality. It connects students to subject matter experts around the globe. Technology enables inner and inter-classroom collaboration. It breaks down economic barriers by giving students nearly lifelike access to historical sites, museums, and other places to which they could not physically travel. When devices are provided to all students, technology becomes a force used to combat the educational inequalities associated with economic class and race.

Make sure your parent community understands the “why” behind your district’s endeavors to give every student access to technology.

Get Hands On

Just as you would not expect students to master devices by simply reading or talking about them, likewise your parent community should have the opportunity to experience educational technology. As any great English teacher will say, show, don't tell.

Hold open houses in which your teachers show off technology-enhanced lessons. Put devices in parents' hands and give them the opportunity to immerse themselves in the educational opportunities of technology. Give specific examples of how technology is utilized in their children's classrooms. Be sure to elucidate the deep and long-lasting learning that takes place when students interact with material in several different formats.

Make it About the Parents

Educational technology isn't just for the benefit of students and teachers. There are numerous boons to parents as well, including the improvement of parent-teacher communication. Streamlined and effective parent-teacher communication has three main outcomes: Parents are up to date on what is happening at school, teachers save time that they can use to improve classroom results, and students take more accountability for their learning.

According to an [article](#) on Common Sense Education, technology enables numerous communication tools, including online gradebooks, messenger apps, portfolio tools, and classroom blogs and websites. All of these technology driven forms of communication make it easier for teachers to disseminate information, for students to stay informed of their progress and grades, and for parents to be in the loop and support their child and his/her teacher. Through technology, parents can step out of the dark and become empowered partners on their children's educational journeys. Make sure parents are aware of the way educational technology personally and positively impacts them.

Help Parents

Parents who aren't technology savvy may feel overwhelmed or intimidated by their child having access to and a deeper knowledge of technology. Or parents may not understand how to use the technology your school employs for parent communication. A school's job is to educate, and sometimes that goes beyond the students. Create tutorials for parents for any apps or websites your school or district utilizes. Don't assume parents' existing knowledge, and make the tutorials accessible to people even with the most limited technological know-how. Send home information on the programs students utilize with resources for parents to learn more. Consider hosting parent IT sessions where parents can come learn about your district's educational technology and policy in a judgment-free zone.

Why is Parent Buy-in Important?

Public and charter schools are reliant on per-student funding, so retaining students and increasing enrollment directly equates to more funding. At the minimum, school districts strive to maintain their student numbers, if not attract more students. A solid technology foundation may attract certain families, however for parents who are ed tech shy, follow some or all of the steps above to gain their approval of technology purchases to retain their children as students.

Other funding comes from supportive parents as well. Parent donations - both of money and supplies - PTO funds, parent-lead fundraisers, and [parent-earned grants](#) are all sources of funding that may be used for technology buys or to cover other expenses so school budget can be redirected to fund technology. Parents who are passionate about getting technology into the hands of all students will find ways to help the school or district find the funding needed. Their passion may just need to be kindled, which you can do by using the suggestions in this article.

If you need help, Troxell reps are standing by to equip you to make the most cost-effective decisions regarding your school's technology budget. Call us today at 1-855-TROXELL.