



## Going 1:1 with BYOD

Anywhere/anytime learning, naturally, requires every student to have access to her own device 24/7. For many districts, a blend of BYOD and district-provided devices is the most efficient way of realizing this vision. BYOD costs less and students utilize technology that they are already familiar with, while school devices ensure that every student can share in digital learning.

BYOD's principal draws have been its accessibility and flexibility. It's technology-infused learning that can happen quickly: giving students more ownership of their learning, not only in the classroom, but everywhere. A 1:1 program comprised of strictly school-owned devices that must stay in the classroom don't allow for true anywhere/anytime learning.

Many districts are equipping laptop carts with Chromebooks or tablets. But this can pose its own issues for tablet rollouts as some management tools have been designed for individual, rather than shared, use of each device: forcing schools to adopt workarounds to give students access to the apps they need.

Some schools connect student with financial needs with assistance from local educational foundations to buy basic devices at reasonable terms, as well as supplement their BYOD program with loaners. BYOD also means that schools do not have to fund, manage or provide maintenance for student-owned devices, as taking care of devices for the entire student body is often not sustainable.

Not all parents, or voters, think technology should be the first priority in local schools, however. Due to limited state funding, some districts are looking to technology tax levies for support. Yet many parents are skeptical of focusing on new technologies, and would rather spend taxpayer money on more conventional ways to improve schools, such as professional development.

One of the main concerns educators and parents have regarding a BYOD program is responsible use in the classroom. Many parents don't always understand how they will be used in an educational context. Some educators merge traditional pen-and-paper homework along with digital projects to help ease families into this new way of schooling.

More often than not, parents and educators find that BYOD increases engagement, and allows new avenues for creative expression. But BYOD also personalizes learning: allowing students to move at their own unique pace. Educators can give real-time feedback to student work and tailor instruction to provide support to students who struggle and help the advanced students continue to challenge themselves.

Strict web filters in some school districts can hinder students from pursuing their own learning in many cases. Preventing access to potentially harmful sites is important, despite blocking students from useful resources, as younger children can be exposed to more than is appropriate for their age. Some teachers realize that students can easily maneuver around filters and, therefore, don't necessarily trust them to use their devices responsibly.

Building the capacity to use devices effectively can also be a significant challenge for schools, one that goes beyond mere technical support. Some districts are beefing up instructional support by hiring personalized learning directors, while others are asking teachers to analyze their technology usage according to the SAMR model (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition) to determine how much they were redefining instruction.