



What We Should Keep from Pandemic Learning: One-to-One Technology and Internet Access

By Educator Barnes – November 18, 2020

It should not have taken a pandemic for students across the United States to have access to one-to-one technology and the internet. The need has always been there and so have the excuses of why this wasn't a possibility. Now, that we know this is possible, we should fight to maintain it.

First and foremost, funding has to be set aside for the upkeep of technology and to replenish technology over the years. Even if students can keep the same device as they matriculate through grades, at some point, the device may start having issues and need to be fixed or replaced.

Devices are used for more than just Microsoft Word; students need the internet. My Indy K12 colleague Andrew Pillow pointed out earlier in the pandemic, “Many people believe the internet should be a public utility anyway, even outside of the education benefits.” Students were denied educational benefits because they did not have the internet at home prior to the pandemic.

Most schools have students complete online programs which the district pays thousands of dollars for students to use. These programs typically have milestones students should reach or a recommended amount of time that students should use the program each day. The district pays for the program because the company assures the district that if students use the program with fidelity they will improve academically. Here’s the problem. There is not enough time in the school day. Many times students are told to work through the program at home. Unfortunately, without the internet, this is not an option for all students. Some of these programs are not adaptable or work well on cellular devices so that doesn’t work either.

One of these programs is LexiaCore5. Students have minutes based on the level they test into. If they are below grade level, they have more minutes. If the school allocates 20 minutes for Lexia, but a child needs 40 minutes, that child is out of luck unless the child can work on Lexia at home. Too many times, the students who need to be able to use a resource that requires the internet at home to get caught up academically are the same ones who don’t have the internet.

Also, having technology allows a reserved student to respond in written form and engage in a different way. The tools students are using to learn at home can be used once the pandemic is over.

I hope for our students that school districts and lawmakers are working on ways to make one-to-one technology and internet access sustainable moving forward.

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