

2. Professional Development and Support for Teachers and Parents

Thinking ‘technology first’ and proceeding too quickly on a large scale, whilst overlooking the human resource factors are dangerous false starts which are sure to derail any BYOD initiative, or at least make it extremely painful and fraught with difficulty in the short and medium terms. Failing to equip teachers and parents with the skills and mindsets to effectively support learning through this model is a pitfall which must be avoided.

Organisations considering such an initiative should begin the work with teachers and parents immediately, consulting with both groups to ascertain the current levels of support and competency across the community.

Steps which should be considered include:

1. The ISTE Standards for Administrators

<http://www.iste.org/standards/nets-for-administrators> are recommended as a framework through which policy makers and school leaders are persuaded, supported and held accountable for the essential shift in working practices and expectations.

2. The ISTE Standards <http://www.iste.org/STANDARDS> , the EC Digital Competences <http://ftp.jrc.es/EURdoc/JRC73694.pdf> , the UNESCO Teacher Standards

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002134/213475e.pdf> , or similar frameworks should be introduced to teachers and be integrated at a suitable pace into the organisation’s performance management policies. A professional development policy must be developed, which will form the basis of preparing teachers for the transition. Provision for external professional development and certification, such as <http://leadingedgecertification.org/page/online-teacher> , should be combined with a GEMS programme, internal school PD and networks for sharing best practice, to ensure a comprehensive approach.

3. Full time Digital Learning Coaches should be deployed in all schools using BYOD policies to ensure that teachers and parents are equipped to deliver the sea change in practice that is needed. These coaches need to meet the ISTE standards set out in <http://www.iste.org/docs/pdfs/nets-c.pdf?sfvrsn=2> if they are to successfully carry out their roles. Without these practitioners on the ground, it is very unlikely that any BYOD

initiative will be successful, as a lack of just-in-time support for teachers will lead to disillusionment and a consequent reversion to safe, traditional practices. See http://www.itec-ia.org/documents/filelibrary/2009_conference/handouts/The_Digital_Curriculum_31F3935ECBABA.pdf , especially page 8, for a working example of why digital learning coaches are an essential part of embedding digital learning in schools and, in particular, a successful 1:1 initiative.

For a practising coach's perspective on the necessity of the role, see <http://k12blueprint.com/content/not-just-middle-schoolers-0> .

Also see

http://www.uwcsea.edu.sg/uploaded/files/Vacancies/2012_10/East_Campus/East_2013_Digital_Literacy_Coaches.pdf for an example role description. An equivalent role description has been produced for GEMS.

4. A comprehensive programme of parent education should be instigated, forming part of wider partnership, engagement and consultation initiative.

Resources such as www.commonsemmedia.org can play an important part in reassuring parents that the shift can be managed safely and responsibly. The GEMS Parental Engagement Manager can play an important role, liaising with parent engagement champions in each school to facilitate the transition and widen the support base in schools.

5. A pilot, evaluate, reiterate, upscale model is recommended, utilizing the organisation's own hardware in the first instance. The journey should be shared openly with parents and exemplars of the positive impact on learning widely circulated in order to win hearts and minds, before seeking parental support to fund provision of a 1:1 scheme.