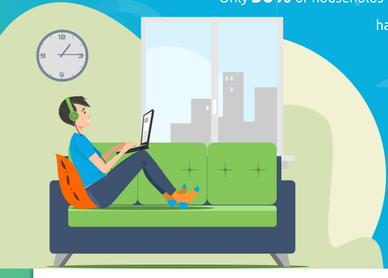
A SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

How Districts are Getting Smart About Bridging the Digital Divide with Technology

The Problem Educators Face By the Numbers



Only **56%** of households with incomes under **$30,0000** have access to broadband internet[1]

Nearly **20%** of teens were unable to finish homework due to lack of adequate broadband Internet access at home, even before COVID-19[2]

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, this "digital divide" has become distressingly problematic:

30%

of students in Washington, D.C. lack adequate access to the internet and proper devices at home[3]

29 Miami-Dade

County public schools recorded average distance-learning attendance rates **below 80%** for the first two weeks of April[4]

The School District of Philadelphia **delayed online classes altogether** because of rampant inadequate internet access at student households[5]

Some districts, however, are taking forward-thinking innovative approaches to building an effective tech-led distance learning program amidst these challenges.

Formula For a Successful Tech-led Distance Learning Program

Seek Funding

- Grants and voter-approved bonds
- Nonprofit/private sector partners
- CARES Act $13.5B set aside for education

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Procure Devices in High Volume

- Chromebooks/Laptops
- Cases
- Tablets
- Accessories

Establish Versatile Connectivity

- Partner with major carriers
- Establish mobile hotspots in the community
- Procure mobile hotspot devices

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Get Devices in the Hands of Students

- Configure each device
- Enroll in Bark for Schools, for student safety
- Ship devices to schools

Stand Up Support Services

- Provide tech support at scale for parents, students and educators
- Partner with a help desk support provider to offset call volumes
- Facilitate broken device replacement
- Execute a warranty repair program

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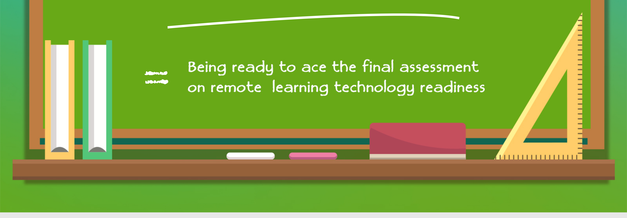
Create a Plan for Sustainability

- Process for students to return devices at end of year
- Clean and disinfect devices
- Wipe data off each device and refresh for new school year
- Retire end-of-life devices safely, securely and environmentally friendly



Sources:
1 Internet/Broadband Fact Sheet, Pew Research Center 2 Nearly one-in-five teens can't always finish their homework because of the digital divide, Pew Research Center 3 DC Publish Schools to broadcast lessons on TV, WUSA9 4 Miami-Dade Schools See Lower Virtual Attendance in Low-Income, Immigrant Communities, WLRN 5 Philly schools forbid graded 'remote instructions' during shutdown for equity concerns, WHYY

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