REPORT

2020 Illinois School District Technology Survey

Published by the Learning Technology Center of Illinois

A SNAPSHOT OF K-12 EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY IN SCHOOLS

LEARNING TECHNOLOGY CENTER OF ILLINOIS

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The survey provides a snapshot of the current state of Illinois school districts related to key aspects of technology in K-12 education, including device access, home and school connectivity, infrastructure, professional learning, cybersecurity, digital learning, and support.

OVERVIEW

The Illinois School District Technology Survey was developed by the Learning Technology Center in collaboration with the Illinois State Board of Education. It was administered from July to October of 2020.

METHODOLOGY

The survey was completed by 451 public school districts, 53% of the total number of districts in the state. Most responses were submitted as a part of two Illinois State Board of Education grant applications that specifically required survey completion as a prerequisite: the Digital Equity Grant and Digital Professional Learning Grant.

Other districts that completed the survey did so voluntarily.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Surveys were completed by Superintendents or other district leaders (49.3%), technology leaders (33.1%), building administrators (13.3%), and others in positions that provided an understanding of the technology and digital learning landscape within the entire district. The districts represented by the data reside in 89 of the 101 Illinois counties and have a total of 1,250,157 students enrolled during the FY21 school year. Submissions came from districts with an Evidence-Based Funding Level of Tier 1 (64.2%), Tier 2 (30.6%), Tier 3 (2.1%), and Tier 4 (3.1%).

THE LEARNING TECHNOLOGY CENTER

The Learning Technology Center (LTC) of Illinois is an Illinois State Board of Education program that supports all public PK-12 districts, schools, and educators through technology initiatives, services, and professional learning opportunities. Learn more about the LTC at ltcillinois.org.

A DEVICE FOR EVERY STUDENT

1:1 PROGRAMS

79.8%

360 out of 451 of respondents report that they have a 1:1 program in their district.

TITLE 1 DISTRICTS

91.7%

Of the Title 1 Districts that submitted the survey, 91.7% have 1:1 programs at one or more grade levels.

OUTSTANDING NEED

70.9%

Districts, on average, indicate that they have enough devices to provide 70.9% of students an instructional device to take home; these districts were short a total of 361,846 devices at the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

1:1 PROGRAMS

One-to-one (1:1) programs, or initiatives that make available a device for each student, are common in school districts across Illinois. Approximately 80% of districts report that they have a 1:1 program, a dramatic increase from 62% of districts in last year's survey. 72% of districts indicate that they have 1:1 programs in grades K-2, 85% have 1:1 programs in 3-5, 94% have 1:1 programs in grades 6-8, and 95% have programs in grades 9-12.

It is important to note that while the survey indicates a high rate of 1:1 programs, it does not differentiate between districts with a 1:1 program for each grade level versus those that only have a 1:1 program at specific grade levels but not others.

Of the 360 responding districts that reported they have a 1:1 program, 243 (67.5%) are in Evidence-Based Funding Level (EBF) Tier 1, and 330 (91.7%) are Title 1 districts.

DEVICES

71% of 1:1 districts utilize only district-provided instructional devices, while 29% rely on a combination of district-provided and student-provided devices. The majority of districts (69.6%) allow students to keep instructional devices over the summer. Consistent with last year's survey, Chromebooks remain the dominant device choice in all grade levels.

Devices by Grade Level

GRADES	CHROMEBOOKS	iPADS	WINDOWS	MAC
K-2	52.9%	42.9%	4.0%	.3%
3-5	85.6%	8.1%	6.0%	.3%
6-8	80.4%	6.2%	12.9%	.6%
9-12	69.7%	10.3%	19.2%	.8%

HOME INTERNET ACCESS

Digital equity begins with internet connectivity at school and at home. In an year of remote and hybrid learning, the lack of home connectivy creates a barrier to the continuity of learning and the access of rich digital resources.

LIMITED ACCESS

According to districts, approximately 13% of students lack home internet access. This rate reflects the national average of 14%, as reported by the U.S. Department of Education.

To gather this data, the majority of school districts (79%) indicate that they have surveyed parents and caregivers about home internet connectivity access for remote learning and report a 73% response rate.

KNOWN BARRIERS

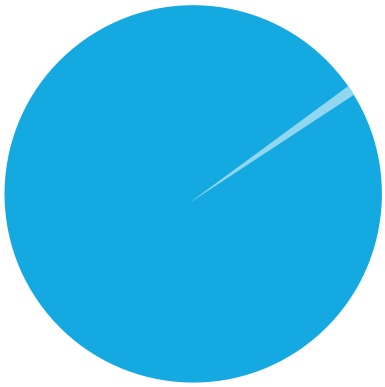
The majority of districts (99.3%) indicate that some barrier still exists for student home connectivity.

To address home connectivity problems, 54% of districts provide cellular wifi hotspots and cellular-connected devices to students for remote learning. These devices are short-term solutions that do not work in all areas of the state.

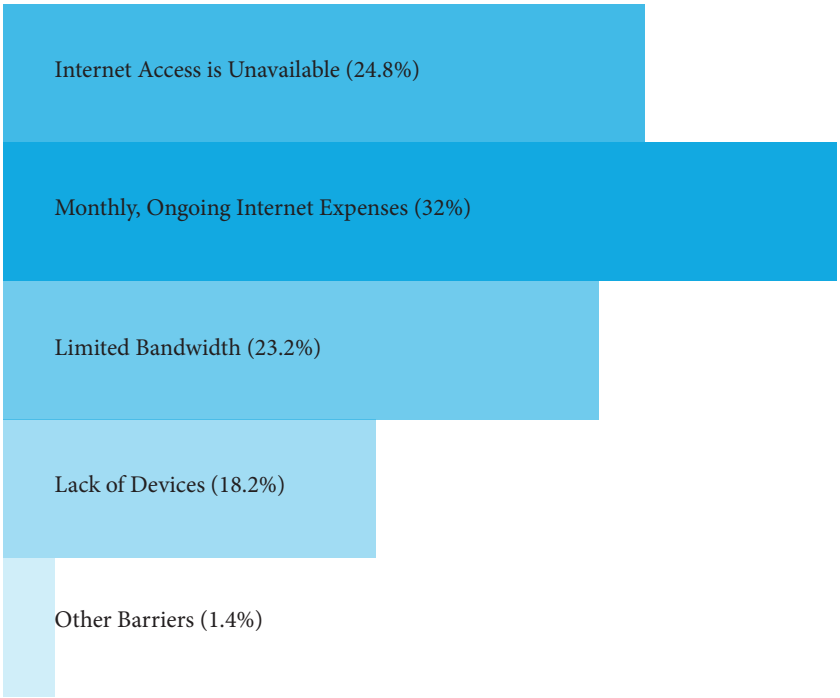
DISTRICTS WITH BARRIERS

99.3%

The majority of districts report some level of barriers for home connectivity.



KNOWN BARRIERS



SCHOOL-BASED CONNECTIVITY

BARRIERS REMAIN

The majority of districts report no barrier to school-based connectivity. Barriers for school-based connectivity exist as well, though in many cases, these are more easily addressed since they are typically within the control of the district.

KNOWN BARRIERS

No barriers, we have sufficient connectivity	54.5%
District hardware within the building	29.8%
Monthly, ongoing expenses	28.2%
One-time, Up-front, non-recurring expense	10.4%
WAN transport between building	7.5%
Service provider is at capacity and cannot provide bandwidth	4.4%
Transport connection at capacity and cannot afford increase	4.0%
Other	2.9%

DISTRICT GOALS

Many districts (38.1%) have a goal of increasing bandwidth to 1 Gbps for every 1,000 students within the next three years, while 25.8% of districts indicate no change is anticipated.

DISTRICT 3-YEAR GOALS

1 Gbps for 1000 students	38.1%
No change. Bandwidth will remain the same	25.2%
Don't know	13.8%
10 Gbps for 1000 students	13.1%
Other	3.8%
Greater than 10 Gbps for 1000 students	3.3%
100 Mbps for 1000 students	2.7%

ONGOING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The success of educational technology initiatives within a school system often hinges on the availability and effectiveness of quality professional learning. In light of the global coronavirus pandemic, districts often put a greater emphasis on technology-related professional learning.

AVAILABLE AND TARGETED

Almost all districts (99.6%) provide professional learning related to digital-age learning, integration with technology across subject areas, and/or digital citizenship. To identify professional learning needs, the majority of districts (92.4%) survey school personnel.

FOCUS AREAS

While the use of tools, apps, and resources continue to be the top priority, districts indicate that digital curriculum and student engagement are also high priorities. This may indicate a shift of focus from tool and app tutorials to a more pedagogical approach to remote learning.

PARENT/CAREGIVER TRAINING

Along with training for district personnel, many districts also provide professional learning opportunities for parents, caregivers, and families mainly in the areas of troubleshooting technology and connectivity, remote learning strategies and best practices, and using apps to support remote learning. Only 14.9% of districts report that they provide no training.

TOP TECH PD PRIORITIES FOR 20-21

Digital Tools, Apps, and Resources	69.2%
Digital Curriculum	65.2%
Student Engagement and Classroom Management	53.0%
Digital Instructional Design	47.9%
Technical Support for Remote Learners and Teachers	47.0%
Digital Assessment	41.0%
Technology Use with Special Education/Special Populations	36.1%
Instructional Coaching	32.2%
SEL in Remote Learning	32.2%
Device-specific Topics (i.e., Chromebook 101, iPad 101, etc.)	31.0%
Data Privacy and Cybersecurity	20.0%

TECH TRAINING PROVIDED TO PARENTS

Use of apps to support remote learning	52.8%
Remote learning strategies/best practices	51.0%
Tech support/troubleshooting of devices and apps used in remote learning	50.1%
Tech support/troubleshooting of connectivity/getting online	49.2%
Use of email	39.7%
Student engagement	37.0%
Finding quality resources on the web	31.0%
Digital Citizenship/Safety and Cybersecurity	29.9%

WORKSHOPS

79.8%

The most popular format for professional learning provided by districts was in-person workshops (79.8%), followed closely by

VIRTUAL EVENTS

71.6%

digital resources (73.6%), virtual workshops (71.6%), and emails (71.0%). Newer forms of professional learning also made

MICROCREDENTIALS

8%

an appearance on the survey, such as micro-credentials (8%), digital newsletters (20.6%), and online classes (32.8%).

DIGITAL LEARNING

Digital-age learning often utilizes learning management systems, digital curriculum, and a core collaboration suite.

GOOGLE SCHOOLS

91.3%

MICROSOFT SCHOOLS

8.4%

DISTRICTS THAT USE BOTH

27%

COLLABORATION SUITES

Three companies dominate the collaboration and productivity landscape: Google, Windows, and Apple. While Google is used exclusively by a large group of respondents (68.0%), many districts utilize a combination of G Suite and another platform (27.0%), especially G Suite and Office 365 (23.0%). Even when districts utilize multiple platforms, 91.3% of respondents report G Suite as their primary collaboration and productivity platform, while 8.4% indicate Office 365 as their primary platform.

DIGITAL CURRICULUM

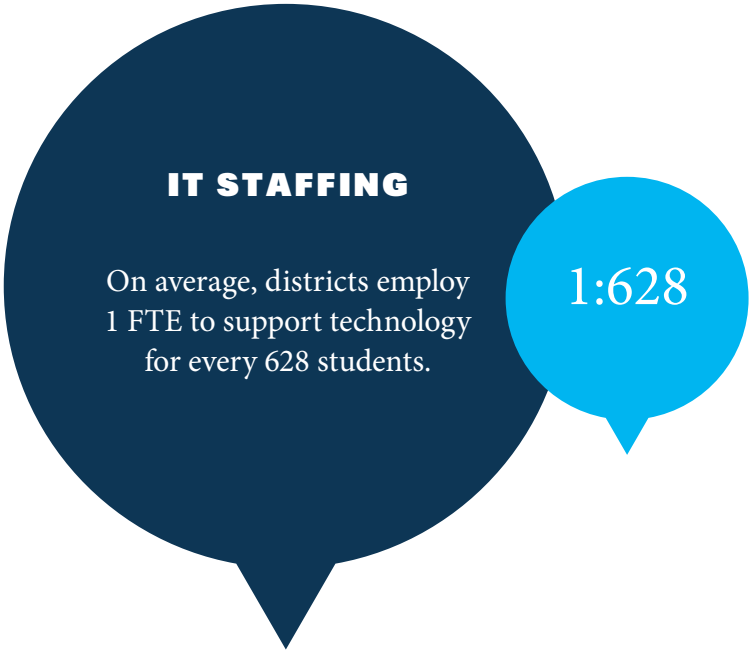
Districts still rely on physical textbooks for a majority of their curriculum (51% of respondents indicate more than 50% of their curriculum). There is a shift towards digital content, specifically purchased content, as 43% of respondents indicate that 26%-75% of their curricular resources are purchased digital content.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Learning Management Systems allow for centralized management of communication, resources, assignments and can be an integral part of a district's digital learning plan. The majority of Illinois districts (87.8%) utilize Google Classroom as a Learning Management System, while only 1.8% of districts indicated that they do not use a Learning Management System. Approximately 41% of districts indicated that multiple Learning Management Systems are used in the district.

INVESTMENTS IN SUPPORTING TECHNOLOGY

Technology is one of the foundational components of the modern learning environment, consisting of approximately 4.9% of a district's coverall budget. Districts optimize the use of technology by employing staff to lead initiatives, support systems, and coach educators on effective use.



TECHNICAL STAFFING

Many districts (79.6%) have at least one Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff to support technology (i.e., infrastructure, networks, devices, etc.) in the district, while 20.4% have part-time FTE or no technical support within the district. On average, districts employ 1 FTE to support technology for every 628 students. To supplement technology support, 22% of districts assign students to provide technology leadership, services, support and training.

INSTRUCTIONAL STAFFING

Similarly, 76.7% of districts have at least one Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff to support technology integration (i.e., digital learning, classroom integration, etc.). Approximately 18% of districts do not provide any staff support for technology integration. On average, districts employ 1 FTE to support technology integration for every 880 students. The majority of districts (73.6%) do not plan on increasing technology integration support during the 2020-2021 school year.

CYBERSECURITY RESPONSIBILITIES

To address increasing cybersecurity and data privacy concerns, 16.4% of districts employ a dedicated network security staff whose sole job is to ensure system security . Most districts include cybersecurity responsibilities as a smaller part of other roles (53.1%), while 2.9% of districts do not assign cybersecurity as a job function to anyone.

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