

The pitfalls and promise of ed tech

What Parents Need to Know
26 October 2017

#edtechRYH



What does “ed tech” mean to you?

Why should parents care about ed tech?

Lots of time and money now being spent on digital technology in our public ed system but with little public clarity on how it's being used

- How is tech being used in your own child's education?
- What do *high-quality* uses of tech look like? What evidence supports whether they are high-quality uses?
- How is your child's personal data being protected?

What policies support high-quality uses of digital technology in schools?

What policies protect children's privacy?

What concerns do you have about ed tech?

“Concerned about the hours of screen time, the cost of technology, and what data is being collected.”

“Assigning rather than teaching; older students know how pretend to be working; social media exposes vulnerabilities”

“Safety, security of children online. Ramped up testing online. Overuse of screens.”

“I am overwhelmed by the amount of time my children spend in front of screens and the number of different apps they are using that are collecting data about them.”

“Who has access to my child's information, and what are they doing with it?”

“There is considerable use of ed tech--based on the number of devices in the building (lots!)--but no clearly defined program/protocol.”

“Many suburban schools have Makerspaces, and I have not seen or heard of any within the schools in my neighborhood, nor where I teach. Our students are not keeping up with other districts as far as STEM. Ed Tech goes way beyond a list of software programs.”

“All the money being spent on it. Whether that money is being spent appropriately and equitably. If it even helps kids and in particular my kids.”

“I'm concerned about the emphasis on ‘personalized learning,’ especially as a remediation tool for struggling students.”

Role of tech in high-quality education

Education: purposes beyond imparting knowledge

- Foster creativity and curiosity
- Make meaningful connections between knowledge, culture, talents of students' communities
- Give students' agency in deciding what and how they learn
- Nurture them as they develop as learners, problem-solvers, participants in a democratic society

“Learning is a matter of constructing ideas rather than passively absorbing information or practicing skills.” – Alfie Kohn



Data privacy and security

- What data is being collected?
- How secure is it?
- Who has access to it? For how long?
- CPS [has had 4 known major data breaches](#) in last 4 years:
 - Student info given to Noble by CPS employee
 - Vendor payment info posted online included IEP details
 - Real data given to potential transportation vendors for RFP
 - Vision exam info posted on public webpage

“Personalized Learning” in CPS

January 2015: “a culture of personalized learning”

From: Denise Little <networksupport@cps.edu>

Date: Thu, Jan 15, 2015 at 6:23 PM

Subject: Technology Inventory Campaign

To: "ALL ELEM PRINCIPAL", "ALL HIGH PRINCIPAL", "ALL ELEM ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL", "ALL HIGH ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL"

Principals,

We know that technology helps students learn in an engaging way, and that it provides teachers with almost instantaneous feedback on student achievement. Moreover, the next generation of educational programs and Individual Learning Systems, as well as our formative and summative assessments, rely more heavily on multimedia tools. **Finally, we are moving toward a culture of personalized learning across the District.** All of these trends underscore the increased need for technology in our schools.

“Personalized Learning” in CPS

- Fall 2016: new [Department of Personalized Learning](#)
- Six CPS high schools in [IL pilot program](#) for competency-based graduation requirements, 2018-2019: “allows for a potentially more relevant and personalized learning experience”
- Rolling out Facebook/[Chan Zuckerberg Initiative’s Summit](#) Personalized Learning Platform (+[10-15 schools per year](#))

But clear description of what “personalized learning” means beyond connotation of increased tech use is lacking

Time and money spent on tech in CPS?

How much money is being devoted to tech—devices and software—in the classroom and out?

FY2013-2017:

>\$80M to 65 companies selling software for curriculum

>\$90M to Pearson, Amplify, HMH, McGraw Hill which sell tests, books and software

Doesn't include hardware & non-classroom tech like Naviance, SchoolMint

“Free” software has its own costs: you usually pay with your data

Privatization and tech

Overlap in players
between orgs, funders,
leaders who pushed
charterization of Chicago
and now behind various
types of ed tech initiatives,
e.g. LEAP Innovations

