District Management Group

10 MISTAKES TO AVOID

The Promise of Technology

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The Promise of Technology

There is much optimism about the potential for technology to transform how K-12 students are educated, and recent trends in technology, product development, and education policy are creating momentum for meaningful change. The promise of technology can be seductive, but it is important to keep some key lessons in mind:

1 DON'T FORGET TO TAKE STOCK OF WHAT YOU HAVE.

Before embarking on investments in new technologies and new models of learning, begin by taking stock of the investments in technology that the district has already made. Free up funds by eliminating what is not working or not being used, and look to redeploy resources and equipment where possible.

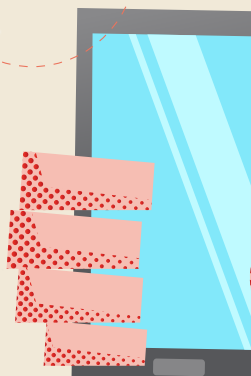## 2 DON'T FORGET TO STAY FOCUSED ON YOUR DISTRICT'S NEEDS.

Begin by defining your district's most pressing needs. Then, when considering a technology, assess whether the technology is addressing your key issues, is the right use of your limited funds, and is aligned with your district's strategy.

3 DON'T FALL FOR THE LATEST AND GREATEST.

When you hear about successes other districts are having as a result of some new instructional technology, it's tempting to rush to do the same. Before investing in more technology, stop to analyze the program more fully and assess whether it addresses your district's most pressing needs.

4 DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE HUMANS.

Many investments in instructional technology have failed to deliver the promised results because the teachers and administrators who were to use it were not trained adequately. Provide the time and training to ensure that those implementing the technology feel confident they can do so correctly.

5 DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF INFRASTRUCTURE.

Implementing online learning programs and one-to-one programs is exciting and holds promise, but success will be limited in the absence of sufficient infrastructure. Make sure the program is designed and implemented with infrastructure capabilities and constraints in mind.

6 DON'T OVERLOOK THE IMPORTANCE OF TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT.

The logistics of managing licenses, keeping track of equipment and mobile devices, and having the technology support to ensure that all the equipment and devices remain in working order is fundamental, but often overlooked. Having the right supports in place can be the difference between success and failure.

7 DON'T OVERLOOK THE POWER OF MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY.

Management technology often fails to inspire the same enthusiasm as instructional technology. However, the analytics and management information that management technology provides can help districts run more efficiently and cost-effectively.

8 DON'T ASSUME IT'S BEING IMPLEMENTED AS INTENDED.

As with any new program, but especially with something as new as instructional technology, make sure to monitor implementation and ensure that the program is being implemented with fidelity.

9 DON'T FORGET TO MEASURE.

As you put a new technology or new model of learning in place, make sure you are collecting data so that you can measure its effectiveness. Also, make sure to track the costs. Then you will be able to assess the real value gained from adopting the new technology or new model.

10 DON'T FORGET TO ASSESS AND MODIFY AS NEEDED.

Make a plan to assess the level of success of the implemented technology program or new model of learning. Actively decide whether to expand the program, make adjustments, decrease the program, or eliminate it.