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POLL RESULTS

Has Technology Improved Your Home-To-School Connection?

Most of those who took our poll or commented agree that technology has improved communication among teachers, parents, and students.

Definitely Helps Parents and Teachers

As both a parent and technology director, my answer would be an emphatic, “yes!” My kids have always been pretty good students. Communicative about what’s going on at school? NOT! Having Web access to their teachers, grades, assignments, etc., meant that we got the real scoop (most of the time). Both students and parents use this access in my school and don’t complain, “that teacher never tells me how Johnny is doing.” She doesn’t need to; the parent can find out herself.

*Mark Inglis
Denver School of Science and Technology
Denver, Colorado*

Not In My Neighborhood

I would like to say that the home-to-school connection has improved, but because the school I work in is in a low-income area, it has not. Many of our parents do not have access to the Internet, and consequently we are not able to communicate with them using technology. This is another example of how the digital divide is becoming wider and wider.

*Maria Delsing
Chicago Public Schools
Chicago, Illinois*

Without a Doubt, Yes

Absolutely! We now have 33 schools and hundreds of teachers communicating with students and parents at home through classroom Web pages (Edline), grades online (Skyward Family Access), and home access to documents and files (WebDAV).

With 26,000-plus students in our district, we have seen more than 11 million access hits this year alone!

*Frank Decker
Evergreen Public Schools
Vancouver, Washington*

Difficult to Leave Work at Work

Being connected to the school’s network from home has made it easier to provide last-minute support and put out fires, but it has had a negative impact on my sleep patterns and family life! It is no longer easy to leave our work at work.

*Eric LaCroix
New Hampton School
New Hampton, New Hampshire*

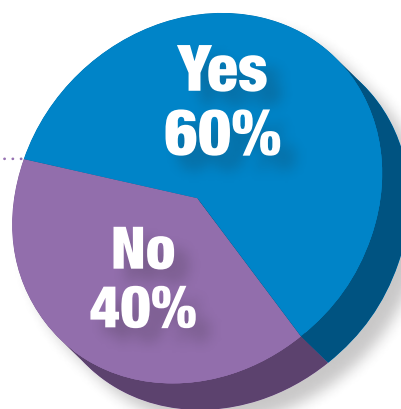
Allows For Role Reversal

A good implementation of technology should transform learning, not just automate it. Otherwise, as noted, we get 21st-century versions of “The dog ate my homework.” How about reversing the roles, by using Blackboard to deliver lectures online and at home, then have the students do homework and dialogue at school the next day?

*Sam Farsaai
Irving Independent School District
Irving, Texas*

More Information/Access For Parents

Technology has definitely improved our home-to-school connection. We survey our parents to ask them what they want from our Web page. Some of the requests have been communicating school closings due to weather, fee payments online, daily announcements, access to grades/progress



reports online, e-mail directory for direct access to teachers and staff, and forms online. The latest request is to put our concerts, plays, sporting events, and other video online. I consider parents to be primary stakeholders, and every effort is made to accommodate their requests for better communication!

*Linda Smith
Cannon Falls Area Schools
Cannon Falls, Minnesota*

I Credit Basic Technology

Absolutely yes, but not necessarily as a result of Web 2.0. Sure, we have some teachers working the blogosphere, but our biggest benefits are coming from more basic technologies—autodialers, classroom phones with voice mail, home access to student information, and school/teacher Web pages.

*Chuck Longfellow
Appoquinimink School District
Middletown, Delaware*

Web Sites Make a Big Difference

When I stopped thinking of my Web site as *just* a communication tool, my home-to-school connection increased dramatically. My Web site is for communication, instruction, assessment, and publication. Parents will visit your site when there are learning resources posted and samples of their child’s work.

*Christopher Shively
Alden Central School
Alden, New York*

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<http://www.iste.org/LL>.