



2021 AND BEYOND:

Safe, Effective Learning for Primary and Secondary Schools

With 1.75 billion students out of school in the first part of 2020, primary and secondary schools have been grappling with a complex set of issues to support teachers and reach students.

Scale of Disruption in Schools Forces New Technology Imperatives

Closure of Schools	Online & Distance Learning	Technology Imperatives
Rapid need to roll out new content	Content management and agile development	Integration of new digital content and tools into learning mgmt. systems
Daily (in some cases, hourly) active parent involvement	Stakeholder communication, rapid feedback channels	Secure, compliant collaboration tools and platforms
Need for continuous remote teachers' upskilling	Learning platforms to upskill digital capabilities of teachers	New skills in content development, video-based teaching, smart classrooms
Impossibility of on-site processes	Move from manual and paper-based processes	Digital documents and workflows; signature technologies
Digital equity (lack of hardware, broadband for some students)	Drop in student engagement, special needs services	Device and connectivity as a service

Source: IDC, 2021

Schools Are Grappling with Massive Disruption

Primary and secondary schools around the world underwent massive disruption starting in early 2020, when COVID-19 struck and forced most schools to remote or virtual learning. This disruption has continued in 2021 with many countries moving back and forth between phases of fully remote, hybrid, and in-person education. Remote and hybrid teaching and learning has surfaced many existing challenges, and exposed real gaps primary and secondary schools face in regard to digital capabilities and workflow, the technology skills of teachers and administrators, digital access and equity, and operations resilience. It has also brought technology to the forefront as the key set of tools to enable teachers and administrators to continue to engage students academically and socially.



Currently, 70% of schools worldwide are focused on business continuity and cost optimization in response to budget restrictions, the economic slowdown, and the need to continue to provide hybrid learning options. In contrast with higher education, the focus is to get primary and secondary students back to the physical classroom. Once the pandemic is under control, IDC does not expect online learning to continue at a large scale due to the age of the students, the outsize role of schools in their development, and digital equity issues. There are other important reasons for returning to the classroom as well.

- ▶ Primary and secondary schools provide essential socialization and student engagement for younger learners; parents and teachers remain concerned with the increased screen time, and social isolation, on this student population.
- ▶ Many students do not have adequate devices and Internet connections at home for effective learning. Their parents and caregivers also may lack the skills to help them with online schooling.
- ▶ Children with special needs cannot access the services they need via online delivery, and this can cause compliance issues for schools around country-level regulations.

These issues are made more challenging by the lack of teacher digital skills to effectively manage hybrid learning, which has led to a massive upskilling effort to train staff on new tools and systems. There has also been increased investment in video solutions, collaboration tools, and hardware to help teachers retrofit classrooms to support virtual learning. However, the bottom line is that most primary and secondary schools have struggled to manage remote work and hybrid learning environments.

Easy-to-use, point-and-click tools that are not complex to implement, and that offer integrated solutions, are highly valued because these allow teachers to focus on teaching and not technology, and are manageable for scarce onsite IT resources.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

What Primary and Secondary School Buyers Need to Know

- ▶ **The art of the possible.** Many decision makers are not fully aware of the latest developments in collaboration and communications tools or in off-the-shelf solutions.
- ▶ **The return on investment.** Schools are watching their spending very closely given budget constraints. They also need to spend on new technologies—ventilation systems, overhead microphones, webcams or video cameras, etc.—in order to upgrade buildings and safely return kids to school. Spending considerations, coupled with lean IT staff in school districts, mean that priority will be given to technologies that work together seamlessly, offer pre-configurations, and have existing integrations and APIs. School buyers will want to know how technologies can help manage costs and improve productivity.
- ▶ **Resilience for remote and contactless services.** Technology parity—access that enables all staff to get their work done regardless of where they work—will be a key investment area. Ease of use and a robust program of staff training and education is also important to overcome perceived concerns over security or compliance, and to reduce resistance to changing longstanding processes with a move to digital and contactless workflows.
- ▶ **The pandemic will cause permanent changes.** Even with the return to school, parents, students, teachers, and administrators do not want to return to the traditional ways of communication, collaboration, and engagement. All stakeholders want to continue the convenience of online and digital communications using multiple mediums such as chat/ messaging as well as video and content sharing that can be managed from anywhere and at any time.

Message from the Sponsor

Avaya provides today's educators with solutions for collaboration, student engagement, and remote learning, and we are committed to help improve your education outcomes by delivering Experiences that Matter.

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