What Educators Can Learn from the Technology Field

By Educator Barnes – October 31, 2020

The coronavirus pandemic forced educators to quickly shift into navigating technology. Administrators and teachers had to learn as they went along. Technology proficiency, for students or staff, was not necessarily the main priority for districts until they were faced with few other alternatives. One alternative, such as making packets for students to complete, did not provide the best learning environment. Honestly, some educators are still struggling. Instead of stumbling in the dark, educators can learn from the technology field and

technology professionals. I happen to be married to one. Here is a list of suggestions I learned from my husband who is a Senior Database Administrator for the State of Indiana.

Trust professionals to work remotely from home.

My husband has always had the capability to work remotely. As he says, "The databases never sleep." He has to ensure that state agencies' applications remain available which requires their databases to be available. It does not matter where my husband is working. If he is not doing his job, his boss will know because tasks won't be completed. Some teachers' students are 100% remote, but some of those teachers don't have the choice to work from home. Professionals should be trusted to get their work done. If there is evidence that they are not, then it is reasonable for the teacher to be forced to work on campus.

Provide teachers with multiple monitors.

When my husband and I were dating while in college at Purdue, I would accompany him to the Knoy Hall of Technology where we would study. The computer lab had multiple monitors for him to complete his assignment. Now, he still uses multiple monitors. It allows him to see all of his tabs without him having to constantly switch back and forth between tabs. It is not enough to ensure students have the right technology; teachers also need the right technology, too.

Reimburse teachers for the internet.

My husband receives a small reimbursement for the internet because he needs to be able to work remotely after hours. It does not cover our entire internet bill, but it helps. In the spring, and even now, some teachers increased their internet bandwidth which comes with an additional cost. The internet is an essential supply that teachers need. Again, it seems like teachers are still expected to dig into their own funds to make sure learning carries on.

Provide necessary technology training.

Part of my husband's job requires him to complete training, at least annually, on phishing, email spam, Wi-Fi best practices, etc. This ensures he is not costing the State of Indiana money or issues because he is not using technology wisely. Training for teachers could include information about posting copyrighted materials online or pictures of students on Zoom. Some teachers made unnecessary mistakes because the training was not provided in

advance. In addition to best practices, teachers need continuing education on the technology they are required to use.

Vet technology used in districts.

My husband can't go and use any technological application. There is a vetting process to ensure the technology used is meeting the desired needs of the users. District leaders should ensure the technology used, whether that be a program or an application, is meeting the needs of the users: teachers, parents, and students. The different amounts of technology should be narrowed so users are not trying to learn everything and then end up using nothing well.

Hopefully, some of these suggestions are already in practice, but based on what I have heard from educators, some schools need to consider incorporating these suggestions.