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National Survey Shows Strong Parent Support for Technology in the Classroom; Suggests Gaps and Opportunities in Implementation

93% of parents believe in the use of technology to tailor student learning, yet only 1 in 3 say that schools are doing an excellent job using technology for this purpose.

CHICAGO, IL – The Learning Assembly, a national network of education organizations that help educators rigorously implement and assess innovative tools to support teaching and learning, today released the results of a national survey of K-12 public school parents designed to gauge their perceptions of technology use in school.

According to the survey, parents see a growing role of technology in schools, with 66% of parents indicating that technology use has increased over the past few years. The survey also shows that while 93% of parents believe in the use of technology to tailor student learning, only 1 in 3 believe that schools are currently doing an excellent job using technology for this purpose.

“Parents don’t see technology as a silver bullet, but the data suggests that they do see a link between smart implementation of technology and the kind of tailored, personalized education that they want and expect for their children,” said Phyllis Lockett, CEO of LEAP Innovations, a Learning Assembly member working with Chicago schools to personalize learning. “It’s absolutely critical that we provide teachers and schools with the training and supports to use technology effectively to create meaningful, personalized learning experiences for every child.”

The Learning Assembly, supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is a network of seven nonprofit organizations- Citizen Schools, Digital Promise, Highlander Institute, iZone, LearnLaunch, LEAP Innovations and the Silicon Valley Education Foundation—working with schools across the country to improve learning outcomes by applying and testing new tools and strategies in the classroom.

The poll’s findings reflect a shift, in recent years, from a focus on access to technology in the classroom to the purposeful implementation of technology that can help educators to better engage students, differentiate instruction, and improve student learning. Parent views on technology, according to the survey, appear to vary based on the perceived quality of implementation. Parents who report their children’s schools are doing an “excellent” job using technology to tailor learning are two and a half times more likely to report that their children learn more and that their children are more engaged than parents who report

their schools are doing a “fair” or “poor” job.

The poll also found that:

- 84% of parents say they want their child to have access to educational technology outside of school to extend learning time beyond the school day. However, only 36% of parents of children who use devices in school report that their children have more opportunities to learn outside the classroom;
- While 87% of parents believe in the potential for technology to positively impact student learning, only 35% of parents whose children use devices in school say their children have learned more because of technology;
- Among parents who say technology is being used more in their child’s school, 64% say it has become more integrated into the way teachers teach and students learn;
- Commonly used education terms aren’t necessarily understood by parents. Only 44% said they were confident they understood the term “personalized learning” as it relates to their child’s education, while four in 10 (43%) understood “competency based education,” and only 31% understood the phrase “21st century skills”; and
- 41% of parents say digital communication is the most frequent way they communicate with teachers (including email, text, and digital applications).

Last school year, Learning Assembly member organizations partnered with 101 schools and 368 teachers serving 13,400 students to pilot and evaluate education technologies and innovative teaching strategies in cities including Chicago, New York City, and the San Francisco Bay Area. These organizations help schools select the right learning tools to support their goals, provide training and support for educators, and identify which approaches are improving outcomes for students.

“Parents want their child to have a personalized learning experience, and believe technology can play a supporting role in the classroom,” said Emily McCann, CEO of Citizen Schools, a nonprofit that works with middle schools in six states across the country to close the opportunity gap. “These findings demonstrate the importance of our organizations’ collective mission to help schools build the capacity to wisely choose, deploy, and evaluate innovative tools and strategies in the classroom.”

Read the poll at: www.LearningAssembly.org

The poll was conducted by YouGov September 9 – 16, 2016 with a sample of 1,000 parents with kids in public schools and margin of error of +/- 3.8%.

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About the Learning Assembly

We believe that by fostering collaboration between great educators and technology innovators, we can truly transform learning. The Learning Assembly members include Citizen Schools, Digital Promise, Highlander Institute, iZone, LearnLaunch, LEAP Innovations and the Silicon Valley Education Foundation. The members of the Learning Assembly collaborate with educators, edtech companies, and research partners to:

- Rigorously assess and curate the best edtech tools in the market;
- Collaborate with teachers and schools to identify the best edtech tools to support teaching and learning;
- Provide edtech companies with critical feedback from teachers and students to improve their products; and
- Raise the bar for quality in the edtech market by analyzing and sharing evidence of learning outcomes.