

The future of education: Are we ready?

I am often asked about what the future of education will look like and why are schools so slow to change. Education over the last 50 years hasn't changed a whole lot from traditional methods. Fads here and there that come and go and have little to no impact or even detrimental effects on student learning. Quite frankly, it looks very similar to when you and I went to school 30 plus years ago. The latest innovations coming in educational technology are among the first things I have seen in education that has a chance to have a big impact on student learning and education as a whole. The use of technology to engage and personalize education for students through adaptive curriculum and resources will allow educators a significant tool moving forward. Our iPad Learning Initiative is moving our district in this direction. In the following paragraphs I will describe to you changes coming in education and our vision for the iPad Learning Initiative.

Technology innovations can change education like no other program has been able to do over the last century. Technology learning tools and programs are being developed at a fast pace and eventually will be able to personalize student needs at their current academic level and learning styles. These adaptive learning systems and enhanced content materials will help teachers differentiate instruction and facilitate learning activities for students like never before. Imagine a day when technology helps teachers figure out how a student learns, helps the teacher plan engaging activities for the student, and is able to assess progress towards those learning goals. This is what technology will be bringing to the education world in the future.

The Springfield Platteview iPad Learning Initiative's vision for the future is to capitalize on these innovations. In 2014-15, in grades where available, our Social Studies grade level curriculum will be seeing new iBooks that have highly engaging content. Old textbooks will be replaced with interactive iBooks that will guide and assist with student learning. Instead of reading Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech in the textbook, students can click to see and hear his speech. In Math, we have already piloted iBooks at the high school. Not only can students read how to solve a problem when stuck, they have access to someone explaining it step by step and other enhanced learning opportunities. These are the resources that students will have at their fingertips moving forward in most subject areas.

Our vision toward student learning needs to be fluid and flexible for an ever-changing future and what it means for our students to be college and career ready. The Top 10 jobs in the world in 2010 weren't even created in 2000, so our students need skills to be able to adapt to changing and innovative career choices. Here is our current vision for the iPad Learning Initiative:

- Students and staff fluent with technology in organization, productivity, collaboration, and presentation skills.
- College and career readiness skills targeted through curriculum, instructional design, and assessment. (Nebraska College and Career Readiness skills include content knowledge application, communication, contributing to employer and community success, problem-solving, critical thinking, innovation and creativity, ethical leadership, productively works in teams and

demonstrates cultural competency, self-responsibility, manages personal career development, and attends to personal and financial well being)

- Interactive, engaging curriculum and resources being utilized by students and teachers.
- Flipped learning strategies to maximize classroom time for students to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate content.
- Differentiation of instruction and personal learning plans developed by determining learning styles, needs, and the academic levels of each student.
- Awareness of local and global issues.

As you see we have a vision for our program that we think will prepare our students for their future. Over time, the learning process will become more targeted toward individual student needs, more engaging for students, and geared towards giving students the skills to be successful in their future. I believe each of these concepts will make for a better education system, and our district will be a front runner with these innovations.