

Fall 2014 1:1 Pilot Formative Memo – Executive Summary

The Friday Institute for Educational Innovation recently provided feedback on the first year of Hamilton County's 1:1 technology pilot program. Major findings were drawn from surveys, focus groups, interviews, and classroom observations. Reports from principals, teachers, and students suggest that participation in the pilot program has continued to promote improved student engagement, while providing students expanded opportunities for learning and support. The [full six-page memorandum](#) is available online.

Student Impact

Improved engagement and interest were the most commonly cited benefits of transitioning to 1:1. Teachers and students both said engagement was better, a finding supported by classroom observations. While a majority of teachers think the initiative has generally had a positive effect, only 40% of teachers feel students have achieved greater academic success. In contrast, **students overwhelmingly (95%) said 1:1 has helped them do better in school.** This suggests that students don't define achievement the same way teachers and principals do – educators might be relying solely on test scores as a measure of achievement.

Teacher Impact

Teachers are primarily using devices to support existing practices. Instructional materials and assessments are now done online, and teachers are positive about being able to provide feedback more quickly to students. However, this has not resulted in teachers shifting time from administrative tasks to student support. Teachers are using devices to differentiate instruction and students can self-pace based on their needs, although teachers cite a high need for training in these areas. **Principals and teachers are positive about project-based learning, but many teachers are unsure about how to integrate this practice in their classrooms.**

Strategies & Supports

Teachers and principals mentioned that **in-house professional development, such as teacher-led sessions, classroom observation, and modeling, were well-received and useful.** Instruction Technology Facilitators (ITFs) are available to help teachers, but have been underutilized. Reasons vary, including teachers not knowing what supports they needed, teachers needing more time and opportunities to work with ITFs, and not having access to ITFs every day.

Challenges & Recommendations

Barriers to implementing 1:1 include student misuse of the devices, technical issues (problems with battery life, breakage, lack of bandwidth, and software/app problems), and lack of early planning and training prior to device rollout. Principals noted teachers were anxious about the dip in test scores and may link lower test scores to the 1:1 initiative, resulting in a lack of support for changes in practice, especially PBL. To help mitigate these issues, staff recommended more professional development and shared documentation of implementation processes, procedures, and expectations.