

## Four Steps For Technology Success In The Classroom

(NAPSA)—The rise of the high-tech classroom has been clearly documented. Districts and schools in the area and around the country are incorporating new technology into the classroom, and technology companies are investing millions in programs providing technology to schools, most in the forms of tablets or laptop devices.

However, oftentimes, this is happening without specific plans or road maps for successful transitions away from traditional pen and paper. In emerging digital environments, technology can expand the impact of education and accelerate the growth potential of every student, educator and school, but only when it is used correctly. The question all schools must now grapple with is whether the technology they are bringing into the classroom is impacting student achievement or simply digitizing textbooks and worksheets.

“Technology has the potential to make significant impacts in education, but we’re not there yet,” said Cameron Evans, chief technology officer, U.S. Education, Microsoft. “Today, technology has advanced to a stage where devices are broadly available and cost effective. The challenge now is to help educators reimagine what learning can look like, and incorporate new tools in a meaningful way.”

There are four steps to implementing a successful digital environment in the classroom, according to Evans:

### 1. Lock on your vision, then your device

The first thing school personnel need to do is ask themselves, “What world are we preparing our students for?” They need to determine their needs, their educa-



### Teachers need to learn how to use technology in engaging and innovative ways.

tional goals and their learning objectives, then find the right devices that will achieve that vision. Schools must evaluate numerous device options to find the device that meets the needs of students to both consume and create content. For instance, laptops may be better suited for high school students than tablets based on learning objectives. Devices need to be better than a pencil and paper and more than a fancy Web browser.

“Schools should not have to compromise on devices due to costs,” said Evans. “With efforts like Microsoft’s low-cost device options for schools, they have access to full-feature devices, helping accomplish the goals set by President Obama’s ConnectedED initiative: to connect 99 percent of the country’s students with technology by 2019.”

### 2. Teach the teachers

Training is essential if educators and their students are going to use technology correctly. Teachers need to learn how to effectively engage students and bring innovation and analysis into the classroom setting. Teachers can’t be handed a new tablet and automatically be expected to know

how to work with students in new ways to achieve learning objects.

### 3. Provide meaningful content

Lesson plans that incorporate technology are critical. A recent IDC study scanned 16.4 million job postings and found high-growth/high-wage jobs want employees with good communication, detail orientation and problem-solving skills. Building these business and productivity skills is much easier with the right tools. Additionally, teachers are facing pressure to align their teaching to state assessments while also ensuring that elements such as creativity and verbal skills are not lost. The right content can connect these dots.

### 4. Create a safe learning environment

Finally, schools need to ensure that technology is used in a safe environment. Schools and districts have a mandate to ensure that data collected about students is applied for the benefit of the student, not being mined for advertising. This includes personal data on students that might be stored long term as well as search history and online activities that tech companies may have.

The transition to a digital classroom should not be taken lightly. The teachers of today are laying the runway for the future of our students, our nation and our ability to compete globally. A fundamental change in education this profound will not happen overnight. Just as teachers and students across the U.S. are entering a new type of learning environment, so must our society support them in new ways by partnering with companies, organizations and communities to help them succeed.