

Digital Reporting Tools A survey of BCTF members Key Findings

Digital tools have been adopted in many districts for use in student assessments and for reporting to parents. A survey was conducted from February to April of 2017 to understand the uses of these tools and issues should be pursued to support teacher needs. An email link was sent to a database of about 33,000 BCTF members which produced 1664 responses to the survey.

1. The most commonly used reporting tool was email (52%). Respondents could identify more than one reporting tool they used and email would likely be used for informal reports and communication as a supplement to formal reports.
2. MyEducation BC was the most used tool after email (44%). Nearly all districts have agreed to use MyEducation BC, although some may not require its use as a formal reporting tool for all grades. In some districts, teachers provide marks to clerical staff, who do the data entry.
3. Templates to produce hard copy were used by 31% and FreshGrade was used by 26% of respondents.
4. Participants were asked to rate the tools they used on several criteria. The tool with the lowest rating on all six criteria was MyEducation BC.

Flexibility

- The tool with the **highest** rating on flexibility: FreshGrade
- The tool with the **lowest** rating on flexibility: MyEducation BC

Improves Assessment

- The tool with the **highest** rating on improving assessment: FreshGrade
- The tool with the **lowest** rating on improving assessment: MyEducation BC

Improves my workload around reporting:

- The tool with the **highest** rating on improving workload on reporting: Google Apps
- The tool with the **lowest** rating on improving workload on reporting: MyEducation BC

Facilitates and/or improves communication with parents/guardians:

- The tool with the **highest** rating on improving communication with parents: Email
- The tool with the **lowest** rating on improving communication with parents: MyEducation BC

Facilitates and/or improves communication with students:

- The tool with the **highest** rating on improving communication with parents: Google Apps
- The tool with the **lowest** rating on improving communication with parents: MyEducation BC

Is appropriate and useful for implementing the new curriculum

- The tool with the **highest** rating on “appropriate and useful for implementing the new curriculum”: FreshGrade, followed closely by Google Apps
- The tool with the **lowest** rating on “appropriate and useful for implementing the new curriculum”: MyEducation BC (no other tool came close)

5. Only 51% of respondents indicated that they had in-service training provided by the employer to learn to use the digital reporting tools. The training that did take place usually had some common characteristics: a) after school, lunch break or staff meeting; b) carried out by someone with limited training on the program themselves, then providing limited training to school staffs; c) most commonly either the teacher spending time on their own or depending on colleagues who had figured it out by themselves and were willing to help colleagues.
6. Only 28% of respondents had training on privacy issues/concerns related to the digital reporting system. Of those, only just over 50% indicated that the training was good to excellent. Training on privacy is a very low priority in the education system, with only about 15% of teachers having had what they considered good training on their obligations to protect the privacy of students (and teachers). That indicates 85% have no training or inadequate training.
7. The lack of training does not reflect a lack of concern on the part of teachers. One of the impediments to many teachers feeling comfortable with using digital reporting tools is concern about privacy and security. Better acceptance of these tools would likely be facilitated if they have training—and confidence—that privacy is properly protected.
8. The large majority (83%) of respondents indicated their district provided them with a district-owned device. However, many commented that the device was inadequate for what they were expected to do and the implicit message was to bring your own device.

9. While some felt they had to no alternative to using their own device, others were directed not to use their own equipment.

10. Parents have direct access to student data through a parent portal according to 35% of respondents. Teachers' views were mixed, with positive views based on better communication with parents, but nearly half (47%) of respondents have concerns. The largest number of concerns about a parent portal was pressure to update frequently and a consequent increase to workload.

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