BCTF ✦ Research Report

Digital Reporting Tools
A survey of BCTF members

Results of Digital Reporting Survey

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 that should be pursued to support teacher needs. An email link was sent to a database of about 33,000 BCTF members.

Respondent Demographics

- 1664 respondents; 77% self-identified as female, 21% self-identified as male, and < 1% identified as trans or gender non-conforming
- Respondents were largely (83%) classroom teachers and specialist teachers (13%) with only 4% of respondents identifying as TTOCs.
- There was broad and relatively equal participation among primary, intermediate, and secondary school teachers (minimum 28% in each category).
- A large majority of respondents had been teaching for 6 or more years (90%). One in five respondents had been teaching for more than 26 years.
- Representation from each of the 60 districts.

Digital Reporting Tools that Teachers Use

- Over half (52%) of teachers use email as a reporting tool—this was the most popular tool among respondents. Email would likely be used for informal reports as supplements to formal reports.
- The second most cited tool was MyEducation BC (44%), followed by Word Template/Hard Copy (31%) and FreshGrade (26%)

Digital Reporting Tool Performance/Evaluation by Teachers:
Participants were asked to evaluate the specific tools they use on the basis of flexibility, improvements to assessment, to workload around reporting, to communication with parents, to communication with students, and usefulness for implementing the new curriculum.

The rankings of these tools (see page 8 of this report for percentages) are based on participants' assessment of the specific tools they use (e.g., only FreshGrade users evaluate FreshGrade; only MyEducation BC users evaluate 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 students: 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)

Choice of Digital Reporting Tool
- Over 60% of respondents reported that the decision to use the tools they are currently using was a **district-level decision**
- Followed by 24% of respondents who reported that the decision to use the tools they are currently using was a **school-level decision** or **Principal/VP-level decision (16%)**
- However, just over half (51%) of respondents indicated that the decision was also a personal decision to use the tool they are using.

Provision of Technology

- A very large majority (83%) of respondents indicated that their District provided them with a district-owned device.
- Over 2/3 of respondents (68%) indicated that they were **not** encouraged to bring their own devices.
- A common response was that they had not been asked to use their own device or bandwidth, "but it is implied, because how else would you accomplish tasks." Many tasks cannot be completed at school: "MyEdBC is time consuming and so inevitably needs to be done at home on your computer." Using different computers at school and home creates extra work, so some being their own device to school: "my own device is quicker and more portable."
- Many FreshGrade users commented that they used their smartphones for taking photos or recording videos of the students at work. They said this is the only practical alternative except for very few places where iPads have been supplied for the teacher or students.
- Several districts encourage teachers to use photos and videos for eportfolios, but without appropriate devices supplied. One district sent a memo to teachers encouraging them to use their personal data plan if the wifi was not adequate in their school.
- While many felt they had no alternative to using their own devices, a few reported the opposite—they were directed not to use their own equipment. This may have been because of concerns about privacy and security. Only a few respondents indicated that reporting should "be kept on a properly encrypted district device."

In-service training

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

What was reported to parents?

- The most common reporting measure provided to parents was proficiency scales (42%) followed by a letter grade (41%), and rubrics/other assessments (31%), and "other" (30%), with the least reported measuring being percentages (27%). These vary by grade level.

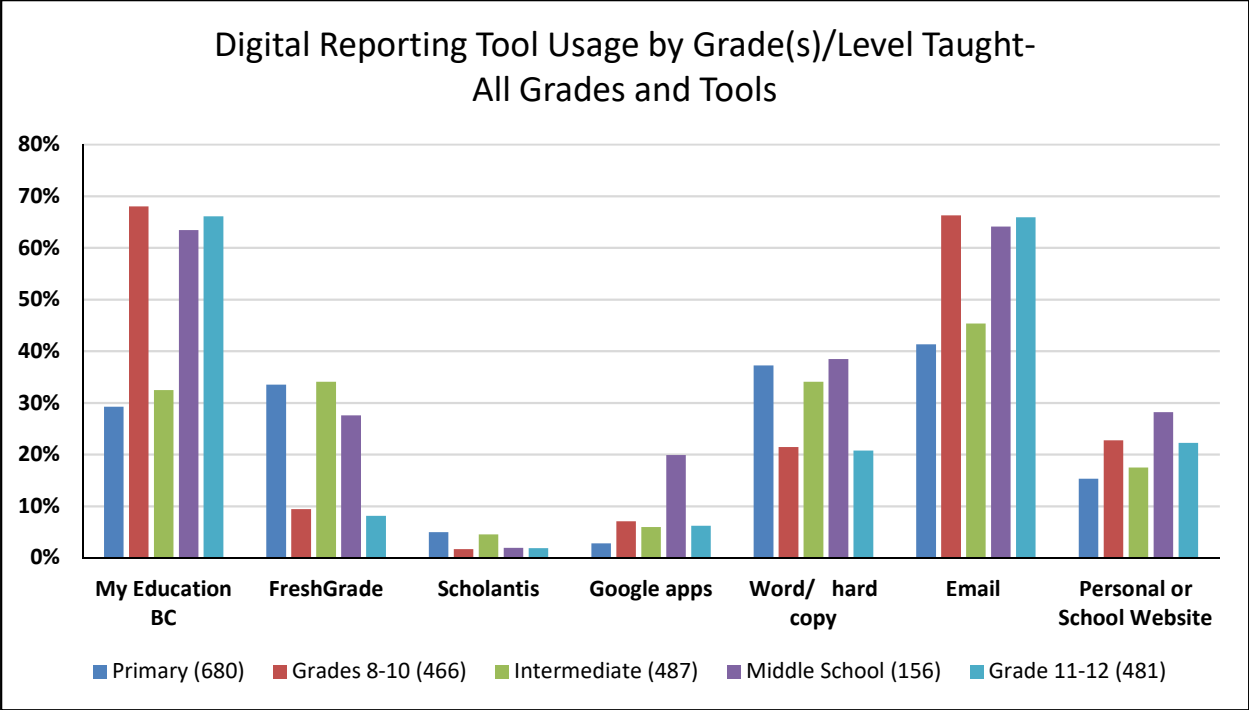**Parent Access to Digital Reports through a Portal**

- A slim majority (51%) **do not** have access to digital reports through a parent portal.
- Just under half (47%) of respondents indicated "yes" they do have concerns or issues related to parents having direct online access.
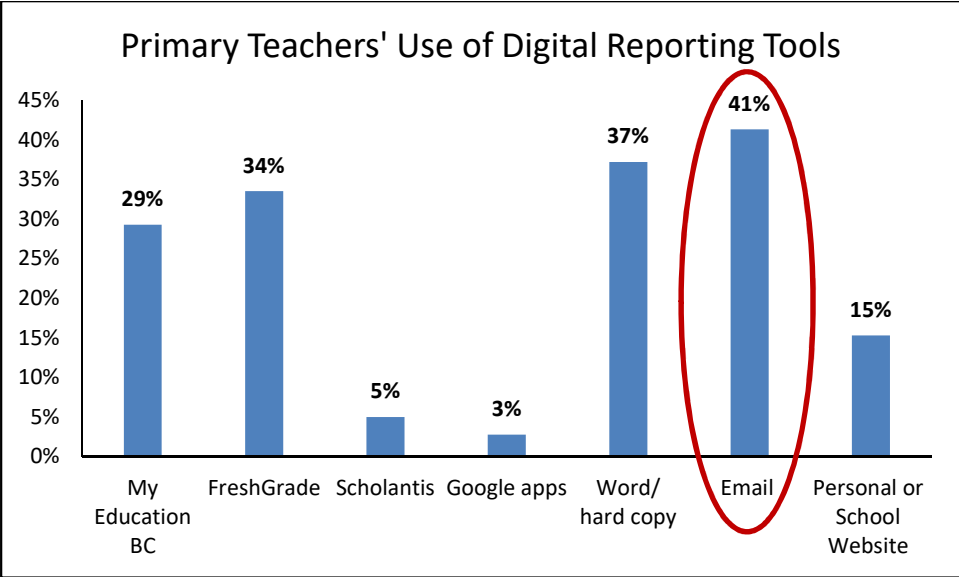
Data Retention

- **Formal Report:** Just under half (49%) of respondents felt that this data should be stored for a **minimum of 5 years**.
- **All data in student's e-portfolio:** Over half of respondents felt that this data should be stored for **less than five years**.
- **IEP:** Over half (56%) of respondents felt that IEP data should be stored for less than **5 years**.
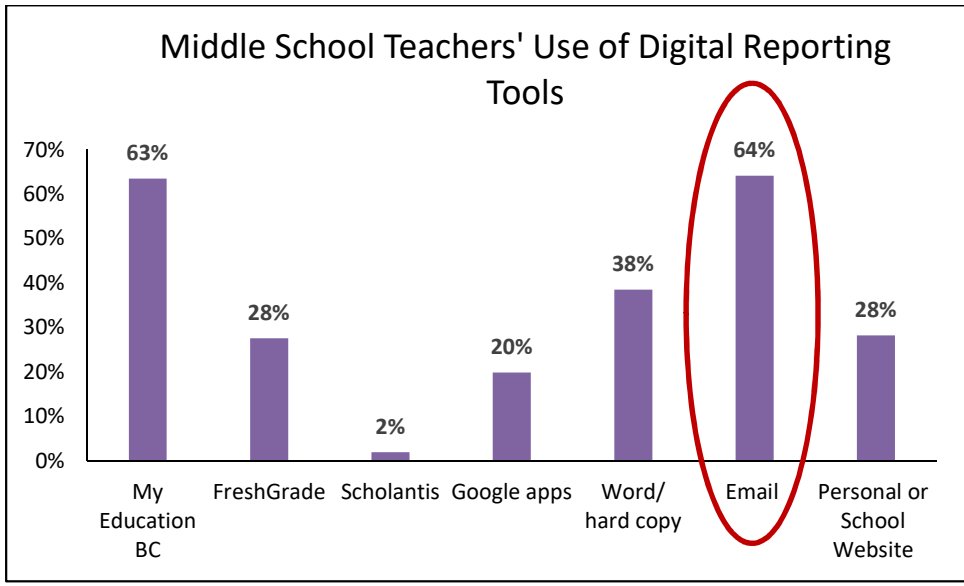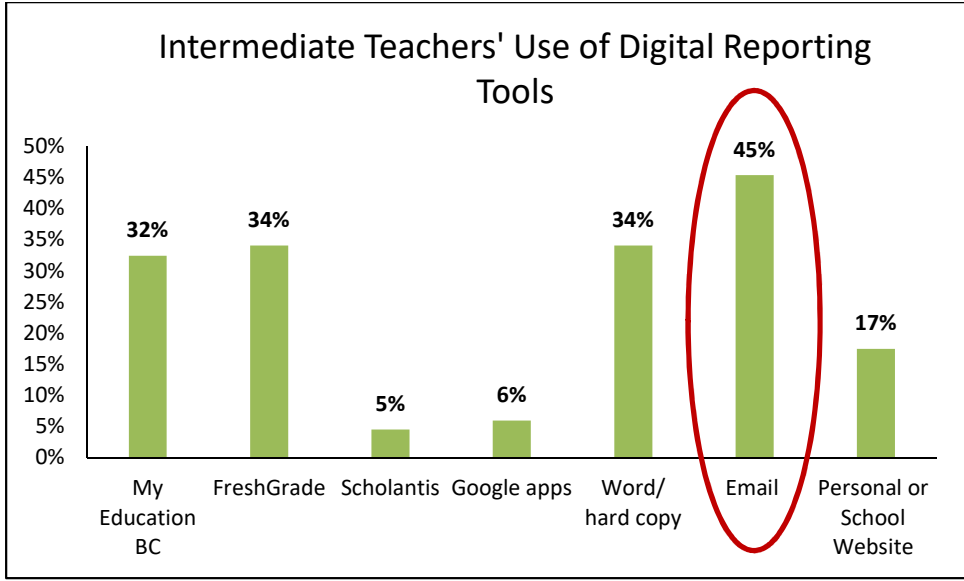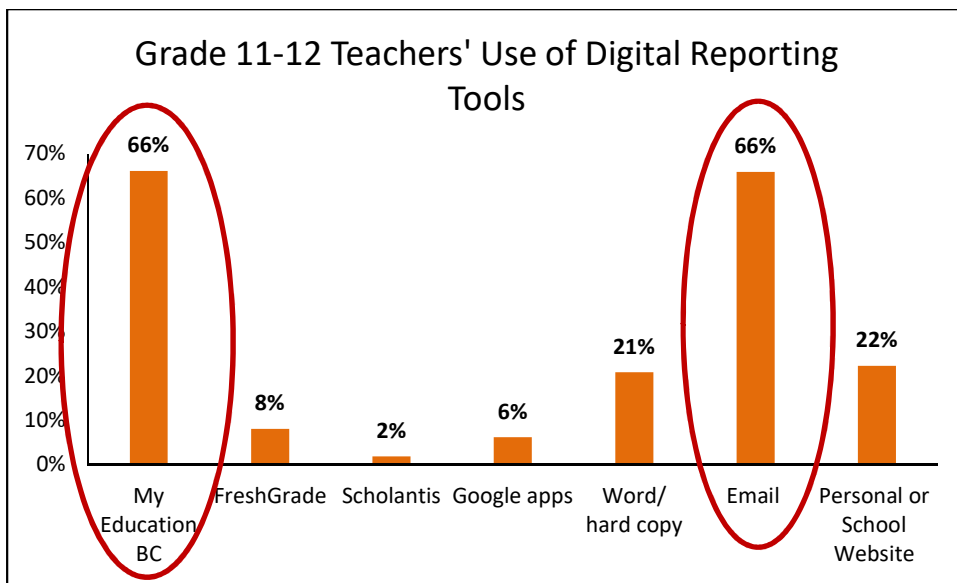
Summary Results by Grade

- MyEducationBC and Email are the top 2 most frequently used digital reporting tools.
- MyEducationBC is used most frequently by Grades 8-10 teachers and Grades 11-12 teachers (68% and 66% respectively report that they use MyEducationBC).
- MyEducationBC usage is reported least frequently by Primary and Intermediate Teachers (29% and 32%, respectively).
- Two-thirds of middle and secondary school teachers use email as a digital reporting tool, while less than half (41% and 45% respectively) of primary and intermediate school teachers use email.
- FreshGrade usage is moderate and at quite similar levels across Primary, Middle School, and Intermediate Levels at 34%, 28%, and 34%. Only Secondary School Teachers report quite low (8-9%) usage of FreshGrade.
- Scholantis is infrequently used across all grade levels as are Google Apps, although 20% of Middle School Teachers report using Google Apps.
- Again, Primary, Intermediate, and Middle School Teachers report moderate usage of Word/Hard Copy at 37%, 34% and 38%. Only approx. 1/5th (21%) of secondary school teachers use Word/Hard Copy reporting tools.
- Personal or school websites are infrequently used as digital reporting tools- the most frequent reporting of this tool was by middle school teachers (28%).

Digital Reporting Tool Usage by Grade(s)/Level Taught- All Grades and Tools

Legend: Primary (680), Grades 8-10 (466), Intermediate (487), Middle School (156), Grade 11-12 (481)

Most Reported Tools by Grade:

Primary Teachers' Use of Digital Reporting Tools

Tool	Percentage
My Education BC	29%
FreshGrade	34%
Scholantis	5%
Google apps	3%
Word/ hard copy	37%
Email	41%
Personal or School Website	15%

Intermediate Teachers' Use of Digital Reporting Tools

Tool	Percentage
My Education BC	32%
FreshGrade	34%
Scholantis	5%
Google apps	6%
Word/hard copy	34%
Email	45%
Personal or School Website	17%

Middle School Teachers' Use of Digital Reporting Tools

Tool	Percentage
My Education BC	63%
FreshGrade	28%
Scholantis	2%
Google apps	20%
Word/hard copy	38%
Email	64%
Personal or School Website	28%

Grades 8-10 Teachers' Use of Digital Reporting Tools

Tool	Percentage
My Education BC	68%
FreshGrade	9%
Scholantis	2%
Google apps	7%
Word/hard copy	21%
Email	66%
Personal or School Website	23%

Grade 11-12 Teachers' Use of Digital Reporting Tools

Tool	Percentage
My Education BC	66%
FreshGrade	8%
Scholantis	2%
Google apps	6%
Word/hard copy	21%
Email	66%
Personal or School Website	22%

Percent of teachers who agree (report "somewhat/to a great extent) or disagree (report "very little/not at all") that the digital tools surveyed offers improvements in the following five areas:

Digital Tools	Offers a flexible tool for reporting		Improves assessment in classroom(s)		Improves my workload around reporting		Facilitates and/or improves communication with parents/guardians		Facilitates and/or improves communication with students		Is appropriate and useful for implementing the new curriculum	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
MyEducation BC	30%	57%	8%	79%	23%	64%	22%	64%	11%	78%	11%	63%
FreshGrade	86%	7%	71%	16%	42%	43%	82%	12%	66%	19%	76%	10%
Scholantis	78%	12%	51%	30%	21%	64%	50%	39%	54%	37%	61%	18%
Google Apps	67%	17%	68%	12%	59%	19%	71%	12%	82%	8%	75%	11%
Word Template/ Hard Copy	73%	17%	47%	30%	43%	41%	64%	35%	47%	35%	51%	23%
Email	72%	17%	31%	51%	36%	50%	91%	5%	48%	41%	34%	36%
Personal or School Website	51%	34%	42%	50%	37%	50%	79%	12%	70%	18%	54%	25%