

IKON INSIGHTS

TECHNOLOGY NEWS FOR K-12 SCHOOLS

Brought to you by IKON Business Group, Inc.



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IKON is a premium IT consulting company focused on providing K-12 schools with customized technology solutions and personalized support.

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3 GREAT IT RESOLUTIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR

As the new year kicks off, many of you are making your plans and resolutions for the remainder of the school year and beyond. During this time, it would be wise to focus on some IT- or tech-related resolutions as well. Making sure that you are up-to-date on the most recent tech and security measures can go a long way toward protecting and investing in your students and staff.

Here are our three best IT and tech resolutions for schools to make for the new year, and how to make sure you achieve them.

1. STAFF SECURITY TRAINING AND CREATING A SECURITY SAFE CULTURE

Educational institutions faced a record year of ransomware attacks in 2021, with K-12 schools the primary targets. While contributing to better educational outcomes, successful

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one-device-per-student and learn-from-anywhere programs have expanded the attack surface for cyber threats of various kinds. Bad actors prioritize elementary schools because they're underfunded when it comes to cybersecurity staff and systems, and administrators are often impatient to put attacks behind them and resume classes.

If your staff has not had any security awareness training, you should make it your focus to ensure that everyone is informed about potential information security breaches. Research suggests that human error is involved in over 90% of security breaches. By providing security awareness training to your staff, you will teach them how to avoid mistakes that could leave the school at risk. Not only will this help your staff be more aware of security, but it will protect your students' private information and make families feel more comfortable and confident when dealing with your school.

2. WORK WITH A MANAGED SERVICES PROVIDER (MSP) THAT SPECIALIZES IN SCHOOLS

The MSP industry has seen immense growth over the past five years. The market was valued at over \$152 billion in 2017 and is expected to rise to \$257 billion by the end of 2022. MSPs allow for predictable monthly costs and better security practices, but they truly have a plethora of benefits. If your computer breaks or shuts down,

MSPs have the ability to not only fix it but also go above and beyond the usual tech support. Most MSPs focus on the corporate sector, but it's important for schools to work with providers who are well-versed in their unique challenges and goals. MSPs are also raising their tech game. Yes, they can help with problems related to e-mail, web and file searching, but they are also available for more advanced needs, like local, state and federal compliance requirements. If you're still working with a basic IT service, look into using an education-focused MSP instead. They will help with your usual tech problems while also providing you with the resources needed to achieve your goals.

3. BACK UP YOUR DATA

Data is an essential part of any school, and it's imperative to make every effort to back up your data. If important files are damaged or deleted or a disaster causes your school to lose important data, data backups can prevent interruptions. It becomes even more important when dealing with students' information.

As you plan out your goals and resolutions to incorporate in 2022, don't forget to include IT and tech goals as well. Not only will they save you money in the long run, but they will also grant you peace of mind. Make a plan, overcome any obstacles and don't lose hope if it looks like you need more than a year to accomplish your goals.

FREE ON-DEMAND WEBINAR:

5 Ways to Protect Your School or District from a Cybersecurity Attack



According to recent data breach reports, the education sector ranked sixth overall in the US for the total number of reported "security incidents" this past year. Education systems have access to tens of millions of records on children and young adults, making them perfect targets for identity theft. Yet most schools are ill-prepared to face the mounting threats posed by hackers. This webinar will teach you the important steps you can take to protect your organization's data.

Watch today at: <https://bit.ly/cybersecurityforschools>

REIMAGINING EDUCATION IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

The pandemic has changed the way that many schools operate. Most have had to implement new strategies, while many have even had to adopt a new virtual environment. The change has not been easy for anyone.

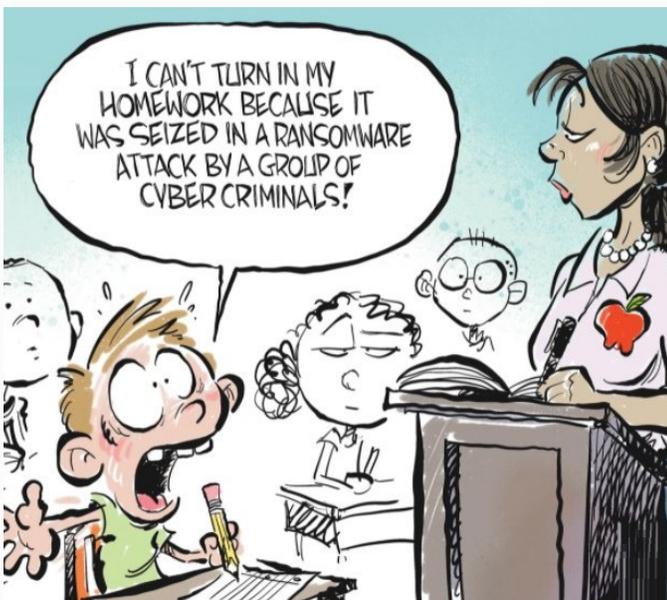
The response of many schools at the outset of the pandemic to rapidly adopt technology to maintain academic and operational continuity could be described as heroic (although not without flaws), and it most certainly displayed a level of organizational agility that burst traditional stereotypes regarding schools and their ability to embrace change.

Yet this shift to remote learning has proven to be no replacement for the in-person experience that so many students crave. Many learners had challenges with accessibility, inclusion, and engagement. We were reminded that the digital equity gap unfortunately persists—and has continued to widen—during the pandemic.

We experienced “Zoom Fatigue” from staring at tiny squares on computer screens and endured virtual classes being infiltrated by outsiders.

Schools have proven they can be agile and include remote participants. But will students, families and teachers now expect an option to join any class remotely? Are there elements of remote learning that will persist in the classroom? Students and parents have made it clear they want the option to return to in-person classes. They also want—and will expect—the option to join any class remotely or watch it later and contribute their thoughts to an asynchronous conversation. Flexibility positively impacts the student experience, and capabilities that make the traditional classroom more engaging, more accessible, and more inclusive are essential to the learning process.

"We were reminded that the digital equity gap unfortunately persists — and has continued to widen — during the pandemic."



Andy Marlette, USA TODAY Network

As schools forge ahead in this “new normal”, many of the technologies that helped them simply survive and sustain classroom continuity will become permanently embedded in their educational methods. The rapid shift to remote learning was a powerful start, but one thing we've all learned is that exclusively online learning has left many students behind and created a yearning for a rich school experience that fosters learning in and out of the classroom.

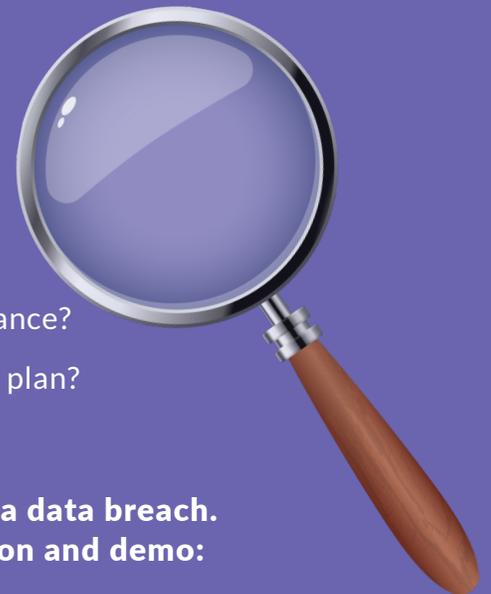
DON'T BECOME A CYBERCRIME STATISTIC...

Content Provided Courtesy of Our Partner - IDAgent

There are some records that you don't want to be a part of setting, like this year's expected record number of new data breaches. Keep cybercriminals out of your school and your pockets when you make smart cybersecurity choices.

Are you...

- Using multifactor authentication to keep hackers out?
- Reducing your access points with single sign-on (SSO)?
- Utilizing secure shared password vaults for sensitive credentials?
- Securing your remote staff properly?
- Watching for dark web credential compromise surprises?
- Running phishing simulation training at least quarterly?
- Making security awareness training mandatory for all staff?
- Improving your school's cyber resilience with layered security?
- Following cybersecurity best practices and maintaining compliance?
- Reviewing and practicing your cybersecurity incident response plan?



If you can't check off every box on this list, you're in danger of a data breach. Reach out today to schedule your free cybersecurity consultation and demo: <https://info.ikonbusinessgroup.com/ransomware-protection>

CLIENT SPOTLIGHT BRONX BETTER LEARNING

The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning Works with IKON to Navigate E-Rate Application Process and Implement Critical Technology Initiatives

"IKON saves us a lot of time. In fact, my time spent on network maintenance has been cut down drastically from 3-4 days per week, to just 3-4 hours per week. That extra time allows me to offer greater support to our end-users and work on more strategic initiatives that benefit our entire organization."

-Kevin Williams, Technology Coordinator

