

# Technology Change Plan

## For the Kent School District

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Case Study 6: Technology Change Proposal

## Introduction

The Kent School District serves over 25,000 students in 42 schools and serves some of the most diverse communities in the state of Washington. The families in the Kent School District come from a wide range of cultural and economic background. Only half of the families served by the district are native English speakers. Communication between teachers, students, and families has always been a sore spot throughout the district due to the high proportion of multi-cultural students, ESL (English as a second language) students, and families without consistent internet access. The COVID-19 pandemic has further widened this communication gap between school staff and families when consistent communication is key. Adopting a child friendly LMS (learning management system) and communication platform, like ClassDojo, would help with communication between schools and families during the pandemic, but also help bridge the language and culture gap when schools inevitably reopen across the district.

## Technology Summary

ClassDojo is a learning management and communication system designed for elementary students, teachers, and families. Teachers using ClassDojo setup classrooms, lessons, and interactive worksheets for students to take part in, and can instantly communicate with students and their families in their native languages through auto-translation in over 35 languages. Students can create a custom monster avatar and share their accomplishments at school and at home by posting them to their personal profile within ClassDojo. ClassDojo is free to use for any size of school, with a paid premium tier that includes premade lesson plans, worksheets, and other features.

## Organizational Factors

The Kent School District is highly resistant to change on a district-wide basis due to several reasons. Like most school districts, tight budgets make changes with an economic impact highly debated. The multiple

entities within the district, including the superintendent, school board, teachers' union, and the teachers, staff, and principals across the district's many schools, all contribute at some level to determining how and when technological changes will happen. Buy-in from the district superintendent or school board would be the most beneficial to enacting a district-wide adoption of new technology, but barring that, strong support by the district's principals would be enough to adopt most types of technology.

## Definition of Success

### Outcome

A total success in the adoption of ClassDojo would see a 100% adoption rate among all 28 of the Kent School District's elementary schools, as well as the early learning center. Total success would allow students, parents, teachers, and staff to communicate more clearly and consistently by reducing the language and cultural barriers that make so much communication difficult in the district. It would also inspire and engage students in their learning goals by sharing their accomplishments and rewarding positive behavior.

A more tempered success in the adoption of ClassDojo would see the elementary schools in the district with the highest levels of diversity, and consequently the highest need, implement the product. While not a complete success, this would best serve the schools and communities that could make the most use of ClassDojo's specific communication features.

### Budget

ClassDojo's standard tier is free for schools to use, so the budgetary constraints of success are governed solely by the cost of training for teachers, students, and parents across the district. ClassDojo has a plethora of training videos and self-guided interactive examples on their website, but the district may

need to budget for a small number of district-wide trainings during the early stages of adoption. Most technology lessons in the district are conducted by the schools' teacher-librarians as a normal part of their role, so much of the training of students and teachers can be done without the need for additional budget measures.

## Change Plan

### Create Urgency

To create a sense of urgency for the adoption of ClassDojo as an organization, getting district-level buy-in would be a powerful motivator. The district superintendent's candid monthly letter to teachers and families would be a great way to sow the need for a multilingual communication platform as well as a way for students to feel more empowered in their work. In addition to the superintendent, teachers and principals in the most diverse communities in the district can work with the parent-teacher association of each school to put a spotlight on the communication difficulties encountered every day, as well as the difficulty in motivating students, especially during a pandemic.

### Form a Powerful Coalition

The district superintendent would be the most effective individual to have on a coalition for change across the district. As a career educator the superintendent is generally well-respected, and their opinion carries a great deal of weight among principals and teachers throughout the district. In addition to the superintendent, having the teachers' union representative as part of the change team would a great benefit. The union representative is a unified voice for the teachers of the district, which would create a two-way street of communication between the individual teachers and the change team. Additionally, since the teachers' union is a primary source of trainings for the district's teachers, the union representative being on the change team would help to sway the union into providing more

trainings for ClassDojo to better prepare teachers to use the technology. Lastly, one or more school principals from throughout the district's most diverse schools would be a benefit to the change team. These principals have power to enact change within their schools and inspire change throughout the district, while also having first-hand experience dealing with the current lack of technology in the problem space.

### Create a Vision for Change

The change vision for the adoption of ClassDojo is simple. The organization wants to bridge communication gaps between schools and families, build stronger communities, and empower students to do their best work and feel good about it. By using ClassDojo's multilingual messaging and posting features, families will no longer miss out on or need to have their children translate important messages from teachers and the district. ClassDojo's classroom features will allow teachers, students, and parents to collaborate in a safe, shared space in order to keep up to date about lessons and assignments, and recognize student achievements, building a stronger classroom community. Finally, ClassDojo's portfolio and badge features will allow students to show off their successes and awards in order to build their confidence and make them proud of learning.

### Communicate the Vision

The strongest way to communicate the vision of adopting ClassDojo is for the change team to use it product on a daily basis and be leaders of the change. The superintendent's monthly letter to parents and teachers can be posted on the district-wide ClassDojo community before being sent out via the standard means, rewarding early-adopters within the district with early access to news and information. The change team's school principals can help to communicate the vision by doing the same as the superintendent. Principals can post school updates and news on the school's ClassDojo community page

early and call out students and teachers who are going above and beyond. The adoption of ClassDojo will start by using its own tools to build a stronger community and culture of recognition.

### Remove Obstacles

The primary parties that might obstacles preventing the change to using ClassDojo are the individuals: teachers, principals, and parents throughout the district. Principals and teachers that refuse to adopt the technology can be swayed to use it by the district or other peers, using evidence of ClassDojo's benefits found within the district itself. Parents can be harder to reach, but if their children adopt the technology as part of their classroom community parents will become more exposed to ClassDojo and become less resistant to the change.

Aside from the people problems, the adoption of ClassDojo could encounter obstacles in its adoption to a lack of training and process. Training can be addressed at two levels. First, through the teachers' union, which regularly holds town-halls and interactive trainings on topics and technologies that affect the district. Second, through trainings provided by the district's teacher-librarians, who are responsible for the day-to-day instruction of technology to students and the de facto tech support representatives for common problems within the school.

### Create Short-Term Wins

If the change plan is followed, the schools with the highest need for ClassDojo's features will be the first to adopt it. Schools with a high degree of diversity and a large percentage of non-native English speakers will see immediate benefits from the multilanguage communication features of ClassDojo. Each family that was previously hard to contact and communicate with, but that now is a consistent contributor to the parent-teacher discourse, becomes a win for the concept of building a stronger school culture and reducing roadblocks in the communication flow between schools and families. Sharing these wins with

other families and schools across the district will help snowball the change across the entire district over time.

### Build on the Change

For each classroom or school that fully adopts ClassDojo there will be more information to help future adoptions. Classroom adoption will fuel the establishment of best-practices and tips that can be shared across the school and throughout the district, which will decrease the likelihood of burnout in other classrooms. School-wide adoption of ClassDojo will prove the possibility and provide best-practices for other administrators within the district. The greatest building block of change for adopting ClassDojo throughout the district would be a direct, measurable improvement in student performance (academic, attendance, or behavioral) due to the use of positive reinforcement within ClassDojo and building student self-esteem through their portfolio of work.

### Anchor the Changes in the Culture

Once ClassDojo is adopted throughout the Kent School District's elementary schools, the district will have a proven example of how a new technology can benefit the teachers, students, and communities of the district. As long as the teachers and principals throughout the district continue to make use of the technology for communication with families, positive reinforcement of student behavior, and acknowledging student successes, the district will have measurable evidence of the effect the technology change had on the district. Using this example of change, and the measurable benefits it provided, new changes throughout the district can be attempted following a similar format as the adoption of ClassDojo.

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