

4 Tips for Schools to Survive Tech Meltdowns



K-12 schools are in an era when just about all their operations are connected to online networks. Any disruption to those services—whether from a cyberattack on the school or affecting a vendor, or because of a natural disaster or other emergencies—can be costly.

No matter the cause, it's important for districts and schools to be able to pivot when the technologies they use daily are out of commission for any duration of time. Education Week gathered advice from experts on how educators can prepare for tech disruptions.

1. Take stock of your tech tools



Take stock of all of the tech tools your district or school is using to better understand your vulnerabilities. If technology is down, which parts of instruction and school operations will be most affected? That could include student and staff laptops, security systems, parent communications, and food service payments. Understanding these vulnerabilities will help districts and schools establish back-up plans in the event of a tech disruption.

3. Train staff and students on the plan



After establishing and implementing a back-up plan, districts and schools should train staff and students on the plan and what a school day would look like without technology. Experts recommend that schools practice the back-up plans like they would a fire drill. Some schools have even started doing tech-free days to ensure everyone has some experience knowing how to continue teaching and learning when tech tools are not available.

2. Have a back-up plan



Establish and implement a plan that ensures learning can continue in the event of a tech-related crisis. This plan could include how attendance will be recorded, how to conduct state tests offline, how to prepare a variety of low-tech or tech-free back-up lessons, and how to communicate with parents.

4. Be Flexible



Having a back-up plan is important, but experts also caution against becoming too wedded to the plan. Schools and districts should also be prepared to ditch the plan depending on the scenario. It's crucial for school and district staff to be adaptable.

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