

SHOULD DIGITAL LEARNING BE IMPLEMENTED IN TRADITIONAL SCHOOL SETTINGS?

written by Jackie Davis March 21, 2019

In recent years, online learning, blended learning, and digital technology have been used to increase educational opportunities for students in a variety of situations. While there are concerns surrounding this type of learning, when education technology is developed and implemented in a thoughtful way, it benefits both students and teachers. The [Digital Learning Annual Conference \(DLAC\)](#), the first on its kind, will celebrate the policymakers, researchers, and practitioners that are innovating digital learning.

To learn more about the conference and the benefits of digital learning, we spoke with Tracy Quarnstrom, the Director of [Wolf Creek Online High School](#). Wolf Creek is a hybrid school that offers both online classes as well as a physical campus that students are welcome to visit twice a week.

At DLAC, Tracy will be part of a session titled “Online Learning is Personal.” For Quarnstrom, it’s important to educate others about the benefits of online learning. “It’s a myth that students online are only getting prepped for tests,” she said. With a mix of content, teachers, and advisors, students can personalize their learning experience without taking away from their educational goals.

“With Google Hangouts and video chats, real-time conversations are possible with teachers,” explained Quarnstrom. Although a student may not be in the same room with a teacher, they still receive one on one interaction. With digital learning, students and teachers are able to lead a “flexible, balanced life.”

“Flexibility is the number one reason we attract students and teachers,” said Quarnstrom. Traditional learning environments can put unneeded stress on both students and staff. The decision to close school due to snow, for example, can impact the number of education days students receive. With e-learning, this is never an issue.

“Traditional schools are beginning to look into e-learning days,” said Quarnstrom. Digital learning days have gone [into effect for some schools](#) to prevent snow day penalties and are being explored on the state level. Digital learning allows both students and staff to continue educational work without the confines of a traditional environment. Quarnstrom and many others at DLAC will explore this and much more.

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