

**BLENDED LEARNING**

# THE GUIDE TO YOUR JOURNEY



**TOP 4 REASONS  
ADMINISTRATORS  
ADOPT BLENDED  
LEARNING**

**KNOW BEFORE  
YOU GO  
CHECKLIST**

**TECH FOR  
YOUR TRAVELS**

# BLENDED LEARNING BENEFITS

## BENEFITS OF BLENDED LEARNING

01 Prepare children for the 21st century economy

02 Increase student engagement & improve performance

03 Promote health and safety

04 Support struggling students and students with IEPs

Hello Education Adventurer,

In the "good old days" of car travel, we didn't have maps on our phones. Back then you'd go to AAA or some other travel service to get maps for your journey, hand that thick booklet to your navigator, and hit the road to places unknown.

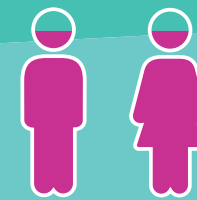
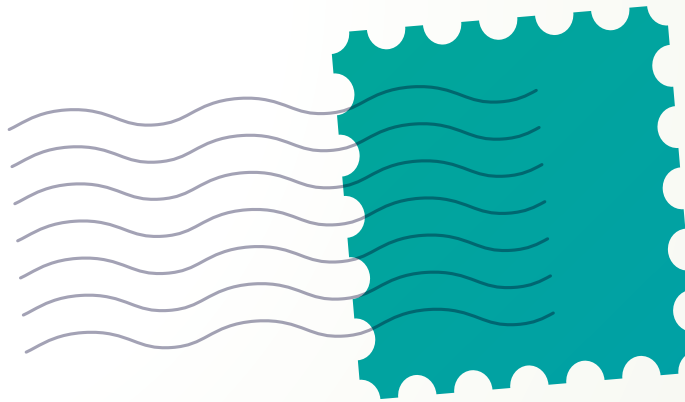
For many of you, blended learning can also be a journey into the unknown. There are so many things to consider, so many stops along the way. Detours and discoveries are around every corner, so you need someone to help you navigate, too. As we look to the future of education, we want this guide to help you effectively combine the best of distance learning with the best of traditional classroom instruction, to produce a truly blended approach to education.

That's why we created Blended Learning: The Guide to Your Journey. Here you'll find research-backed insights into what you need to consider when embarking on your blended-learning journey. You'll also find a map of stops along the way, with checklists to help make sure you don't forget anything as you go.

Thank you for allowing us to help you on your journey into blended learning, and ultimately for helping those who matter most: your students.

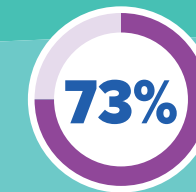
Enjoy the ride,

**Lisa O'Masta**  
President, Learning A-Z

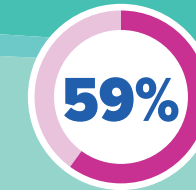


88%

of students using Raz-Plus blended learning solution showed reading gains over break, avoiding the "summer slide".



of educators who utilize a blended learning instruction model observed an increase in student engagement.



of teachers say students are motivated to learn in blended-learning environments.

Sources:  
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<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59381b9a17bffc68bf625df4/t/5949b5db725e25cad52277e2/1498002924767/KeepingPace+2012.pdf>

# WHY BLENDED LEARNING WORKS



An evaluation of evidence-based online learning studies found that **“of the 11 individual studies with significant effects favoring [online education], 9 used a blended learning approach.”**

“  
Blended learning improves the efficacy and efficiency of the entire learning process.  
”

“  
Blended learning ... has the proven potential to enhance both the effectiveness and efficiency of meaningful learning experiences.  
”

(Blended learning: Uncovering Its Transformative Potential in Higher Education, D. Randy Garrison and Heather Kanuka)



Blends of online and face-to-face instruction, on average, had **stronger learning outcomes** than face-to-face instruction alone.



Teachers enable and **inspire students to learn.**

“District(s) must use technology, specifically online learning, to **customize** for students’ different learning needs.”

## Implement Technology For Student Outcomes First

To thrive in the information economy, The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) recommends that all students acquire broad, transferable cognitive and noncognitive (intrapersonal and interpersonal) skills.



80% of surveyed businesses said blended learning is “important” or “critical”



86% of surveyed teachers use digital games for English language instruction



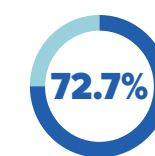
Blended learning helps communication shift from command to conversation.



The knowledge workplace is a blended-learning environment.



**57%** of parents say online learning allows their children to work at their own pace.



**72.7%** of blended-learning schools received acceptable performance ratings. Online-only schools were 37.4%.

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# ROADMAP TO BLENDED LEARNING

## 1. Buckle Up

This will be a long ride, with bumps, curves, and detours along the way.

## 2. Assemble Your Team

You'll be on this journey for a while, so pick people you really like. Assemble a team based on the scope and complexity of your implementation. They will be there to advise, research, and take on tasks.

## 3. Research and Learn

Few go on a trip without first learning something about the destination. Now that you have your travel companions, start researching online to spark ideas.

## 4. Benefits for Students

This concept, not the technology, should be the first item you address. At the end of the school year, what specific goals will you have achieved? Use the SMART model for goals as a guide.

## 5. Engage Students Equitably

What does the school need to do to ensure that the blended learning model provides equitable resources for all students? What more can the school do to help? These are just a few of the questions you must answer before you can start working toward a successful implementation of blended learning.

## 6. Educate Teachers

This must be done within the concept of blended learning and the new opportunities blended learning creates for teachers to grow and to be satisfied in their careers.

## 7. Identify Other Stakeholders

Teachers, unions, principals, parents, and guardians will all need well-thought-out and customized messaging.

## 8. Check the Tech

Determine what type of software, hardware, and internet backbone you want to use. This can range from integrated to modular, Mac to PC and Chromebook. The choices can be dizzying so it's okay to feel a little "carsick."

## 9. Pick Your Place

Choosing exactly which kind of blended-learning strategy you use will impact your technical infrastructure and physical configurations. Types can range from station rotation to virtual. We explain this later in our guide.

## 10. Sing the Same Song

No trip is complete without everyone singing along in the car. The same goes for implementing blended learning: Everyone has to buy in on a culture you define together. Build your team, facilitate their efforts to solve problems, and implement.

## 11. Implement

It's time for the rubber to meet the road. Start small with one class or one school with a plan for growth to your district based on what you've learned.

## 12. Reminisce and Revise

It won't be long before your journey is in the rearview mirror. But that doesn't mean you won't look back on it, think about things you might have missed, and decide to revisit. Evaluating and refining are an ongoing process.

## 13. Detour

Plan in-person visits based on available time and budget to spark ideas; [blendedlearning.org](http://blendedlearning.org) has helpful resources.



Consider surveying stakeholders on thoughts, feelings, knowledge, and technology surrounding blended learning.

Meet with each group to explain vision.

Support parent engagement: help them monitor performance and stay informed about their child's at-home practice by using the parent portal.

Implement technology seminars to help them learn.

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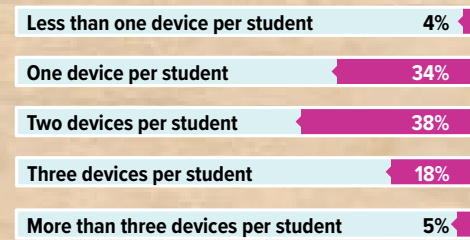
# KNOW-BEFORE-YOU-GO CHECKLIST

- ✓ **DEVELOP A CLEAR GOAL:** Why do your students need blended learning? What are the problems you expect it to solve? Are the expected results clearly defined?
- ✓ **IDENTIFY BARRIERS:** How your goal could break down can be as important as the goal itself. What barriers do you foresee? Like having a spare tire or a roadside preventing access to online and digital resources.
- ✓ **CREATE A SCORING SYSTEM FOR EVALUATION:** Choices in blended learning can be overwhelming. To ensure that you evaluate “apples to apples,” develop a numeric scoring system based on criteria such as ease of use, lesson efficacy, support, and so on. Also ask questions such as, “Would you use this in your classroom?”
- ✓ **DEMO PRODUCTS AND SOFTWARE:** Most software (including blended learning solution Raz-Plus) can be tested through a free trial. Divide and conquer by assigning selected software to different team members to try out, and have them report back. Use your scoring system for equal evaluation across team members.
- ✓ **MAKE SOME PIT STOPS:** Most road trips involve seeing cool places. Your blended-learning journey should be no exception. Stop off at as many blended-learning schools as you can for inspiration, knowledge, and networking. See [www.blendedlearning.org](http://www.blendedlearning.org) for a comprehensive school directory.
- ✓ **EVALUATE RESOURCES TO ENSURE EQUITY:** Do you have enough money or the right equipment for your trip? Maybe you already have the resources, internet connectivity, and equipment to implement blended learning. If not, what do you need? What capital improvements might you need to make, or can you fix up your current spaces?
- ✓ **CREATE A COMMUNICATION PLAN:** Everyone wants to know where you are going and to make sure you get there. Planning how and why you communicate across stakeholder groups is critical. That means a plan to engage students, teachers, administrators, and parents. Each group will have its own needs and concerns.
- ✓ **ESTIMATE YOUR COSTS AND SAVINGS:** Blended learning requires an investment. Estimate start-up and ongoing costs. How will you justify the expense? How can you offset those costs through efficiencies and reallocating assets?
- ✓ **ASSESS TIME REQUIREMENTS:** There will never be a perfect time to implement blended learning. Chances are that when you step on the gas, you won't have everything you need. But it still makes sense to plan a realistic timeline. You may make some unexpected detours on the way, but you will know where you are going and whether you should drive all night to get there.

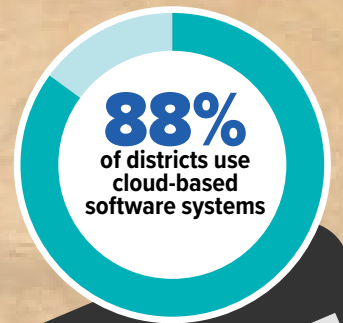
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# TECH FOR YOUR TRAVELS

## Percentages of students with devices by 2022



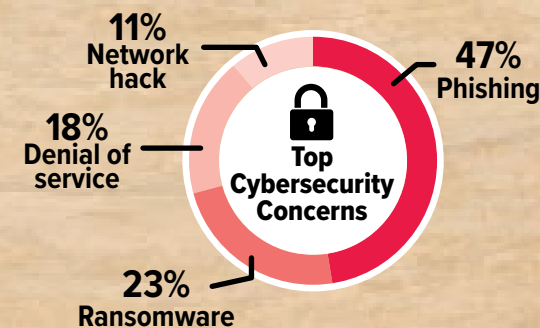
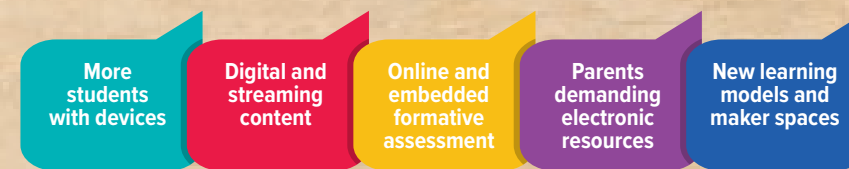
Total may not equal 100% due to rounding.



## Categories to consider when evaluating education software

- Functionality • Accessibility • Technology requirements
- Mobile functionality • Security • Environment for collaboration
- Level of teacher facilitation • Cognitive engagement

## Drivers for internet bandwidth growth



## Types of Devices to Consider



## Wireless Network Questions

- How many people will use the network?
- How many devices will access it?
- What types of devices will access it?
- What are the size and age of the building you will use?
- What will usage patterns or bandwidth demands be?
- How much will it cost to implement and maintain the network?

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# BLENDED LEARNING CONFIGURATIONS

The blended-learning environment can be arranged in various ways. Here are the pros and cons for each.



## Station Rotation

Students rotate through stations in the classroom on fixed schedules with at least one station that is online instruction.

**Pros:** smaller teacher-to-student ratio, better student engagement, lesson flexibility

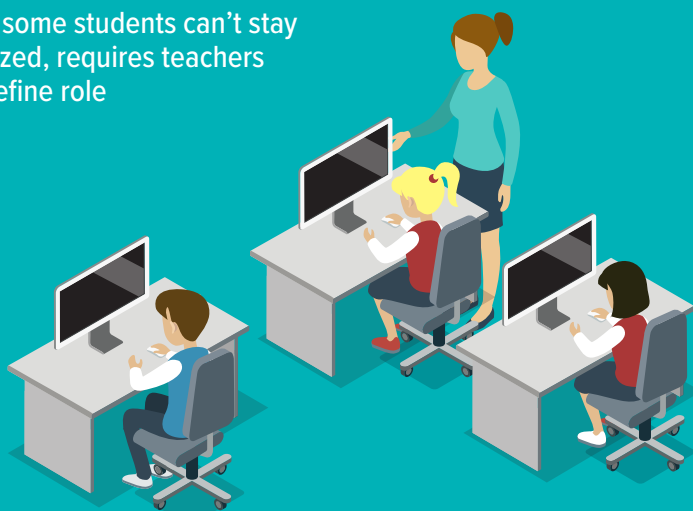
**Cons:** tech issues, noise

## Individual Rotation

Students rotate through stations on an individual basis. Schedules are set by teacher or learning software.

**Pros:** teachers can focus more on students with greater need, and students work at own pace

**Cons:** some students can't stay organized, requires teachers to redefine role



## Lab Rotation

Similar to station rotation but online instruction happens in a computer lab.

**Pros:** smaller teacher-to-student ratio, student collaboration, fixed schedule

**Cons:** tech issues, fixed schedule could stifle quick learners



## Flipped Classroom

Students learn new material remotely at home. Classroom time is dedicated to practice and projects with the teacher.

**Pros:** lessons can be viewed multiple times if needed, and class time focuses on lesson implementation

**Cons:** little cost efficiencies, requires high level of student initiative, and dependent on student internet/bandwidth/device access at home



## A La Carte Model

Students can opt to use distance learning to supplement their in-person classes.

**Pros:** increases opportunities, options, and flexibility

**Cons:** lack of structure can lead to disengagement



## Enriched Virtual Model

Most courses are completed remotely by the student. Face-to-face instruction time is required but not every day.

**Pros:** combines benefits of a la carte and flipped classrooms, a good bridge between classroom and virtual-only learning

**Cons:** students may not be able to juggle home and school requirements, and will need personal devices for coursework

## Flex Model

Students direct their own learning remotely. Teachers provide face-to-face instruction when the student needs them.

**Pros:** students move at own pace, possible lower costs

**Cons:** large space and device requirements



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# MILE MARKERS

What gets measured gets done, which is why it's critical to track student progress along the blended-learning journey. Here are some tips to get it done.

## Develop and Track Probes

Teachers, schools and districts can develop "probes," or tracking data points, to monitor progress. The probes can be tracked on a spreadsheet or, better yet, automatically in learning software.

## Survey Your Stakeholders

Don't forget to ask all your stakeholders for measurable input. Annual input from parents, teachers, and students will help you understand what's working and what needs improvement.

## 1 Student Goal Setting

Under the teacher's direction, each student evaluates skills and then sets daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual goals (or a combination of those). The SMART model is often used. Teachers check in with students to monitor, encourage, and support progress. If that sounds a lot like a work environment, it's by design.

## 3 Lean on Each Other

We can all learn from each other's experiences in this new, uncharted territory. Be sure to rely on the experts who live and breathe blended learning, and have deep experience in best practices. You can tap into their knowledge to ensure you're serving your students in the best way possible.

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