

St. Mary's City Schools - Auglaize County

Mobile Learning Devices give digital learning options to small school district

With just two computer labs in and a handful of computers in traditional classrooms, St. Mary's City Schools' Technology Coordinator Kyle Menchhofer was looking for a way to provide more digital learning opportunities for his district of 2,100 students.



While searching the Internet for innovative solutions, Menchhofer discovered the research Elliot Soloway conducted on the subject of digital learning in the classroom. Dr. Soloway also is the co-founder of [GoKnow Learning, Inc.](http://www.goknowlearning.com), which creates and markets educational software for mobile devices.

Fast Facts

What is a mobile learning device (MLD)?
3rd, 4th and 5th grade students at St. Mary's Intermediate School use Internet-equipped smart phones (phone and texting disabled) for learning about and completing assignments in a variety of subjects.

Typical Use
4th grade math students learn geometric shape and angles in the classroom, then use their MLDs to take pictures of objects around the school building that portray those shapes and angles.

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Program link
http://www.smriders.net/Mobile_Learning

Menchhofer secured local board support for a pilot program to equip 232 intermediate school students and four teachers with mobile learning devices. In the pilot, students were issued a smart phone device without phone or texting that they could use to complete assignments, both in school and at home.

The pilot was a success. Student performance improved, as did homework completion rates. Menchhofer then partnered with Verizon Wireless and secured E-Rate federal funding to cover bandwidth expense. Menchhofer does recommend looking closely at the requirements of any funding sources for restrictions that could alter how a plan is implemented. For example, E-Rate funds cover only classroom use, so students can no longer take the devices home, which change slightly the increased homework completion rates observed during the pilot.

