




To: Senator Michael Dunleavy

From: Bob Whicker, Director 
Consortium for Digital Learning

Re: Assurances for Personalized Learning Opportunity Grants

The Consortium for Digital Learning (CDL) has advanced the use of technology in Alaska schools since 2006. Through this experience and research, we've learned what works. We know that a personalized learning opportunity grant program using one electronic device for each student and teacher within the regular instructional program across all content areas can increase student achievement, improve instruction and create opportunities for cost efficiencies.

From our experience, we have developed critical processes designed to effectively support school districts in the planning, launch, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of successful and sustainable 1:1 digital learning projects. These processes are research-based and field tested. Omitting or sacrificing any one of these critical components has consequences. Our design of the Personalized Learning Opportunity grant processes are the result of our direct involvement in digital learning projects for more than 130 schools and 32 districts.

We believe that local control of school reform efforts is imperative. Local decisions regarding components of a digital learning initiative must match a district's academic and operational goals, instructional design and technical infrastructure. Hardware and software purchases are important foundations for successful project implementations. The project design should include mobile devices that are full featured, and fully enabled for web access or stand alone use. Devices available from numerous major vendors (Microsoft, Apple, Dell, among others) meet that criteria. Vendor support in the form of professional development and technical services are also critical components of the project design and should be available in a variety of blended (face-to-face, synchronous and asynchronous) delivery options.

The Consortium for Digital Learning wants to assure all stakeholders that processes of the Personalized Learning Opportunity grants will follow the above principles to give districts the best possibility for improving student achievement, changing instructional practices, and creating cost containments. Honoring districts' local choices of hardware, software and services is essential. The CDL is vendor neutral and will work with vendors identified by local school districts that are participating in grant projects.