Spotlight Transcript_Ep6_MattPoteet_&_DevinPage_2025

The Day We Stopped Guessing: Tools That Helped Calvert County Make Student Digital Behavior Visible

Yasmin London (00:10.446)
Hello and welcome to Spotlight on student digital safety, the Coria podcast where we unpack the most interesting stories, strategies and learnings on student digital safety for schools, by schools all around the world. I'm your host, Yasmin London, and I am so excited to welcome to today's Spotlight guest. We've got two today, so double trouble.

We've got Matt Petit, Director of Information Technology and Devon Page, Technology Integration Specialist from Calvert County Public Schools in Maryland, West Virginia. Welcome, gentlemen. How are doing today?

Matt Poteet (00:44.259)
Doing great, thank you.

Devin Page (00:47.352)
Great, thank you. Thanks for having us.

Yasmin London (00:48.718)
So great to have you on. There's so much going on, I guess, in the world of digital safety and technology at the moment. I'm really, really excited to hear what you're doing in your school district. It sounds like you've made some incredible strides. But one of the things that I do like to start with is to sort of figure out the lay of the land, according to you both, when it comes to digital safety. So when you look at schools...

and the digital landscape today and what your experiences are. We know that there are negatives, but there are also positives. So I wanna know what excites you the most when you think of schools and digital safety today.

Devin Page (01:30.114)
I'll start with that. So what excites me the most, and maybe has most of my career, is just the expanded potential for learning that.

The digital landscape provides. mean, are like solidly in the third decade of educating 21st-century learners. It's a term that's probably been played out since we're like 30 years in over the past or almost 30 years. And over these past 20 years of the 21st century that we're living in, educators across the country and here locally in Calvert County and Maryland have done just an amazing job of leveraging the potential of technology, providing distance learning opportunities, video conferencing with experts, and virtual field trips.

active lessons, digital resources, which really now supplement hard copy materials. Sometimes you have both. And all blended learning opportunities, something that we're really trying to push here in Calvert County, are blended learning for teachers in the classroom. So what, just as has always been the case and was the dawn was the case in the dawn of the internet age.

In the hands of talented educators, students and teachers are going to recreate learning. They're going to recreate and jointly collaborate with each other to kind of reshape and reimagine what learning can look like. And that's really amplified in a digital landscape. It's almost as if what a teacher can do in the classroom and what a student can do, the campus has been broadened and widened because of the digital age. And so that's just super exciting to me. Kind of has been my entire career. And I think that's also the case nowadays.

Yasmin London (02:58.808)
What an answer. Absolutely nailed it, Devon. I think it's so exciting, isn't it? We can get pulled into this, I guess, concern and fear-based mentality sometimes, but it's really important to know that there's light and shade to all of these things and that there's so many positives that come out of the evolution of technology, particularly for schools, for students, staff, and even parents integrating in. Matt, what about you? What are you most excited about?

Matt Poteet (03:25.038)
I'm just going to really kind of echo a lot of what Devin said. He's out in the field working with the teachers and educators, helping to integrate the new technologies and platforms that we've procured. So I'm just going to go with his answer on that one and just echo some of the same sentiments.

Yasmin London (03:48.014)
You

Yasmin London (03:51.406)
Fantastic. It's great when we all agree. And look, there are many, many positive aspects, as Devon mentioned. One of the things that I did want to ask, I guess, before we get started, is there's over in Australia and certainly I know in the UK and in New Zealand, the film, the Netflix series, Adolescents has been really, really hot. Is that something that you're seeing over in the

US? Is that starting to, I guess, generate conversation around digital safety in schools over in your neck of the woods?

Matt Poteet (04:21.934)
I personally have not, I have seen the Netflix advertisements for that movie, but I have actually not tuned into that yet. It's something I'm certainly interested in. So I can't say that that movie's spurred anything, but being an IT director for a pretty large school system, it's certainly been at the forefront of my mind. And now that you've mentioned it, I'll have to put that Netflix flick at the top of my list.

Yasmin London (04:48.654)
Yeah, it's heavy watching, I'll say that, but you know, really interesting, I guess, in terms of the conversation that's being had around digital safety. Devon, have you seen it?

Devin Page (04:59.704)
I have not seen it. I think I've heard whispers of it, you know, but so like Matt, I'm gonna have to, you know, catch it on the back end, and then maybe we can give you our movie review of it. But I mean, there have been, I there was a documentary, something along the lines of social media and how it impacts adolescents. And if this Netflix documentary that you're referring to has the same flavours the one I watched a couple of years ago, it was actually super scary in terms of

Yasmin London (05:06.574)
Yep.

Devin Page (05:29.784)
What the potential for students' use, children's use of social media could be on the brain, brain development, and mental health. So those are certainly concerns that we have in Calvert County Public Schools ,and I think educators across the globe in the digital age.

Yasmin London (05:45.612)
Yeah, absolutely. Well, I think it's a hot tip for both of you to watch and certainly one that if it's not over in the US in a big way, it shortly will be. But it is centered around a boy called Jamie in a UK town who unfortunately gets really sucked into the the manospheric online radicalization style content, the misogynistic anti-feminist content. And, you know, I won't ruin it, but he commits a crime, and it shocks the town, I guess, and really starts conversations around the impacts of this sort of content on young minds. So a really, really good one. And I guess it speaks to the importance of visibility with technology, which is what we're talking about today, really making sure that we're not just sort of blocking content, and I guess...

You're reporting in basic terms, but how do we get down to that granular level where we're starting to see patterns of behaviour, where we're starting to really get to the good stuff when it comes to the tech that's available? Now, Matt, your school recently made a fairly significant

commitment by shifting to one-to-one managed devices. know, the evolution away from BYOD in many schools around the world is real. Can you tell me a bit more about this project and what the driving force was behind the decision?

Matt Poteet (07:04.494)
Yeah, I'd love to. I'd say there were three main factors that contributed to the shift. The first one was to deal with equity and access to digital resources. We need to ensure that all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background, have access to technology for learning.

This also provides consistent access to online resources for students, not only at school but at home. And in fact, nearly all of our textbooks are now digital. So students don't carry around multiple textbooks all day. It's basically just one laptop.

And with regards to testing, most of our state assessments are all online. So, having this one-to-one model helps streamline testing administration and save instructional time and resources. So I'd say that was one big factor. The second one would be a big push to personalized or learning and differentiated instruction.

our one-to-one laptop model that we have for students in grades three through 12. It helps teachers differentiate instruction, allowing students sometimes to learn at their own pace with adaptive software and lesson plans. It also encourages engagement through multimedia resources and hands-on learning opportunities for students.

And the last one, certainly a charge that we've always had, is ensuring that our students are college and career ready. We really need to equip our students with 21st century skills like collaboration and problem solving to prepare them for college and careers where digital proficiency is essential. So, having our one-to-one laptop initiative also enabled teachers to extend learning beyond the classroom through flipped and blended learning models. So I'd say all three of those

Matt Poteet (08:55.568)
Kind of, we're an impetus for that for the movement.

Yasmin London (09:01.25)
Yeah, absolutely. There has been a fairly significant investment that your school district has made. And I imagine lots of our listeners today have sort of thought about changing over to one-to-one devices, but obviously budget is a really big issue there. How did you get it across the line? What finally pushed you, I guess, to make that leap and to get that buy-in across your school stakeholders to make that happen?

Matt Poteet (09:23.886)

Yeah, I wouldn't say there was like any one defining moment that pushed us to make the leap into one-to-one. However, I know that during the COVID-19 pandemic, it forced a lot of school districts to adopt remote learning and issue laptops to students. So many districts were forced into a one-to-one model, and that was a defining moment that required a lot of them to make the leap.

Devin Page (09:33.316)
you

Matt Poteet (09:48.619)
But we had begun to transition to the one-to-one model a couple of years before the pandemic. So our rationale for the shift really occurred over time. And I'd say the main impetus behind it was the push from our Department of Instruction. And really, I should probably turn it over to Devin now, since he's in instruction, to talk about some of the instructional needs and focuses that we had, maybe, that caused the shift to the one-to-one initiative.

Devin Page (10:19.564)
Yeah, I mean, the good thing about so Matt's in the Department of Information Technology and I'm in the Department of Instruction, but we collaborate. He and I his department my department a lot of.

Technically, the Office of Digital Learning, which is kind of a wing of the Department of Instruction. And I mean, I would just say that as the internet, as I've talked about, you know, 21st century learner, the internet expanded over the past, you know, prior to the 21st century, but materials began to really kind of either migrate online or expand to include hard copy and digital versions of the same materials, like textbooks, like I mentioned before. And when that happened, it really just became apparent that we had to head in the direction of one-to-one.

could see kind of the writing on the wall. And we also know that today's students, and Matt alluded to this when he talked about college and career readiness, will shift jobs depending on what your sources are, maybe even careers, an average of four times or three to seven times in a lifetime. And the chances are that some of these jobs are going to require digital proficiency. So that's really kind of a high likelihood for any number of jobs that students are going to have, know, Millennials and Gen Z. So we really owe it to our students to prepare them for college and career

readiness by building their digital literacy skills and we're going to need to be one-to-one to do that. Computer labs or shared laptop carts, those are just not going to suffice as those needs become greater and greater.

Yasmin London (11:41.102)

Yeah, no, you're absolutely right. The future of personalisation and career readiness, they're critical considerations for schools, aren't they? know, there's a, again, a mindset where there's a lot of blocking and banning around the way that kids are using technology. But ultimately, our role as educators and school leaders is to build, you know, ethical, resilient, knowledgeable digital citizens, isn't it? So that they can go out and really contribute to society really well.

When it comes to other considerations around this, what about the teachers? They are pushing for more control over what is happening in the classroom as well? What were the challenges they were facing that you were hearing about?

Devin Page (12:22.7)
I mean, absolutely. So as a teacher, Matt and I were actually both social studies teachers, and he's been in a kind of the central office role for a very long time. I've only been out of the classroom for three years. And so I can just say from experience, and we all know, teachers crave and seek to take advantage of all the different kinds of tools they can, whether they're digital tools or whether they're any kind of creative tool that a teacher might use at their disposal within their toolbox.

to enhance learning, but they want to ensure that those tools are going to be efficient and that they're going to be effective. That's always the case. again, digital or not. So teachers do recognize the advantage of going to one-to-one that Matt spoke of, but they also, as you kind of alluded to, want control. They want to maintain control, even if it's whatever students might be doing on a digital device. So teachers kind of have retained a fear of placing computers with the entirety of the internet into the hands of like kids who are ages, let's say eight to 18, from third grade to 12th grade. That's where our one-to-one laptops kind of, that's the breadth of the students who have one-to-one laptops. So if all of those students are just simply gonna have access to the internet, teachers are gonna want control of that. And that's gonna be paramount to them to kind of maintain an effective and functional classroom to maximize learning.

Yasmin London (13:42.23)
Yeah, absolutely. And I want to know what tools you implemented and how you gained those deeper insights. But before we get to that, what were you seeing around student behaviors that, you know, what were the early warning signs that you were starting to see? Perhaps there were problems that this was potentially a bigger issue than you expected. Were there any situations or examples that either of you could share about, I guess, the student behaviors that led to this control and visibility decision?

Devin Page (14:15.2)
So with early warning signs that, yeah, go ahead, Matt.

Matt Poteet (14:16.398)
So

Yasmin London (14:20.974)
Sorry guys

Matt Poteet (14:22.99)
Now, David, please go ahead, you can start.

Devin Page (14:26.924)
Now, I'm just, with specific early warning signs, I wouldn't say that there was kind of a specific set of circumstances that caused us to want to purchase or dive into a tool that was gonna give teachers more control, other than just the fact that the expansion of the internet.

has kind of a, it's like a two-sided coin, right? So there are the positives of that, but there are also a negatives of all the different things that students can access that we really don't want them to access. And from YouTube to games that students can play online, those will be, I think, the early warning signs will be the student's proclivity for getting distracted or pulled into distractions that might be games.

Yasmin London (15:03.736)
Mm-hmm.

Devin Page (15:22.526)
that they could play on the laptop. I would also say that

The first kind of thing that kind of stood out as something that we need to kind of pull back was cell phone use. And cell phone use caused students with the growth of social media, and particularly things like Instagram and Snapchat, that kind of appeal to youngsters as something that was an easy distractor. But we address that in Calvert County Public Schools. We're beyond a year, a little over a year of a new policy we put in that really curbs

or cell phone use, but a lot of those same behaviors can be replicated on a laptop. And we know that. And so kind of like to pair with our new policy that really kind of locked down students' cell phones in Calvert County Public Schools, we had to follow up with another thing that was going to kind of curb their tendency to want to get off task on laptops. And so I think that's kind of the best answer to the question about early warning signs, that kind of wanted us to dive into the tools we have now.

Yasmin London (16:02.367)
Mm.

Yasmin London (16:18.776)
Yeah.

Matt Poteet (16:23.938)
Just one thing to piggyback on that, I'd like to add, would just be, think a lot of it was, we truthfully at the time didn't really, I don't think anybody really understood the extent of the problem. There were, think maybe Devan used the word, some hints, some early, maybe some minor little signs out there that teachers would pick up on.

Yasmin London (16:25.935)
Yeah.

Matt Poteet (16:47.45)
But you know, students are really savvy. When there's nothing, when there's nobody or no software that's monitoring their online activity, I mean, they can get very creative with how they kind of hide things and, you know, they can do things really without the teacher knowing. And so, you know, sometimes we had teachers that came to us from other districts and would tell us about the software, and it was

It only took actually the first one that came to me, and it piqued my interest immediately because I knew this was an issue that teachers were having, and reall,y having a teacher come from another district that had similar software, they informed us of it. And then immediately we went to research it, and we researched several different companies, and obviously moved forward with Linewise. And we've now, the Classwize that we've put in that monitor

Now we've really seen the signs that we probably could have or should have seen in the past. It was just impossible to know it because of how crafty students can be in hiding their online activity. So now we've got a great resource using the application through Linewise. And now our teachers are really able to monitor that online behavior. So...

The only thing I think that we're frustrated about is the fact that we didn't find out about it sooner and couldn't implement a solution sooner.

Yasmin London (18:15.254)
It's so difficult, isn't it? Yes, go for it, Devon, please.

Devin Page (18:15.886)
Can I jump into that? Can I add something real quick to that?

Yeah, because I think actually I'll credit Matt here a lot because he talks about a teacher coming from a different district and kind of sharing with us what they had in another district that was controlling students' online activity. And Matt really pursued that. I mean, he pushed for looking at different opportunities for us to have the tools we have now. And I didn't, I mean, I was a

teacher in the classroom and saw some of the things that were students playing games when they shouldn't have been.

We were told what we hadn't told as teachers was that you really have to engage with students. You have to monitor the classroom. You don't want to be sitting behind your desk. You want to be out and about, roaming around the class and interacting with your students. And that's going to take care of students trying to be off task. But the question is, is that sustainable? When you have one teacher in a classroom with 25 students, and they're all kind of working on a computer where the screen is facing those students. And I should have known that there is a need for this earlier. I think Matt kind of alluded to

Maybe we should have known that students might have been doing some things that we now know with Classwize that we really have kind of our eyes have been opened.

My own son, even when he was at home, would claim he was playing a game on his laptop that was an elementary platform regarding math called DreamBox. And DreamBox allowed you to play math games. But I once walked behind him, I saw him do the four-finger swipe on his trackpad to go to a different desktop. And I said, whoa, I literally did not know you could do that. So my 10 year old son taught me something that I was then able to see students doing in the classroom. So.

Devin Page (19:54.724)
I think over time, it just became an awareness on our part that that's unsustainable advice for teachers. It's just to kind of roam around the room. And also you don't want them to, you know, to feel like they don't have the control that you talked abou,t teachers you're into having in the classroom.

Yasmin London (20:00.654)
Yeah.

Matt Poteet (20:07.66)
And Yasmin, just one thing to add too - my wife is a, we actually met at this high school about 25 years ago. She still works at that same high school. And so I obviously have her, but many other folks that I've continued to keep in contact with, both teachers in the classroom and administrators. And just the two biggest pushes they had, and I know Devin already alluded to one of them, and that was the issue with the cell phones in class.

Matt Poteet (20:36.916)
With solutions like Classwize, if you still allow cell phones in class, it's gonna basically render that software useless. Because students can get on their cell phones and get on their cellular network, and don't have to go through our content filters. So, if you're gonna give them a laptop

with content filters and controls and class-wise software and all these things, but then they've got another device that has unfettered access to the internet. So that's really kind of step one.

It was critical to get that out. then secondly, again, the ability to be able to monitor our students' online behavior and not only monitor what they're doing, but even be able to open up new sessions and be able to open up a new webpage where we want them to go so that maybe they can't go to any other webpages. And we know they're going to be focused where we want them to be. Being able to have that type of ability as a teacher to empower myself and my students, it's just

been transformational. So really I think that dual approach of getting the cell phones out of classrooms and getting in you know software that can not only monitor but really help teachers become you know more facilitators I think is critical and it's what really is it's been a huge project for us the past couple years and it's been super exciting.

Yasmin London (22:01.312)
Yeah, I think there's so much to unpack with what you just shared. But the first thing that comes to mind is something that I think so many schools are really grappling with in that back in the day, we had teachers that could rely on eyes and ears alone, you know, the roaming around the classrooms, knowing the students knowing what's going on in their in their family lives and what to be looking for. But ultimately, you know, this whole conversation is really outlined that we don't even know what we don't know, we don't know what kids are getting up to. We don't understand the tricks that 10 year olds have when it comes to being able to get rid of a desktop, you know, and to create a second one. We do need technology to help us evolve. And what I'm hearing from both of you here is schools that choose to step up, who choose to take ownership, who say, you know, we're banning cell phones, but we're putting a tool like Classwize into the classrooms to control this experience and really personalise it. They're the ones who are going to win in this game, aren't they? They're the ones that are the innovators, the ones that are going to get the results and you know, the positive, I guess, reinforcement from all stakeholders. Would you, would you agree with that?

Matt Poteet (23:10.254)
I think every single stakeholder is a winner here. Teachers being able to facilitate the type of lessons that they want and know that the students are going to be using these devices as devices for productivity, not devices of distraction, just to give teachers that confidence. So that's huge for them. And then students also, oftentimes, students get upset with discipline, but I'm a former volleyball coach as well. And a lot of times, my players would kind of openly get frustrated about some of the difficult things that we would do in practice, and some of the discipline, and some of the rules and regulations. But on the side, privately, they would admit that they know that it makes them better. And they kind of needed some of those guardrails up, and they needed to be pushe,d and they'd admit those things privately. And we've had many,

many students doing the same thing. Because when they can do something, if it's relatively easy, even if they know they shouldn't, students will often do it.

And if we can just put these guardrails and you know to prevent them from doing it they're gonna you know I think they also they know what's right and they appreciate it and I think even though our number one search term for a lot of students is how to get around class wise students are trying to it you know we do have a lot of students again ultimately when they kind of do give in and realize that this really is what's best for them and we've seen you know with students getting the cell phones out and getting the class

Matt Poteet (24:43.114)
Software in. We've seen students just, you know, their attention greatly increase and, most importantly, know achievement go up.

Yasmin London (24:53.826)
Yeah, exactly. think in the end, look, kids will be kids, and they don't want to admit when maybe something isn't working for the,m and they don't want to lose face. And so that's also our job in schools, isn't it, to do what's best for them and to really understand the environment in which they operate to try and achieve the best for them. Beyond keeping students focused, because that's obviously a really big issue and something that all schools are really, really zeroed in on.

Were there any other unexpected benefits? Devon, I remember you sharing something about a factoring example. Could you share a bit about an unexpected benefit when it comes to that?

Devin Page (25:31.214)
Yeah.

Devin Page (25:36.386)
Well, 100%. I'll start with that one. There are others. So I was in a math teacher, a high school math teacher's classroom, and I was kind of troubleshooting something else. And while I was there, he was teaching a factoring lesson using manipulatives, like kind of blocks and units and rows of a certain unit of measurement. And he would give it a potential problem, create a rectangle using one three-by-six block and three, you know, items of a row with three blocks each, and then six units of individual block,s and then create a rectangle, howeve,r you can do that. But he was running Classwize and he's got Classwize on his screen, but he's got the problem on the smart board. So he freezes the smart board, and he watches these students try to problem solve and come up with how to create a rectangle with those different requirements. And he'll see students trying to solve the problem in different ways and successfully solving the problem in different ways. And so he has an awesome relationship with his students, and he would just go to one of his students and "Hey, that's really cool how you did that Would you mind if I show that to the class?"

Yasmin London (26:29.486)
Mm.

Devin Page (26:38.56)
And so, invariably, and I've watched him do this, every single time he asked a student, they always said yes. So he would go back and he would unfreeze the smart board, put the class, put that one student's tile into live view, so it's like full screen view, and the students would see that particular solution, and they would talk about it and discuss how that student kind of solved the problem, so to speak. And then he would do it again. He would kind of let the kids try to figure it out. Some kids kind of mimic what they saw on the smartboard or others have figured out a different way to do it. And so he'd say, Hey, you solved the same solution with the same parameters, but you did it a different way. So, can we show the class how you did it? And so he would do the same thing and put it in Live View. And then the students would see yet another way to solve that same problem. And it was just such a unique way to use class-wise and to use Live View that I had not even anticipated as we were sort of.

Walking teachers through and training teachers and how to use Classwize that I think that's the beauty of education, right?

Teachers are given the tools, and there are best practices, and we all know what those best practices are. You talked about communication, engaging with your students, and getting to know your students. But then really talented teachers are going to think of a creative way to use ClassWise to make it a tool for, as you said, personalized learning, and also kind of like facilitate discussion and problem solving amongst their students and with their students. So I was just super excited about that. And I will be sharing that with all of the

in my district as a way to kind of promote not just what class wise can do to monitor students, but what class wise can do as a kind of as an instructional tool. I'll give you another one too. A middle school English teacher.

Yasmin London (28:12.481)
Mm.

Devin Page (28:15.756)
She was telling me how she used Classwize as a formative assessment tool. She would see different things that students were doing as a way to kind of maybe a writing sample or some written response that students were producing. And based on their writing that she could see in ClassWise, she would then differentiate her lesson accordingly and sometimes even plan the next day's lesson based on what she had witnessed in ClassWise on different students' computers. So those are just two examples of how Classwize is a productivity tool, an engagement tool, a tool that can make learning that much more robust and interactive with students. There used to be some sort of an attachment you could put on top of a smart board

projector that would then connect through Bluetooth to students' computers. And we thought that was the most innovative thing. And oh, wow, you can take what a student is doing on their computer, you can show the entire class what that student's doing.

Well, Classwize can do that, you know, times 25, because you have live viewing Classwize. So it was just a wonderfully creative example of what teachers do when they have a tool they can be creative with.

Yasmin London (29:15.784)
Mm. Yeah.

Yasmin London (29:22.988)
I absolutely love that. mean, literally last night I was helping my 10 year old daughter with her homework and we're going through, you know, the importance of, of mapping how you came to a particular answer. And that a lot of the time, when it comes to your teachers, it's really important for them to see how you work it out rather than the result. And, know, this is so important across the board. So to be able to do that with technology now, and to not only do it, but utilize examples of other students thinking for everybody else to learn from, you know, it's really exciting. That's innovation, you know, it's not just about distractions and safety. It's great to be able to tick, you know, those boxes, but this is where students really learn and grow. And that engagement, I guess, in a lesson or in a class is just amplified. So it's, it's incredible to hear these stories. And, you know, expect the unexpected when we start to put these tools into the hands of teachers in classrooms. And of course,

those innovative, very switched-on students that we have across the world. Now, there are so many benefits to a tool like ClassWise, but it does take buy-in, I guess, from multiple stakeholders across a school or a district board, for example, to sort of have it implemented. Matt, how did you do that? Who were the key people that you had to engage with to achieve the success that you have?

Matt Poteet (30:48.942)
Boy. So with this one, it was so critical to engage.

With a rollout, district-wide rollout of this size, it's gonna be basically rolled out in every third through 12th grade classroom. We really needed to tap into all stakeholders. Working with the Office of Digital Learning and Instruction, because they've got several integration specialists who are in the schools who get to work with teachers, was critical to get them on board. Because first off, we had to figure out which application we wanted to use. Because, as great as Linewize is, obviously you guys have got a bunch of competitors as well. So the first order of business was kind of even figuring out what solution we wanted to move forward with. And so that was a collaborative effort between both the instruction and the IT department. From there, once the decision was made to move forward with Linewise and use their applications and tools,

that's when we really needed to engage with several pilot teachers as well, just to make sure that everything is working properly as expected. Obviously we need to tap into quite a bit of IT staff as well, like our network engineers to ensure there are going to be any conflicts with any of our existing content filters or just any of the backend IT pieces, applications that we had set up on down to student services and administrators and buildings to get feedback from them. Even legally, we haven't rolled out the Monitor product yet.

But you know, things like that, sometimes you know you need to get legal involved to find out what some of the responsibilities will be, so you know, just in a rollout like this. I just cannot emphasize communication and collaboration enough. You've got to include all stakeholders, and I certainly did not mean to leave out parents. You've got to communicate with them. What's going on? know why it's happening when it's going to happe,n that it's a partnership with them and so just really, really critical to not only identify and include

Matt Poteet (32:56.56)
all the stakeholders, but to consistently communicate with them throughout the entire process. And I think this, for us at least in our system, it's been such a great example for how our two departments in instruction and IT, you know, can collaborate and work together.

And we tag team all of this. Whenever an issue comes, if it comes Devon's way or if it comes our way in IT, we constantly communicate. We have weekly meetings with each other. But again, involving all the stakeholders is critical. And I know a lot of folks say that and provide lip service about it, but I just can't overemphasize the importance of communicating with everybody consistently.

Yasmin London (33:38.966)
Yeah, it's always a better thing to over communicate than under communicate, isn't it? When you've got this many stakeholders, parents, teachers, IT staff, engineers, student services, admins, legals, there's got to be a lot of concerns. Were there any sort of key concerns, Matt, that came up for those stakeholder groups? Was there anything that you, a consistent problem that you needed to address?

Matt Poteet (34:01.038)
I think just the biggest concerns, now, at the beginning, they were technical. You know, it's a very robust application and, you know, there's lots of different settings and ways that it can impact your network. So, you know, the biggest piece was just, you know, getting it off the ground from a technical standpoint, making sure there weren't any conflicts with our network. And, you know, there were certainly some growing pains with that. But the great, another huge huge piece is regardless of what vendor a school district might select, ensuring that you know you've got a good support team because these issues come up across the board with all vendors when you're talking about software this robust. So you've really got to have a strong support team with the vendor you use. part of the reason we're on this podcast here with

Linewize is just such a phenomenal team there, especially the support team that has weekly, this has continued to have weekly or biweekly meetings with us, you know, during the entire rollout, as well as we've been in it for a few months. And they've just been a fantastic partner as well. Any district out there that's looking for you know, software of this size and magnitude and scope, certainly make sure you do your homework and that you reach out to other districts and find out about the type of support that you're going to get.

Yasmin London (35:28.258)
I think that's great advice. Look, in the end, as much as we love, we love hearing this fantastic feedback for Linewize, but ultimately, I think, you know, our mission is to make sure that schools are looking at this as, you know, a category of solution. If they're not looking at it at the moment, you know, backtracking to our conversation earlier about another school district leader sharing that this even existed for you, Matt, that that's what we want to make sure we're encouraging here is, is that schools actually have the tools that they need that they're sort of moving along with the evolution of technology and not using tech that's not fit for purpose anymore. I think that's the really important thing to remember. There are solutions out there, but making sure the right one that fits your school or district is really important. On that, and this is a question, I guess, for you, Matt, but of course, you, Devin, as well is if a school wanted to implement Classwize or a similar system you know, tomorrow, what are the first steps that they should take? What would they need?

Matt Poteet (36:28.142)
Well, the first thing again, well, have they decided on what project they're going to, what product they're going to implement? First, you've to, you know, obviously figure out which solution you're going to move forward with. And then once you've done that, you know, making sure that, you know, your stakeholders in your district, be it the IT team, be it instruction, student services, different administrators, you know, your various chiefs, just making sure that they're all very well aware of what's going on what the issue is, if a school system doesn't have a solution, like Classwize, everybody knows the issue, but it should be clearly laid out with examples of what's happening. And then you lay out what the solution is, and then the steps that it's going to take. mean, just methodically laying everything out, know, creating timelines with folks, you know, assigning points of contact so that we know exactly what the roles and responsibilities of everyone on our team are going to b,e as well as the roles and responsibilities with the vendor, with L,inewize to know what we're going to be responsible for and what they're going to be responsible for. So, just really laying out timelines.

With many goals involved and including all the stakeholders. Communication to parents is going to be critical. First off, communication with the staff, though. A lot of time,s folks will even forget about that. They'll tell the parents, and they'll forget to tell their staff what's coming. So obviously first you need to talk to the administrators inthe buildings, then you would inform all staff so that they're aware, and then pretty shortly thereafter make sure that the parents and the students are informed for what's coming. So again, just kind of more on

The themes of constant collaboration and communication with all stakeholders. And then just again working closely with the vendor and your technical folks in the IT department. As Devin said, I'm a former social studies teacher. So, you know, I don't have a computer science background. I'm not a former network security engineer, network engineer by any means. So, you know, I really had to tap into their expertise quite a bit and put them in contact with the technical experts at Linewise. So just making sure you've got the right people on the

Matt Poteet (38:37.58)
The roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and the communication and collaboration is consistent.

Yasmin London (38:46.636)
I think that's fantastic advice. Devin, anything more to add from the coal face?

Devin Page (38:52.836)
Just the, not only is communication, is the consistency of communication is important, but we, I think, made it a point to communicate in many different ways. So we made videos, we made kind of instructional videos in the beginning of the year.

As we were changing our entire filtering system and how Classwize was gonna interact with the filtering system, Matt and I and my supervisor collaborated on that video, and one of the other Office of Digital Learning specialists was the narrator for that video, and we did it, I mean, over time. We made it a point to try to get it done as quickly as possible. We kind of had a deadline, and we worked overtime to get it done ,and the...

The technology integration specialist who did the narrating even did it over the weekend. So that was one thing we also Matt and I just participated in Kind of a digital learning night for parents at an elementary school and we we communicated to those who are in attendance how class wise works and and how We in Calvert County Public Schools value our students safety online and social media So there are it's it's the consistency of communication is key and it has to be repetitive, right?

You know, you might not have the email that you got last month and so we have to continue to send out some of those same communication pieces, but we also have to send them in different ways. A lot of schools have digital newsletters that they put out each week at the end of the week. And each of the Office of Digital Learning specialists tries to include something related to what we are doing in the technology integration world in those digital newsletters. And oftentimes, I'll send a Classwize blast out to my team. My team will put those in the newsletters as well. But really, and just kind of the quality of communication and the quality of cooperation, and collaboration amongst the teams. So there's my team, and then there's Matt's department of information technology. And the people that I've gotten to know who work for Matt, I've

become close to as we have begun to collaborate together. And I'm also, I'm finding myself really relying on that kind of like three-way communication with Christy and others from Linewise who are-

Devin Page (41:01.304)
part of their team. I mean, Matt is not speaking hyperbolically when he says that the Linewize team communicates with us regularly and is super, super responsive. It is an absolute fact that if you have some concern or some question that you want to kind of address, they're right back with you either with an email response or it's on the agenda for the next time we meet, either weekly or bi-weekly. And that has been a tremendous, tremendous help.

Yasmin London (41:27.682)
I think one of the things that we focus on a lot at Linewize is really being shoulder to shoulder with school communities, that we are a local partner. have, you know, offices all around the world, but we work at a grassroots level to make sure that you have what you need, that you're feeling supported, but also to think proactively, what's that next step? What's that next piece of the puzzle that's going to cross your path that they can really help with? So it's fantastic to hear such positive feedback. know that's a really high priority for our team. Now we're coming to the end of our conversation, but I've got two more questions. And one of them, I guess, is particularly important because we want to see how you measure real, tangible, I guess, outcomes of success. What do you look for when it comes to implementing a tool like Classwize or a technology piece like that? What do you look for to know that it's working?

Devin Page (42:26.284)
I can speak to one thing real quickly. So we get the data, the backend data on usage across a district. How often is it being used by which teachers in which parts of the district, in which schools? We also have...

academic outcomes, which is what we do. We are, I mean, we're a school district, so we're educating students. So when we see the academic gains, not just behavioral, because we talked about ,Classwize really kind of being a good monitoring tool, but those gains can be traced back to the depth of engagement among students that really is, you know, kind of...

Part of what happens just naturally when students are not off task. And that efficiency that Classwize helps create, then translates to more focused students and fewer distractions, and improves product,s and also improves student retention of content. One of the things you mentioned, what you asked about, have there been any positive surprises? I've heard from several, we have what's called a behavioral development program, and that's BDP. So BDP teachers are saying that even their classes are more engaged and more focused and more efficient. And so when you talk about measuring success, I mean, what better measurement do you get than academic outcomes? So it really does not just start with Classwize, but it starts

with the teacher's relationships in the classroom and working with students in all the ways that we know are the best practices, but then integrating Classwize with that.

Yasmin London (43:56.866)
Yeah, and the staff buy-in as you've both mentioned, that's a critical piece. I think Matt, you mentioned it, you know, making sure that they're informed, engaged and excited about what's happening because ultimately that is that sweet spot where we do start to see those academic outcomes, the engagement, the focus from students and then the results that all schools and districts want, which is, you know, engaged learners and great reputations. We're not going to say that that's not a factor as well. We want to make sure that we're seen as a school that's doing things differently and doing things well. What else about what other things would you add to Devin's comments about how you'll measure success?

Matt Poteet (44:32.6)
Yeah, so pretty much everybody's gonna probably use some sort of quantitative and or qualitative data, right, to measure the success of a new initiative. So one area that ClassWise is also really strong with is usage analytics. So we can run reports, and Classwize can furnish reports for us that track how many teachers log into the platform, and how many Classwize sessions are run on an average day.

And even which specific features are being utilized. So that provides some pretty good quantitative data. We also solicited feedback from teachers using surveys to understand the issues that they're having and maybe any of the reasons why they might not be using the product.

So running the usage analytic reports that the Classwize offers in conjunction with soliciting feedback via the online surveys, I think, are two effective ways that we can gauge the success of the rollout. And ultimately, mean, obviousl,y it's gonna be the key here is gonna be student achievement, right? So we're really excited to look for increases in student achievement. And while we may not be able to pin that entirely on the rollout of Classwize.

It will be interesting to see what type of quantitative data we're going to be able to generate regarding student achievement because that's really what it comes down to. That's what we're charged with, and we're here to teach, students are here to learn and achieve, and we want them to be productive citizens when they graduate, and that's really what it's all about.

Yasmin London (46:10.626)
Yeah, absolutely. Well said. think in the end, you know, talking about usage analytics and data and reflecting, guess, taking those moments to make sure that what you were hoping to achieve is actually being achieved. And those little moments where we can tweak and redirect equally as important, but some really great comments there. Now we've gone through so much today. Yes, Devin, please go for it. I love it.

Devin Page (46:31.374)
Can I mention one other thing? So not only can Christie and LionWise, I say Christie, but really LionWise, share usage data and the analytics with us, and we can also generate those reports ourselves, but when we survey teachers on...

Their experience with Classwize, we actually shared that back with Linewize. So they actually got our results as well. And not only that, this goes back to the communication piece. We then assimilated and distilled all of the different feedback from the quantitative feedback, which was just like the percentage of teachers who use Classwize and teachers' kind of responding to a kind of scale question versus also a kind of an open-ended text based question. We took all that data and then we condensed it, and then we then went back out with you know an all staff communication and set up times to have training sessions with our staff on on Classwize and those training sessions were run by line wise virtually. So we're measuring success.

But then, based on how we're getting those success measurements, we're then being proactive about what we do in Calvert County Public Schools with Classwize. So I just want to get that out there as well.

Matt Poteet (47:40.983)
And that really...

Yasmin London (47:41.486)
That's a really, no, I love that Devon.

Matt Poteet (47:43.021)
That's and that just also I think highlights the collaborative efforts that we have with Linewise because you know we identified an issue with some teachers. Some of them wanted in person training, which Devin and his team could provide Some of them wanted training online by Linewize professionals, and you guys offered and held multiple sessions for us. So again, that wasn't anything that was in the plan, but it was just something that you know Linewise support saw and worked with us on and held those session,s and again we view it as a partnership.

that we hope to continue on for many years to come.

Yasmin London (48:18.734)
That is fantastic to hear. It is a partnership. Ultimately, you know, everybody's in this business for the wellbeing and academic outcomes of students to make sure that they achieve their potential. And that takes a village, a lot of the time, you know, and it takes personalisation and it takes what we call discretionary effort in any way that we can. So really important to hear that, and thank you for sharing that.

The last question is really just about one key takeaway that you'd love our listeners to know, to think about, to try based on your experience of this concept of creating visibility, I guess, in schools with the right technology. You've talked a lot about Classwize. We've talked about the fact that we want to create, I guess, at Calvert County, you want to create personalized approaches to student learning that you want to make sure that they're college and career ready.

So, if you had one piece of advice each to share as a takeaway when it comes to student digital safety in schools, what would it be? Matt, do you want to start? Devin, or you?

Matt Poteet (49:22.798)
Sure. I can start. We'll let Devin finish. He's, he's a little bit more eloquent than me. So I'll start. Yeah, I just, I personally believe that everything we've talked about today and then some is going to be prevalent and here in every single district in the country, and within four to five years.

Devin Page (49:26.98)
Go ahead.

Yasmin London (49:31.148)
The finale'

Matt Poteet (49:47.887)
You know, things like AI-powered behavioral threat detection systems, they're going to be standard in public schools, you know, using things like real time analysis of student digital activity, you know, their communications and their patterns to proactively identify and flag potential safety threats. You know, things like cyberbullying, self-harm, school violence, you know, identifying those things before they escalate.

And so, you know, we didn't talk about that system today, but it's another that Linewize offers, and we're very excited, you know, to roll that out in the coming months as well. You know, so that's something that I think everybody should really be aware of. If you don't have, you know, the monitoring software yet, like class-wise, if you don't have software that parents can leverage, where they too can potentially install this on their child's own personal devices. And if you take a laptop home with the student that the district provides, you can empower parents to pause the internet or write their own rules for sites that they want or don't want their students to go to. just this really, this entire partnership dealing with digital collaboration and ensuring that our students are working safely and productively online, and we're proactively finding out issues that occur ,hopefully again before they escalate or happen.

And then also empowering parents to be able to do the same thing with their students, not only with the classwork that they're doing in school, but the time that they're on these devices outside

of school. So I think every district in the country is gonna have these types of platforms. We've rolled out one, and we're really
excited and we're in the midst of rolling out the other two, and so we're excited to have all three here come next fall.

Yasmin London (51:55.95)
Fantastic, thank you, Matt. It is really about layering, I guess, different types of technology, fit for purpose technology, and when they integrate and work together, it's a really, really beautiful thing. Devin, a last key takeaway from you?

Devin Page (52:11.51)
Yeah, so like, you know that phrase, once you see something, you can't unsee it. Well, I really feel like that kind of applies to Classwize in the sense that as we have talked about a couple of times in this podcast, we've seen now with evidence of what really hard evidence of what we may have suspected students are doing, but now we've confirmed it or also maybe even didn't know students were doing. And now that we've seen that, we can't unsee that. So I could not imagine.

If we were to take class wise away from Calvert County Public Schools, the response we would get from teachers because of how they now are dependent on it, how important it is as a tool for them as a way to not only just monitor students, but as we talked about also enhance learning to be creative in the classroom with instructional, you know, creative ways class wise kids can be used instructionally. So that just, I think speaks to the value of a tool like Classwize in today's 21st century classroom.

When so much of what we do is digitized, and we have so many online resources. It's almost irresponsible not to have something like Classwize when you have students using the internet as often as they are for the different reasons we have them using online tools, not just for digital textbooks, but we test them online. We have online platforms that monitor their progress in academic games throughout the year. And Classwize is critical, or a tool like Classwize is critical, for making sure that these tools are as efficient as possible.

I just think that idea of once you see it, once you're kind of our you got a peek behind the curtain, we realize its value and we are, I think, even that much more appreciative of what Classwize allows us to do in maximizing efficiency. And the other thing is regarding the Qustodio app and the other things that we're going to be using in class, know that Linewize provides. I'm a parent as as you know, Yasmin, you and I talked about, I have a senior in high school right now. She's got 27 more days of being a senior and a student in Calvert County Public Schools. And I am one of the you know, we have a few of us in who are in information technology and technology integration specialists who also have students and will be testing the Qustodio app. And so it's just, I'm super excited to see how that is going to transform parents' experience as well, just like Classwize has transformed teachers' experiences.

Yasmin London (54:29.08)
What a way to wrap up! I knew that, you know, Matt did hand over to you, Devin, for a reason to wrap up so beautifully. But I think in the end, you've just reinforced exactly what we mentioned, that it is about having, you know, multiple layers of tech tools fit for purpose, giving the right information to the right people at the right time. And yeah, once you've seen it, it's really impossible to look back. So thank you so much, Matt and Devin, for your time, for your insights.

For your passion, obviously for Linewize, we love working with partners and schools and districts like yours. One of the things that we say at Qoria, which, for our listeners, if you don't know who Qoria is, it's the parent company of Linewize. We often say that as the digital world evolves, so do we. So Matt and Devin, thank you so much for your insights and stories and helping us do just that today.

Matt Poteet (55:21.425)
Thank you. Thank you. Thanks. It's been a pleasure.

Devin Page (55:22.296)
You're very welcome. Thanks for having us.