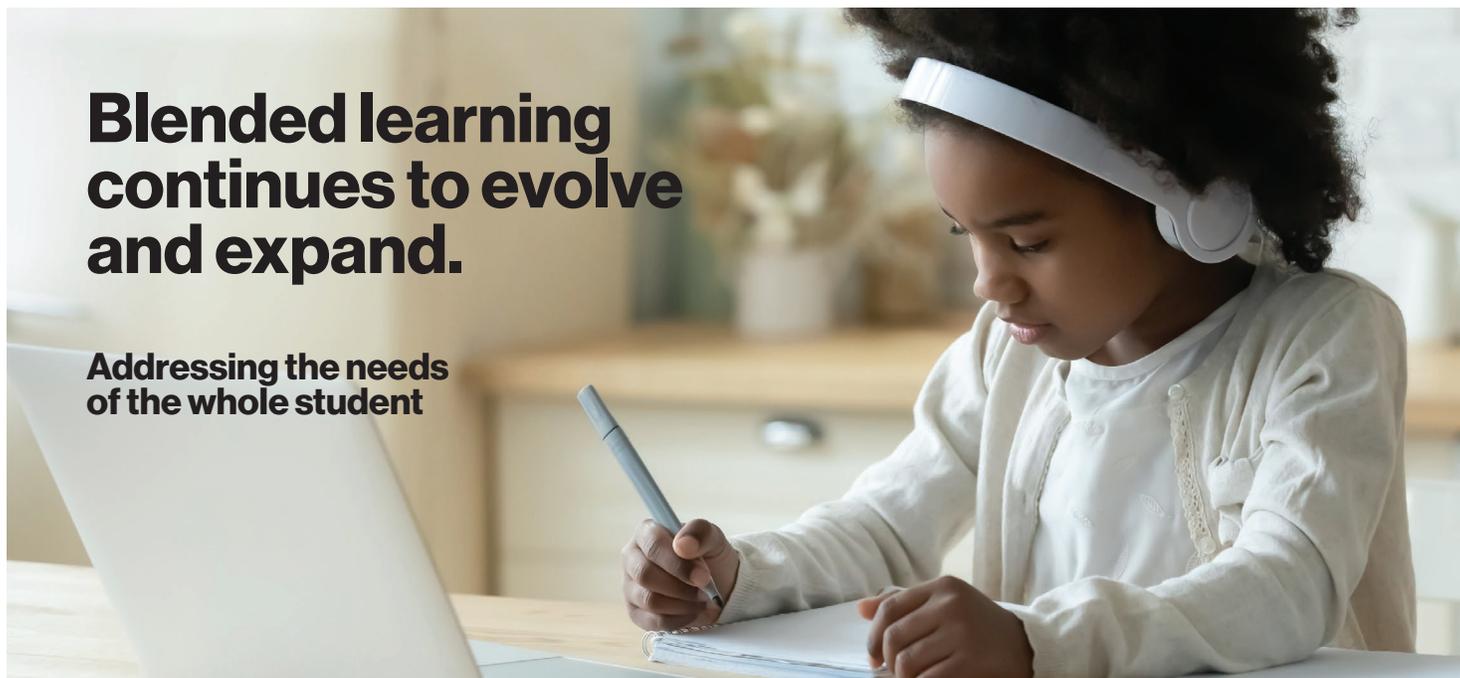


Blended learning continues to evolve and expand.

Addressing the needs of the whole student



As the pandemic's impact continues, it's clear that blended learning is about more than just the sum of two types of learning—traditional on-site and remote learning. As one state superintendent of schools put it recently, remote learning can (and should) be extensible to address the needs of the whole student—extending beyond education to include mental health support, physical and speech therapy, and more. The same approach would hold true for teachers, providing all the training and support they need. In short, now that blended learning seems to be here to stay, it needs to be able to replicate the many activities and services that used to be handled within the school walls.

Here are other trends that show the evolution of blended learning as it becomes more widely adopted.

Educators are evaluating how to get the best results.

Blended learning effectively offers two channels, face-to-face and screen-to-screen. To ensure that blended learning is effective and engaging, schools are working to identify what activities are best done in-person, on campus, since they truly benefit from face-to-face interaction between students and instructors. And they're exploring what works best online, which provides flexibility and wider access to resources and experts.

No matter what the subject area, or the age of the learners, evaluating the best channel comes down to two main criteria: engagement and effectiveness. Is the method engaging students and encouraging them to learn? And does it prove effective in the end, resulting in deep learning? Careful thought and evaluation—and a certain amount of experimentation and evaluation—enables schools to get the best of both worlds promised by blended learning.

At the beginning of the pandemic in March, 2020, a remarkable 1.5 billion students around the world were engaged in remote learning.¹

Schools are strengthening their resilience.

At the beginning of the pandemic in March, 2020, a remarkable 1.5 billion students around the world were engaged in remote learning, according to UNESCO.¹ For many schools, migrating to online learning was a crash course in educational experimentation; and a technological fire drill that few want to experience again (just ask a K-12 IT professional).

Even for districts that were prepared for emergencies, the sudden arrival of the pandemic stressed resources and uncovered educational inequities. To ensure resilience to any future disruptions, schools are investing in the technology necessary to ensure a more seamless transition to a blended or all-online learning model when the need arises again—and there's near universal agreement that it will. High-speed connectivity, iPads and tablets, and a robust learning platform are just some of the enabling technologies receiving new attention and investment—plus course content geared for online learning.

Blended learning is moving beyond casual collaboration tools.

Basic, widely available collaboration services served as a critical lifeline during the early stages of the pandemic. Beyond significant issues in security (Zoom-bombing²) and connectivity (the digital divide), it became readily apparent that the capabilities of these services were intended for business or casual users—not necessarily education. While they worked, and continue to serve as potential fallback technologies, it's clear that they're not enough. Educators are looking beyond these basic services for effective solutions that can serve as the foundation for blended learning now—and that can expand to add new capabilities, including those that go beyond traditional education.

Some new online learning platforms are still fairly basic, while others are much more robust. Transforming virtual classrooms into effective learning environments requires a rich set of remote learning features. Here are some of the capabilities that schools are looking for: great audio and video, dynamic content sharing, seamless breakout sessions, simple notetaking, digital whiteboarding, and support for groups of all sizes—from small discussions to large lectures.

Ease of use is a priority, so schools are paying attention to the user interface, ensuring that it's intuitive for all students and faculty, without requiring IT support. Also important: easy installation, reliability, security, and expandability (users and capabilities). In short, they're looking for a remote learning platform that inspires, offering endless possibilities for class enrichment.

One popular solution is [BlueJeans by Verizon](#), which provides a rich set of distance learning features that eliminate distractions, boost note-taking abilities, and improve group discussions.³ The goal? To ensure that the virtual classroom is an extremely effective learning environment.

Teachers continue to innovate.

Blended learning doesn't come with a handbook. During the initial response to the pandemic, teachers—some with online teaching experience, others without—had to come up with imaginative teaching methods quickly, adapting or adopting them depending on how effective they proved to be. They faced a lot of challenges early on. Now that it's clear that education as usual isn't coming back anytime soon, they continue to explore blended learning and build (and share) their expertise.

The future of education looks even more blended.

These trends and many others point toward a clear fact—blended learning isn't just an option anymore. It's the answer for many schools. It offers the freedom to integrate on-site and online learning, and the flexibility to move to one approach exclusively if necessary. Thanks to better technology and more experience, blended learning can offer a learning environment that is much more than just the sum of its parts—and one that's capable of supporting the whole student.

Learn more

To learn more about how to make distance learning successful in your district, please contact your Verizon Account Representative.

[verizon.com/distancelearning](https://www.verizon.com/distancelearning)



¹ "UNESCO rallies international organizations, civil society and private sector partners in a broad coalition to ensure #LearningNeverStops," UNESCO.ORG. March, 26, 2020.

² "Beware Zoom Users: Here's How People Can Zoom Bomb Your Chat," Forbes.com, March 27, 2020.

³ BlueJeans Meetings is subject to contractual availability. Check the terms and conditions of your government contract vehicle to determine whether BlueJeans Meetings is available to you.