

Details

Using Technology to Promote Health & Safety - Bonus Episode with Kokomo24/7

In this episode, I'm joined by Devin Stone from Kokomo24/7 to discuss ways to use technology to promote health and safety in schools. You'll also hear Devin share tips, strategies and insight for managing health and safety protocols and initiatives using Kokomo 24/7 this school year.

Introduction

Hello there and welcome to today's episode of the Easy EdTech Podcast! If we haven't met before, my name is Monica Burns. I'm a former NYC public school teacher and I've been out of the classroom for a few years leading professional development for teachers, and writing about all things EdTech on my blog [ClassTechTips.com](https://www.classstechtips.com)

Before we jump into today's episode, a quick reminder — you can head to my website [classtechtips.com/podcast](https://www.classstechtips.com/podcast) for all of the show notes and resources from today's episode, and if you're listening to this episode on a podcast player like Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or Google Podcasts, you should see a link in the description that you can click on as you listen today and it will take you to all of the resources I mention.

Promotion/Reminder

Today's episode is sponsored by Kokomo24/7 (*Twenty-four-seven*), a leader provider in health and safety management solutions. With the company's extensive history in assisting k-12 schools, colleges and universities, and other educational systems, Kokomo247 Safety Cloud can help to swiftly implement proven health and safety management measures during this pandemic as well as known concerns in educational settings, such as accident and bullying, mental health, and Title IX (*nine*) compliance requirements. Visit www.kokomo247.com to learn more about Kokomo247's solutions.

Today's Intro

I'm excited to have you join in on a conversation around health and safety with me today. Today, I'm joined by Devin Stone from Kokomo24/7 to talk about ways to use technology to promote health and safety this school year. This is a big topic and one that is front of mind for so many educators this year. As I'm recording this episode for you in August, I've already spent time in schools and classrooms that are taking all different types of safety precautions to make sure this year starts off in a healthy way and today's bonus episode we'll hear from Devin who shares tips,

strategies and insight and also talk a little bit about the platform Kokomo 24/7. Let's dive into the conversation!

Episode Transcript

Monica:

Welcome. Thank you so much for carving out some time to join me today for this episode of the Easy EdTech Podcast. Before we jump in to talk about today's topic of using technology to promote health and safety, I'd love for you to share with listeners just a little bit about your role and your background in this space.

Devin:

Yes. Thanks again for having me so much, pretty excited to be here, but yeah, a little bit about myself. My name is Devin Stone and I'm a part of Kokomo 24/7. We're a solution and health and safety initiative company, where basically we try and offer the best solutions to different institutions, organizations, companies, but primarily we do have a strong background and focus in education. We initially started over six years ago in education. I'm part of the team here that helps match schools with programs, things like that, to make sure that they are the healthiest and safest that they have available for programs for them.

Monica:

I know that we connected earlier this year. I got a chance to learn a little bit about your work, Devin, and what Kokomo 24/7 does. This concept and this topic that we're focused in on today is definitely one that is front of mind for so many educators. We're talking in August, that's when this podcast will go out, and thinking forward for the upcoming school year. We know that many schools are adopting new health and safety initiatives this year, or revisiting things that might've worked really well or maybe weren't as wonderful as they hoped it would be this past school year. I'm curious, in your conversations with schools and districts, what have you heard? What are they thinking about as they develop initiatives related to health and safety this year?

Devin:

Yeah, that's a great question. We've had a great number of different questions come our way from different schools and everything like that. One of the big things primarily is how do you adapt to all the changes that occur? I mean, as we've seen

how the past year has been in 2020 and the pandemic with the vaccine rollouts and where we're at now as a country and society, it's basically like, how do you still maintain that being able to almost do classes in person again? But also maintaining like the safe learning, having to have proper distancing between each other. And so we've had different representatives from schools from K through 12 to colleges, even tutoring centers, just ask us like, "please help us." This is an ongoing challenge, so how can we actually mitigate this?

Devin:

So our students because first and foremost, which is part of why we're here too, we saw there was a need to help put these safety measures in place. And I mean, this is almost one of the biggest challenges yet as a country and as an institution and education. So part of our life philosophy is we really want to focus on what matters, which is the actual being able to have a safe environment for students to truly learn and grow and prosper in education. So all of these questions that come our way, like how can I make sure that all the students are coming to school safely and we actually can know and monitor that, but also making it feel less intimidating, right? Because the first thing that comes to mind is, "well, is my student being tracked all the time?"

Devin:

Does this mean they have to have a bunch of technology because technology can shift and it's growing. And for the better part, we want it to be very simple and straightforward and easy to understand. But the biggest thing is trying to mitigate those worries and from both like an administration standpoint, but also from the people who it affects the parents and the students. So a lot of that has really come down to making sure that we clearly educate when we give our answers and all our solutions to make sure that we're going to take care of everything that's on the hard side of things. So you can focus on what really matters and make it the easiest and simplest process possible going back to school.

Monica:

Yeah. You know, I would imagine a lot of questions have come through and you shared from some of those different perspectives, not only from a school-based site or a district, but also folks that are managing maybe an afterschool program where the students coming in from a few different sites or different areas. And on the podcast, we talk a lot about making things simpler and easier and technology sometimes can be intimidating to take on something new. Right?

Devin:

Oh yeah.

Monica:

I know I feel that way when I sometimes come across something new and really need to unpack what the use case is going to be, but there's also lots of ways that digital tools can help really support different logistical challenges that might come up. I was talking earlier today about some formative assessment routines with some educators, right? There's this idea that technology can help streamline some of that data collection and analysis and help us repurpose time to be more efficient with our interventions. And so I'm curious about the technology that you use and really just this idea of how can technology support a health and safety initiative.

Devin:

Yeah, that's a great question. So the first thing that comes to mind for a lot of people when you hear the word like technology for safety initiatives, some people think it's like an actual physical device. But we live in a more digital era where a lot of things are integrated, especially when you have the introduction of having tablets and different laptops like Chromebooks, for example. They're all distributed so heavily into different education systems and programs now. So technology on the plus side is that it's becoming more ingrained as kids grow. Because I mean, when I was in education growing up K through 12, I think the most advanced thing I probably interacted with was just learning how to type for the first time. It's definitely a little different now. So for us, the technology side of things because we are a cloud-based solutions company.

Devin:

So everything is digital. Meaning we have the mobile applications that has really easy and user-friendly to use, but also operating when it comes to just being available on a web platform. So as long as they have a web browser, which is something that two components that almost everyone has some sort of familiarity with, depending on without age being a factor into it. Most kids know how to use apps now and know how to unlock their parents' phones all the time and then there's also those who are just trying to be a little more tech-savvy and like to play around with all the different buttons and see how things work. But so that's a great opportunity to learn as well. But keeping that in mind, when technology comes into play, ultimately how we've come across as a company in our approach to

technology beating health and safety, especially in school, is making it as simple as possible.

Devin:

So for instance, because we have this option for students to actually kind of submit their vaccine records and their test management stuff, depending on their mandate to their school. And so we don't want a child who might be only in first grade have to be responsible for uploading all this information that they might not even know exactly. Yeah. That's stressful. And they're already going into a different kind of raised stressful environment because of the COVID-19 pandemic and everything. So keeping that in mind, we integrated our software to be more user-friendly for also the parents who aren't actually there in school. So they actually know exactly what they need to do and make it a very time conscious. So it's not very time-consuming in the process uploading the information for their student or multiple children if they're in the same age group in an education system. So that's one thing that we've been trying to alleviate more of those worries when it comes back to different institutions reaching out to us. As in, where do we go? How do we do this? What's your experience? What are other people going through? And so we've kind of culminated all that experience to realize that it really comes down to making technology very friendly, non-intimidating and overall very simplistic. So it's an easy way to just really drive in the health and safety efforts for each school.

Monica:

Yeah. I mean, I can imagine as you are having these conversations with different schools and districts or different folks that are investigating what the right move is for them, that as you mentioned in an environment where we're talking about things that are feeling heavy or stressful and then bringing in technology, which might feel like another layer. That's a little intimidating or potentially would cause some hesitancy. Having things that are family-friendly that meet families where they're at when it comes to perhaps their experience and interacting in digital spaces or that is an onboarding process that is seamless or supported or just really going to be crucial. And so I'm curious, I mean, what are some things that might surprise listeners about the way that this kind of software can assist organizations in schools with a health and safety initiative? Or you mentioned a couple things already about just uploading information. What are some things that might be a little bit more surprising if someone hasn't seen this in action before?

Devin:

Yeah, that's awesome. One of the number one things that I have personally experienced is the look on someone's face when we tell them how easy it is. That's one of the most surprising things is because for example, a lot of schools are trying to track like I previously mentioned the vaccine reporting for their students, from K-12 to higher ed and all that. So being able to upload and take care of and manage all this information from the small school systems that might have maybe a few hundred students to different schools that have thousands upon thousands of students that they have to take care of. And that's just counting the students. That doesn't include all the staff, the faculty, the administration and if they're worried about guests as well. So that's the nice thing we had all experienced. Like I said, we've personally gone through the ringer as we've developed everything so we can make it very, very easy and a very quick turnaround time.

Devin:

So for example, if the school says, we need this implemented by Monday and it's Thursday afternoon, we can get it to them almost sooner than that. Because a lot of this stuff is very easy for us to kind of configure and develop. And like I said, one of the most surprising things is just being able to turn everything around so quickly, especially if someone's worried about just the actual size of their school or their institution, or just trying to figure out. We have the technical experience and expertise to actually help walk them through. You mentioned onboarding and that being a big part of our process as well. So once we have a new school that's onboarded with us, our team is very delicately working with whoever's going to be actually overseeing the software and the platform.

Devin:

So you think your higher ed, excuse me, your human resources, or maybe it's a principal or whoever it might be within the administration level. We delicately walk through with them. So we can actually better understand what their pain points are, what their challenges might be. So then we can help develop the best system environment that they're actually going to be using. So then basically what we call it as training the trainer. So then by the time they're ready to go live with the platform and they're ready to start utilizing it for their entire system and institution. They're good to go. But then also the nice thing, that's why we're called 24/7. We have team members all over the globe and always available. So we know sometimes, "we need help right away. Please help us figure out what happened. I clicked something, everything disappeared." We're here to help. So this is another way of really truly making it easy.

Monica:

Yeah. And I would imagine that those pieces are really crucial when there's a lot of shifts happening, right? A lot of changes happening that you need, you might anticipate, you might not anticipate you might see coming, or that might be feeling like it's coming out of left field. And so now we've talked already a little bit more generally about some of the ways that digital platforms, technology, different types of software can support health and safety initiatives and really get people on the same page and organized when it comes to managing different types of paperwork or being responsive to different initiatives that are taking place. Or I should say, not only the school-based initiative, but perhaps that's in response to say a statewide mandate or something that's coming along the lines that way. So tell us a little bit more about Kokomo 24/7. What exactly does it do and how would someone get started using this platform?

Devin:

Yeah, so the first thing just to get someone started using our platform and getting in touch with us is just by simply going to our website and going to our contact page. And then we respond immediately, we're here to help and like I Said, 24/7. So we're very open and eager to learning how we can help you out because everyone has a different, unique situation. And sometimes people feel they might be alone in it too and not being able to handle the different mandates that just keep coming their way or how to go through the process. And so that's a great and easy thing we can help create an open discussion and help them out. And plus with our quick turnaround time everything, it's going to feel like, "wow, I feel like I just talked to them yesterday. And all of a sudden we're already doing all this stuff to make sure that we're health-conscious and safe as well."

Devin:

So there's a number of things that we do. We're kind of like jack of all trades essentially within Kokomo. So we have something that we kind of decided to call our Kokomo's safety cloud, which is kind of our umbrella terminology for our entire product suite in our catalog. So we offer different things that a lot of people have been seeing and actually experienced since over the last year. We have a certification for daily screenings and your kind of health screenings. So this is for being able to make sure someone's okay before they come into a facility or location. They can use it for a different number of ways. And then also we have a lot of case management capabilities within our platform as well. That's kind of where we

started and going back to how we began originally helping with solutions for education systems. One of the biggest school systems in the country, the LA unified school district. They're actually one of our clients who actually uses our case management as well as our non-reporting too.

Devin:

We have a system for non-reporting. So for instance, for a student who ever feels uncomfortable, or if there's any instance that they need to report something, but they want to remain anonymous about it. That's something that we had that was primarily in solely based on our experience with education and having this tool created. But also what's nice about it is a lot of things we've developed is actually kind of applicable to different institutions and industries overall. So that's why we've learned so much from education that's helped us personally grow too. But with a pandemic, a lot of our offerings and our products and solutions kind of spun out and we created a number of numerous different things too. So like I mentioned a few times here, vaccine and test records. That's been a very hot commodity where a lot of people, regardless of what their industry is really require this.

Devin:

So in the cases of education, especially with higher ed right now, because the way the vaccine is as of right now where only those 12 and older can actually receive it, we've seen a lot more vaccine mandates and requirements for higher ed. So one of the schools that we just recently teamed up with is actually the University of Michigan who's going to be using our vaccine and test records for actually managing for their students and staff for the fall. So it's kind of going to show that there's a huge need for these different solutions. And so that's why we're available to help, but a few more things that we also offer is with contact tracing that kind of communicates with our different things like guest screening is another thing we offer. So not so focused on the people who are actually a student or a team member or whoever might be within the organization.

Devin:

How do you track if you have like a large-scale event or maybe for schools? Yeah. You have like parent teacher conferences, or maybe you want to get the kids really fired up about having book fairs or different like a science fair. I always wish my school had it, but we didn't do it. So something like that. You want to have your parents and your guests involved too. And so that's another solution we came up with. So then they can actually attend and make sure that they're healthy as well as

their students and their family. So we have that. And then one of the biggest things to be better suited for any sort of instance that might occur, we do have emergency notifications as well. So the great part about it is within our system, if there's ever an emergency like maybe there's a fire or a water main break or something more disastrous, we do offer this solution.

Devin:

So then administration can actually track and be able to monitor their student list or everyone involved so they can make sure everyone's reporting back that they're okay. So then if there's anything they need to take care of, they have that system available because the first thing we want to make sure is that your students in your schools are essentially nice and safe. So ultimately we've had a lot of solutions come our way, even with occupancy management too for desk hoteling and everything like that. Being able to make sure that occupancy is alright. So I know I've said a lot of different solutions, but I mean, it just goes to show how much we've learned from education systems and other industries too, which ultimately created what I call or what we call the Kokomo safety cloud. So it really just entails overall exactly what we can offer to really make sure all these schools and these institutions are well-prepared for the remaining school year.

Monica:

Yeah. I mean, it's really interesting to hear about all of those different pieces Devin. Because we talk about something like using technology to support a health and safety initiative. That can mean a lot of different things, depending on a particular school or district's priorities or what's being asked of them from other places, or it might even just be in response to things that they've seen and that they have identified as an area that is high on their list. So you might not have a place that is looking to really monitor, say vaccinations, but you might have another place that's really thinking about the occupancy for events or contact tracing. Right? So I can imagine that you as well are having conversations with folks in different parts that are based here, right in the U.S. So in different parts of the country where the mandates or expectations or the priorities in terms of what area you may be spending time thinking about and which ones you might not be spending time thinking about are evolving.

Monica:

Right? So I appreciate you just unpacking those components so that folks who are listening can reflect on what their priorities, what they're being asked to do, and just

know that you all offer a platform that could address some of these areas of concern. And so as we get ready to wrap up here, I'd love for you to share a little bit about where listeners can connect with you and learn more about your work. I'm going to make sure that anyone who's listening in, you can just tap on the description and get down to a couple of links. But if you can kind of give us a bit of a shout out here and just let us know where can listeners connect with you and learn more about your work.

Devin:

Yeah. Awesome. Thank you again so much for taking the time to let us have this discussion on health and safety. It's something we're really passionate about. I worked in higher ed as well before working with Kokomo. So it's just a great way to kind of blend everything. So thanks again. So yeah, if you want to connect with us, learn more, or just have maybe a discussion on what your current systems are and what you're looking to maybe transition to for being able to have better solutions for health and safety efforts. First thing I would direct people to just our website, which is Kokomo247.com. And you can learn more about our entire product offering and what we do, read some testimonials, see some videos. And also if you ever want to get in touch with us, you can go to our contact page, which is pretty open and direct on our homepage. But also we are available also on LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram as well. But yeah, the show notes is always a great, easy way to do it. So thank you for that. But yeah, we're always eager and open to hearing more.

Monica:

Well, thank you so much, Devin. I really appreciate your time today.

Devin:

Yeah. Thank you so much, Monica.

It was great chatting with Devin today to hear about his unique perspective on using technology to promote health and safety this school year just like every episode of the podcast, even this bonus episode, let's finish off with some tips to make this EdTech easy.

So let's make this EdTech easy...

First, examine local initiatives.

Next, customize your data collection.

Then, communicate goals with your community.

Finally, revisit as initiatives change.

Remember, you can find the shownotes and the full list of resources from this episode on classtechtips.com/podcast including all of the ways to connect with the team at Kokomo24/7. And I'll be back on Tuesday with another episode of the podcast! In the next episode number 127 I'll chat with Kristin Harrington on "How to Make Sure Your Next Project is Authentic."

Promotion/Reminder

A big thank you to our sponsor for this episode, Kokomo 247. This health and safety cloud platform instantly gives power not only to manage health and safety concerns, but also mitigate and be compliant -- all not only for students, but also for faculty and staff as well. You can ask for a no-string attached 15 minute demo at www.kokomo247.com -- and you'll see how much they are passionate about school safety and how they have been helping many - from small districts and colleges to some of largest school districts and universities like 2nd largest school district in the US and Big 10 Colleges.

Outro

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