

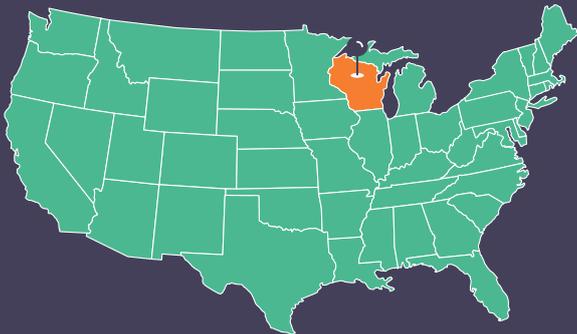
Wausau School District

Wausau SD needed a LMS:

- To support the district-wide 1:1 program that included various types of devices
- That all teachers, students, and parents could use
- Where curriculum and instruction needs could 'live.'
- That effectively infused collaboration, creativity, communication, and critical thinking skills into an educational environment that encouraged student voice and choice

Customer:

Wausau SD, Wisconsin



2014–2015

Year Implemented itslearning

District Profile:



18

13 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, 2 high schools and one alternative high school



8,500

Students

Demographics:

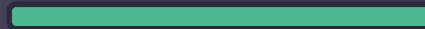
2.45% African American



5.40% Hispanic



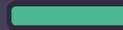
67.25% White



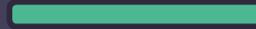
5.06% Multi-Racial, Non-Hispanic



19.03% Asian



45.06% Eligible for free and reduced meals



0.04% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander



0.76% American Indian



Wausau School District Uses itslearning to Master the “4Cs” of K-12 Education

Similar to the workforce, the K-12 learning environment used to focus around individual work. Students were encouraged to take a “me” versus “we” approach to education, often missing out on the benefits of collaboration, teamwork, and sharing ideas.

Fast-forward to today and the educational environment looks dramatically different in school districts like Wausau SD in Wausau, Wisconsin, where teachers and curriculum directors strive to incorporate the 4Cs of education into both classroom and independent learning.

Wausau School District

Developed by the National Education Association (NEA), the 4Cs – critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity – work together to help students develop 21st Century skills and take ownership of their learning. “If today’s students want to compete in this global society, they must be proficient communicators, creators, critical thinkers, and collaborators.”ⁱ

Ticking Off the Boxes

Wausau SD had its work cut out for it when it came to the management and orchestration of learning resources – a task that had to be completed before its 8,500 students could commit to the 4Cs of learning.

Armed with several years of blended learning experience, Reggie Smith, Instructional Technology Integration Specialist, joined the district in 2014 and immediately saw the need for a centralised learning management system (LMS) that all teachers, students, and parents could use.

“We wanted to transform learning from being ‘face-to-face’ to digital using a blended learning approach,” Smith says. “In order to do that, we needed an LMS.” The platform also had to be able to support a district-wide 1:1 program that incorporated various types of devices. Wausau found what it was looking for in the itslearning platform.

An Essential Educational Asset

As the industry’s only cloud-based, comprehensive learning platform designed by educators specifically for the way today’s students learn and interact, itslearning serves as a single, end-to-end teaching and learning platform for more than 7 million teachers, students, and parents worldwide.

By consolidating siloed systems and content resources, itslearning ensures technology becomes an essential educational asset. In place since 2014, itslearning houses Wausau’s English curriculum and McGraw-Hill content (for grades 3-5), as well as a calendar and planning platform for middle school instructors. It also serves as a combination repository/direct instructional tool for high schoolers.

Early on, Smith says the district’s IT department pioneered the movement to a new LMS, but adds that instruction “took a bigger stake in it this year, with more vetted content being stored in and delivered through the platform.” He credits the district’s commitment to professional development for helping to achieve that “bigger stake,” and says Wausau SD used a training system that was directly tied into learning the various aspects of the LMS.

“We really wanted to drive home the idea that curriculum and instruction needs to ‘live’ in the learning management system,” says Smith. “It needs to be able to be shared among teachers and schools across the entire district in order for the LMS to be leveraged completely.”

Tackling the 4Cs

Knowing the value of effective collaboration in today’s educational and professional environments, Wausau SD leverages itslearning to enable improved teamwork and collaboration, along with the other 3 Cs of 21st Century learning. “Every training program we’ve held was really focused on the 4Cs,” says Smith, “and that continues to be our focus.”

As part of that commitment, the district encourages teachers to think beyond using itslearning as a content repository, and to instead view the platform as an instructional tool. “We really don’t want teachers to just ‘dump in’ their resources and not actually utilise the platform,” says Smith. In some cases, that could mean setting up a specific page where students can download blended learning coursework, submit assignments, and collaborate with one another.

“We’re thinking about having students take charge of their own learning, being a voice for themselves, and teachers becoming more of a facilitator instead of a direct instructional individual,” says Smith. “In the end, it’s about getting every student on one, consistent, device-agnostic platform. That’s been a big selling-point for us.”

ⁱ Preparing 21st Century Students for a Global Society, www.nea.org/assets/docs/A-Guide-to-Four-Cs.pdf