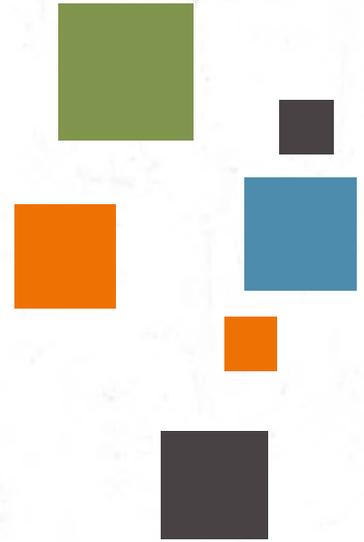




AT THE HEART OF EDUCATION



**WHY STRATEGIC
ABANDONMENT
IS THE KEY TO
IMPROVING
COLLABORATION
CURRICULUM
ALIGNMENT
AND STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT**



As school districts look to transform their instructional practices to make learning more personalized, engaging, and relevant for today's students, many districts have struggled to integrate new technologies to support this shift. A big reason for these struggles is that districts have added too much complexity by introducing disparate systems for handling curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, communication, collaboration, and other functions.

Every unique system a district adopts adds one more separate log-in for students or teachers to remember and is yet another technology platform with which teachers must become familiar. These demands can add up quickly, leaving already overworked staff members feeling frustrated and discouraged about employing another technology tool.

That's why it's critical to consider which existing technologies or processes you can abandon before you move forward with any new initiative—an approach known as “strategic abandonment.”

In this decision guide, you'll learn more about what strategic abandonment is and how it's critical to the success of any digital learning initiative. You'll also be introduced to a framework for evaluating which tools and systems you can strategically abandon to maximize your chances of success—and you'll discover how an all-in-one digital solution can help. Finally, you'll learn how to implement such an end-to-end solution effectively, and an interactive quiz will help you determine what kind of an impact a digital transformation can have in your district.



Take the quiz

STRATEGIC ABANDONMENT EXPLAINED

When Houston Independent School District (HISD) officials were planning a major digital conversion a few years ago, one of the most important conversations they had was about which programs and systems they would stop spending money on before moving forward with their initiative.

HISD leaders wanted to produce “global graduates”: college-ready learners, leaders, and skilled communicators who were able to make responsible decisions, think critically, and be adaptable and productive. They determined that, in order to achieve this goal, students should be exposed to the kinds of digital tools and resources they would be using in the real world. HISD leaders also wanted to integrate more personalized, blended, project-based, and student-centered learning into instruction.

But HISD officials realized that adding more systems and responsibilities without removing others isn't a realistic model for success. It's not sustainable financially or in terms of human capacity. So, as they planned their initiative, they took a hard look at where they could strategically abandon some older processes and technologies.

“Having those abandonment conversations is critical to the success of any digital transformation process,” says Chief Technology Information Officer Lenny Schad. “If you don't have those conversations, teachers will see your initiative as just another add-on, and you won't get the support

you need from them. But if you do have those conversations, they are much more receptive to your efforts.”

Strategic abandonment is a change management concept that emerged from the teachings of management consultant Peter Drucker, whose “purposeful abandonment” urges business leaders to eliminate projects that aren't delivering a return on investment.

“The first step in a growth policy is not to decide where and how to grow,” he reportedly told business managers. “It is to decide what to abandon. In order to grow, a business must have a systematic policy to get rid of the outgrowth, the obsolete, the unproductive.”

Drucker was talking to business leaders, but his advice applies equally well to K-12 administrators. Drucker understands that change is only possible when employees have the capacity to learn and implement new technologies and ways of doing things—and that only happens when the organization gets rid of other systems and processes first.

When considering which programs to strategically abandon, K-12 leaders should look at each program and ask how critical it is to the district's mission, whether it supports the goals of a digital transformation initiative, whether it delivers a return on investment or helps employees do their jobs more effectively, and whether it can be replaced by a better process or technology, among other factors.

Here's an evaluation framework that can help you make these decisions. How do your current systems support district needs?

	ACCEPTABLE	QUESTIONABLE	UNACCEPTABLE
Can students, teachers, and parents access all the tools and content they need from a single log-in?	Yes, every user has one log-in to access all content and curriculum resources.	Some users have single sign-on; others have just a few log-ins across content and instruction.	Students, teachers, and parents have multiple log-ins for different systems.
Can teachers easily align their lessons with state standards and local curriculum?	Yes, we have a standards alignment toWol that teachers can apply to all of their lessons and materials.	We make resources available to help teachers align their lessons, but we don't have an easy-to-use alignment tool.	Teachers are left to find their own resources to align lessons with state and local standards.
Do teachers have a central place to store, access, and share all of their lessons and content?	Yes, we have a central hub or library that houses all of our curriculum materials.	Our curriculum materials reside in multiple systems, but we do have a platform for teachers to share their materials.	Our curriculum materials are in separate systems throughout the district, with no easy way for teachers to share materials.
Can teachers easily deliver assessments and personalize instruction for their students?	Yes. We have a single platform for creating and delivering assessments and analyzing results. Teachers can see students' needs easily and can assign personalized content to them as applicable.	We have multiple platforms for giving assessments, and we're personalizing instruction based on the results—but we have no easy or automated way to do this.	At this time, we're not using assessment results to deliver personalized instruction to meet our students' unique needs.
Can students work independently on self-directed learning?	Yes. Aided by technology, students are able to work independently on assignments and have some control over their own learning.	Students sometimes work independently, but there is no coordinated system that enables students to do this district-wide.	Our students rarely work independently, and/or they have no control over their own learning.
Can students access content and demonstrate their understanding in multiple modalities?	Yes. Teachers can easily post course content in text, audio, video, and other formats. Students can submit their work in a variety of formats as well.	Some teachers post content and let students demonstrate their understanding in multiple formats, but at this time there is no integrated, simple way for them to do this.	Few of our students are able to access content or demonstrate their understanding in multiple modalities.
Can students, teachers, and parents easily communicate and collaborate across multiple devices?	Yes. We have a single, easy-to-use platform for all stakeholder groups to communicate and collaborate.	We have multiple means of communicating, but we don't have a single platform.	We don't have a process or technology in place to facilitate two-way communication in our district.
Can parents easily gain insight into their children's assignments, progress, and completed work?	Yes. We have a single, easy-to-use platform that gives parents access to their children's work and progress.	Parents have some access to their children's work and progress, but this varies from class to class and there is no single, district-wide system.	Parents have access to grades but little access to their children's assignments, work, or progress.
Do teachers have access to just-in-time professional development resources from a single, central location?	Yes, we have an online platform that gives teachers easy access to professional learning resources whenever and wherever they might need them.	Teachers have access to some online professional development resources, but they must be accessed from various locations.	Teachers have little access to online professional learning resources.



ABANDON DISPARATE TOOLS FOR AN ALL-IN-ONE DIGITAL LEARNING SOLUTION

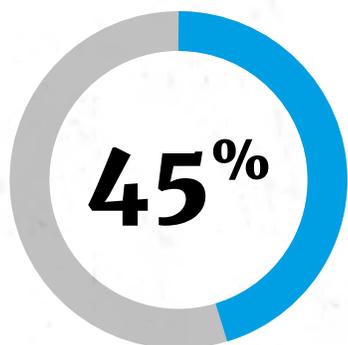
If you answered “questionable” or “unacceptable” to any of the questions, then you should consider replacing your disparate systems with an enterprise learning management system (LMS) that can satisfy all of these requirements.

Today’s LMS is about much more than just course delivery. The right LMS can serve as an end-to-end, all-in-one digital learning solution, functioning as a central hub for lesson planning, curriculum alignment, digital content, personalized learning, assessment, communication, collaboration, and professional development.

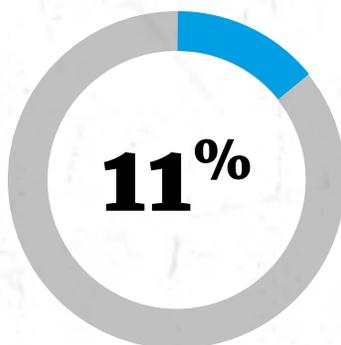
By combining these functions within a single system you can save money, improve the return on your technology expenditure, and invest those savings in growing and sustaining other areas of your digital transformation initiative—such as purchasing devices or content.

What’s more, having an all-in-one digital platform with a single sign-on saves users time and makes it easy for students, teachers, and parents to access the resources they need to be successful.

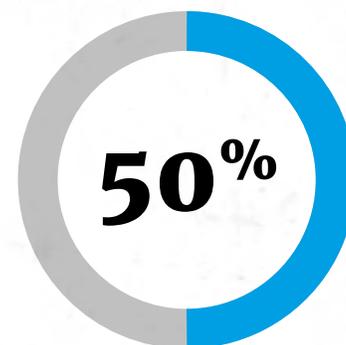
BELIEVE IT OR NOT...



45% of teachers have to manage at least five logins to access curriculum materials



11% of teachers have to manage sixteen logins or more



Close to 50% of administration staff time is spent on updating, rostering, & distributing curriculum materials from non-integrated systems

NOT A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS!



For more detail see our infographic...

If teachers have to spend time learning how to use various systems for their curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, and other needs, and then switch back and forth between them, they aren't going to use the technology—and districts will have wasted valuable resources. Even worse, your students won't benefit from more personalized and student-centered instruction.

An enterprise LMS that brings all of these functions together within a single platform eliminates this complexity so that it's much more likely that staff members will be on board with the digital transformation.

That's what has happened in Houston, where district leaders were able to eliminate several disparate technology systems and create an end-to-end platform for digital teaching and learning, called the HUB. Powered by itslearning, the HUB is an online environment where everyone involved in a child's education has access to the information, tools, and resources they need from both school and home.

The HUB has become the center for curriculum, instruc-

tion, personalization, collaboration, and communication among educators, students, and parents throughout the entire 215,000-student district. All HISD curriculum and professional development resources are located on the HUB and are accessible through a single sign-on. In addition, teachers have access to various other HUB features. Among other functions, these features allow them to:

- Design standards-based lessons using a customizable planner.
- Create and deliver assignments, quizzes, and surveys.
- Access digital resources such as district-approved textbooks and other educational platforms.
- Collaborate with peers to plan lessons and share ideas.



Meanwhile, students at all schools have access to HUB features such as online tools and activities that encourage them to explore, create, and collaborate with their classmates. They can also access reports showing their progress on assignments and tasks.

In addition, the HUB provides a shared learning object repository, or digital library, and a curriculum management system. It serves as a central storage location for all teacher resources and is also a platform for communication between students, parents, and teachers.

The HUB is an integral part of HISD's vision to ensure that all graduates are ready for the world and have the skills they need to succeed in college and the workforce.

"We believed that having a one-stop shop for teachers to go to, where they could access as many elements that are required in their instructional day as possible, would streamline their work," Schad says.

And district leaders have been proven correct: This end-to-end system has saved teachers time and made their adoption of new instructional methods easier—which has led to more personalized, student-centered, and collaborative learning in the three years since the project began.



FROM ABANDONMENT TO ABUNDANCE: IMPLEMENTING YOUR NEW DIGITAL LEARNING SOLUTION

You've identified which processes and technologies you can strategically abandon, and you're ready to implement an all-in-one digital solution to facilitate teaching, learning, collaboration, and more. So what are your next steps? An effective change management process begins with strategic abandonment, but there are many other keys to success. To help you through the process and ensure that your digital transformation succeeds, here is an interactive quiz with various items to consider.



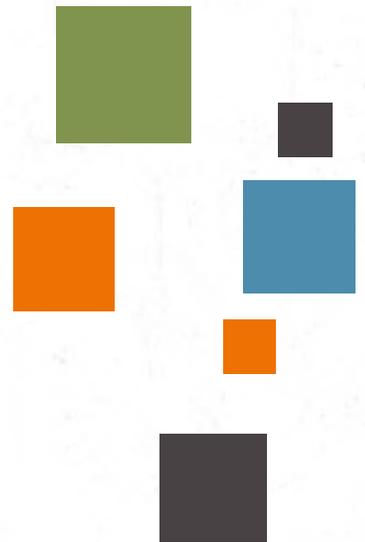
Take the quiz

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About itslearning

Designed specifically for K-12, itslearning is an enterprise LMS that allows districts to support the shift to personalized learning by putting curriculum resources, instructional strategies, standards-based lesson plans and assessments, as well as professional learning, all in one central location for easy access.

itslearning is a cloud-based learning platform that connects teachers, students, parents, and school leaders both in and outside the classroom. The platform provides countless ways for teachers to create engaging lessons and resources, makes teacher collaboration and sharing of materials easy, and automates routine tasks so teachers have more time to focus on their students.



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