



Spartanburg County School District Six

Overview:

- Spartanburg District 6 uses itslearning as a digital hub for professional development, curriculum organization, resource sharing, student learning, and more.
- Technology is integrated from preK-12 ensuring digital literacy from the start
- Faculty members use itslearning to for professional development - facilitating collaboration, increasing communication, and maximizing productivity.

Customer:

Spartanburg County School District Six,
Roebuck, SC, USA



2013 Year Implemented itslearning

District Profile:

 11,378 students approximately

 1 of 7 districts in Spartanburg County

 68% free and reduced meals

Demographics:

44.2% White

34% Black

17.4% Hispanic

3.8% Asian/Pacific Islander

0.6% American Indian

Establishing a Foundation for Technological Proficiency and College and Career Readiness

Spartanburg County School District Six has consistently been recognized for academic excellence at both state and national levels. The district prides itself in offering students innovative opportunities for college, career, citizenship, and character development and District Six decided to use itslearning to equip students with additional technological and academic proficiency. Leaders knew that to provide students with first-class educational opportunities, the faculty and staff also had to become tech-savvy.

In 2013, The Spartanburg School District 6 school board introduced a bring your own device (BYOD) policy, and district leaders knew they needed to find a tool that would make the most of this initiative, ensuring technology

became a seamless component of instruction. itslearning provided just that solution – seamlessly organizing their curriculum and integrating rich learning experiences and providing teachers with the tools to connect to students and parents in a digital environment.

Building a Model for Success

For the district's director of instructional technology, Joey Gardner, it was essential to understand what types of professional development would work for teachers and earn their buy-in. So, in 2014, he allowed early adopters to explore itslearning and give constructive feedback. This provided a better understanding of how teachers would experience the new technology.



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“We needed a solution that would help us to build teacher capacity while also increasing students technological and academic proficiencies.”

Joey Gardner,
Director of Instructional Technology

Based on early adopter feedback, district personnel provided teachers with professional development via itslearning. “This was a paradigm shift from traditional teaching and we felt that teachers should first experience the platform as learners,” said Gardner. “itslearning’s services team was crucial in this process, providing us with a better understanding of change management and using their expertise to guide our professional development model. This not only created the opportunity for school administrators to become more involved but it allowed teachers to better grasp the shift in teaching practices and replicate this model with their students.”

Meanwhile, curriculum specialists organized a digital curriculum, building model lessons and integrating resources to support college and career readiness. Gardner enlisted 22 classroom teachers to work alongside the curriculum team as paid trainers to ensure that these curricular templates fit everyone’s needs. “We wanted to provide teachers with course templates, so they weren’t forced to build everything from scratch, but had the autonomy to make changes as needed.”

Maximizing Communication and Collaboration

Before itslearning, District Six leaders struggled to find convenient times to bring everyone together for professional learning. Now, apart from initial face-to-face meetings, district staff can engage in professional learning online, at times convenient for them. “Communication is seamless,” says Gardner. Administrators, teachers, students, and parents are

all able to use the integrated messenger and other tools for real-time communication.

In addition, the district has used itslearning to create “District 6 University,” an online professional learning community for teachers, prekindergarten to eighth grade. Teachers connect through itslearning’s community spaces; discussion boards; video, audio, and text conferencing; and sharing resources to communicate, collaborate, and develop content for substitute or new teachers. “This has really helped boost our efficiency, especially since the district spans a 25 to 30-mile radius,” said Gardner.

Moving to the Next Level

Gardner is happy to report that early efforts have guided teachers toward technology-enriched lesson designs. Allowing staff to collaborate via itslearning. Most recently, seventh and eighth grade science teachers worked together to create anatomy and physics courses incorporating multimedia resources from itslearning’s library. “The content library saves our teachers time because they aren’t forced to search the Internet for resources – everything is already there.”

In addition, the district is well equipped as they begin to implement project-based learning. “This too requires a different instructional mindset,” Gardner said of the new approach. “We want students to be more self-directed and have more ownership of their learning and itslearning has provided us with a great foundation to create these opportunities.”



AT THE HEART OF EDUCATION

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