



Fort Worth ISD

Overview:

Fort Worth needed a Learning Management System:

- To support its mission to go digital for students and teachers
- Manage curriculum resources
- Support PD training

District Profile:



146

83 elementary schools, 29 middle schools and 6th grade centers, 18 high schools and 16 other campuses



86,000

Students

Customer:

Fort Worth ISD



2015

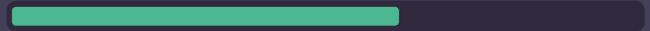
Year Implemented itslearning

Demographics:

22.9% African American



62.5% Hispanic



11.2% White



1.4% Multi-Racial, Non-Hispanic



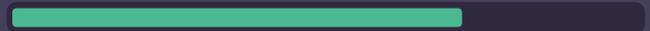
1.9% Asian



0.1% American Indian



74% Eligible for free and reduced meals



Fort Worth ISD Gets Teachers and Students on the Same Page with itslearning

On a quest to go digital, Fort Worth Independent School District implemented a learning management system that supports professional development and helps teachers replicate practices that give students voice and choice in the 21st Century classroom.

For Michael Cummings, helping teachers facilitate technology in their classrooms is a top priority. As technology learning coach for Fort Worth Independent School District in Texas, he knows the challenges that he faces on this pursuit, particularly when it comes to ongoing professional development. Previously a director of technology for a private school, Cummings says simply putting technology into the classroom and asking teachers to use it is never enough.

“I want to make a mark by really educating teachers and training them on how to successfully integrate technology in the classroom,” says Cummings. As part of that mission, Fort Worth ISD implemented the itslearning Learning Management System (LMS) in 2015. Wanting to make all of its faculty meetings digital and accessible to a larger swath of instructors, the district turned to the Instructional Technology team to spearhead the implementation effort.

“I learned everything I could about the LMS and quickly became an expert on it,” Cummings recalls. “I’m a big fan of LMSs; I think they make a huge contribution to education in that they help us keep everything organized.”

Putting Resources at their Fingertips

Knowing that teachers have a hard time finding the time to explore and participate in their own professional development, Fort Worth ISD uses a combination of online, self-paced courses and face-to-face teacher training, the latter of which is also available in a digital format. The itslearning platform supports both instructional and technical personnel and is designed based on the needs and delivery preferences unique to each district.

Using its LMS, the district can model teaching practices in a way that allows instructors to mimic and/or implement those very practices in their own classrooms—a capability that enables student voice and choice while also improving student engagement and outcomes.

An Experience that Incorporates Student and Teacher

The district’s first online learning course focused on how to use the LMS—an option that’s broken down into a basic course (to master the LMS’ basic functions), an intermediate

course (for adding content to courses), and an advanced course (to learn the flow between teacher, student, and parent within the system).

At some schools, “itslearning serves as a ‘reservoir’ for teachers and students in that it gives everyone one place to go to find information that they need, be it a faculty handbook or testing materials or a testing schedule,” says Cummings. A teacher who missed a faculty meeting, for example, can access the LMS and get all of the information she needs without missing a beat. The platform not only makes it easier for teachers to implement technology in order to improve student engagement, but it also helps them practice on the same platform that their own students are using.

Cummings says these and other benefits have helped Fort Worth ISD shape an educational experience that incorporates both student and teacher. The district’s leadership team (chief academic officer and chief of secondary schools) are also modeling the use of itslearning by holding the monthly principal’s meetings in the platform.

“In education, the focus is so often on students and student outcomes that we forget the real vehicle is the teacher,” he points out. “The better prepared the teachers are, the more beneficial the educational experience will be for the pupil.”

Digital Organization

A recent survey of Fort Worth ISD teachers revealed that many teachers are enjoying access to their professional development through the district’s LMS. “They can take the professional development in their PJs,” says Cummings, “and not have to give up their lunch hour to learn something new.” And if they want to go back and review key points, they can do that right in the LMS.

From the professional development administrative point of view, Cummings says the LMS also makes his job easier. Much like with online education, the content is right at the teacher’s fingertips and support staff members are just one email away at any time. “My department can stay on top of everything and make sure the work is getting done and that the proper credits are granted,” says Cummings. “This is just one example of how an LMS can serve as more than just a content repository for teachers and students.”