

EASYTECH SUCCESS STORY

District Prioritizes Digital Equity for Diverse Student Population

Chandler Unified School District
CHANDLER, ARIZONA

43k students

31 elem schools

10 middle schools

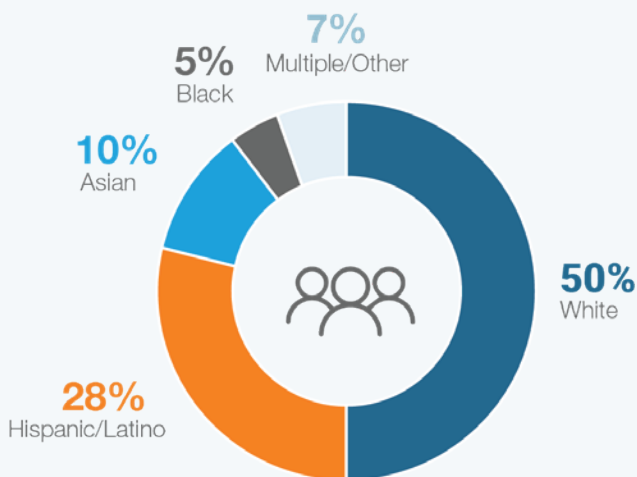
8 high schools

3 alternative schools

30% f&r lunch

SEEKING EQUITY

Spanning more than 80 miles, the Chandler Unified School District (CUSD) in Arizona serves over 43,500 students from families that reflect a wide spectrum of socio-economics. Providing digital equity to all students is a district priority.



“Chandler is the premier district of choice, and there’s a lot of school choice out there,” says Cristen Marceau, instructional technology coach, who has worked as a technology educator for over a decade. “We knew the experience with technology and digital literacy skills should be the same for our Chandler kids, whether they’re at a school in the northern part of the district or all the way at the other end.”

To ensure digital equity, the district hired 30 new technology teachers in 2017 to work primarily with

grades K-6. Marceau was tasked with developing a standardized curriculum for the district, so that every teacher wasn’t having to hunt to build their own lessons on everything from typing to cyber bullying. While searching for a digital literacy solution, Marceau came across Learning.com’s EasyTech.

“**When I started looking at the EasyTech pacing guides and the lesson plans, it felt so possible to me.**”

– Cristen Marceau,
instructional technology coach

DIGITAL FOUNDATIONS

Learning.com was readily embraced by CUSD’s technology teachers such as Sophany Tibke, who says EasyTech addressed the holes in her instruction.

“Before, there was no way to measure where everyone is, and some kids would fly under the radar,” says Tibke, who is now an instructional technology coach. “With Learning.com, I could check in on progress and see precisely where the students lack skills and need my help.”

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EXCEL IN A DIGITAL WORLD

Tibke's classroom included a number of students who were learning English. While native Spanish speakers leveraged EasyTech's video captions and lessons in Spanish, Tibke says the lessons were remarkably accessible to students regardless of their primary language.

"Out of all their classrooms, including music and PE, the ELL students thrived in the tech lab because Learning.com is so visual," Tibke says. "Many would even out-progress the English-speaking students."

One reason district leaders wanted all students fluent in critical technology skills was to support their success with online state testing in core subjects like math and reading.

"We needed our students to have those basic skills of click, drag, highlight and copy/paste, so that they are truly being tested on what they know, instead of on their computer skills," says Marceau.

Marceau shares that district assessment specialists have noticed the improvement since EasyTech's implementation. Students get straight into testing, instead of wasting valuable time acclimating to their devices.

WIDER APPLICATION

In many ways, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the digital transformation already underway in the district. In the spring of 2020, CUSD purchased and distributed laptops, partnered with T Mobile to distribute wifi hotspots, trained teachers for online instruction, and set up a virtual school for thousands of families that preferred not to send students back in person. Nothing about the transition was easy, but the technology team was proud of the digital foundations they had proactively provided students across the district.

"If our kids didn't have those 3 years of experience with Learning.com leading up to COVID-19, it would've been a lot worse," says Curt Landon, instructional technology coach.

The district technology team including Marceau, Tibke and Landon hope to continue building on the foundations laid both before and during online learning. They are currently creating crosswalks between their K-6 digital literacy curriculum and Arizona's recently adopted Computer Science standards.

"Our vision is to see our classroom teachers feel more comfortable with technology being how we teach in the 21st century," says Marceau. "We have a lot of professional development ahead of us, to see more technology and digital literacy skills that students are learning in the lab being applied in the classroom."

“**With Learning.com, everything is in one place, from typing to presentation skills to the digital citizenship side. Having everything all in one tool is very, very helpful.**”

— Curt Landon, instructional technology coach



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