

Chandler Schools Use EasyTech to Create Instructional Equity for All Students

A Diverse District

Spanning more than 80 miles, the Chandler Unified School District in Arizona serves over 44,500 students in grades K-12. Noted as one of the fastest growing districts in the state, it consists of 31 elementary sites, ten middle school programs, six high schools, and three alternative schools. While student demographics and family household incomes reflect a wide spectrum of socio-economics, Chandler schools are proud of the diversity that makes up the entire student body in their district.

“We have campuses that represent affluent and lower socio-economic levels alike—and every variation in-between. We embrace all differences and are constantly working to meet the learning needs of this huge mix of students,” said Cristen Marceau.

Although Marceau began her career as a classroom teacher, she ultimately moved into a technology role for Chandler schools. She celebrates having served nearly two decades of service in technology education and was tapped for the task of creating instructional equity for all students throughout the district in recent years.

Since not having a standardized curriculum has been identified as being a barrier to providing students with instructional equity, Marceau and her team focused on eliminating that obstacle by developing a robust technology curriculum with EasyTech.

Marceau admits that she had never developed a technology curriculum for so many students, and it felt a bit daunting. “EasyTech has really helped us in that respect. The curriculum helps level the playing field for all our students,” she said.



An Answer for Instructional Equity

While searching for a digital literacy solution to offer instructional equity throughout the entire district, Marceau mentioned how a coworker had heard about Learning.com and brought the product to their attention.

“I fell in love with it. EasyTech arrived at a time when I felt pressure, because I had never written such a large scope of digital curriculum for so many grade bands,” said Marceau.

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“When I started looking at the EasyTech pacing guides and the lesson plans, it felt so possible to me. Before, I had nothing to go on to create lessons. And now, seeing what other technology teachers have done with it, and how much talent and creativity EasyTech accommodates as we work with the product, is all pretty impressive.”

After deeply exploring the product, it was decided that EasyTech was the best solution for the Chandler district to bring digital literacy lesson staples such as keyboarding, coding and computational thinking, business applications, online safety, and more, to every student.

The Coach Approach

As Chandler Unified School District moved forward with the decision to utilize EasyTech at all their sites, they also identified adequate teacher training as another key area that promotes instructional equity.

Many teachers are expected to teach students technology skills, but do not receive specific training on how to teach these skills and are not provided with any sort of curriculum to follow. As a result, students may encounter uneven quality of instruction from classroom to classroom and school to school. To ensure equity, the district made the decision to hire 30 new technology teachers in 2017 to work primarily with grades K-6.

“We knew that our state is moving to online testing, for grades 3-12. We knew that was going to be a challenge and our superintendent and school board knew we had to get our students ready for that,” said Marceau. “We did not want our students struggling with how to open a tab, how to highlight text, or how to keyboard. We had to get 21st century skills delivered to our students as soon as possible.”

In addition to getting the technology curriculum ready to go, their role has been focused on coaching and modeling technology integration with classroom teachers to implement equity of instruction for their students.

“With this new technology team, our hope is to get our classroom teachers coached and trained and confident to take on technology education in their own classrooms, over the next few years.”

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“My role is to support the teachers to support our students. Our mission in this district is to really give our students the knowledge and skills that are necessary for them to succeed in life, in career, and in college. Supporting our teachers to offer the best digital learning curriculum to our students is a valuable instructional strategy for us all,” said Marceau.

About Learning.com

Learning.com is a national leader in providing digital literacy solutions that help prepare students for online assessments, school, college and their future careers. The company offers a complete digital literacy curriculum for grades K-8 that engages students as they develop critical skills such as keyboarding, business applications, online safety, computational thinking and coding. Founded in 1999, Learning.com currently partners with one in six U.S. school districts and serves more than 4 million students each year.