EDTECH
Top40

A Look at K-12 EdTech Engagement During the 2022-23 School Year

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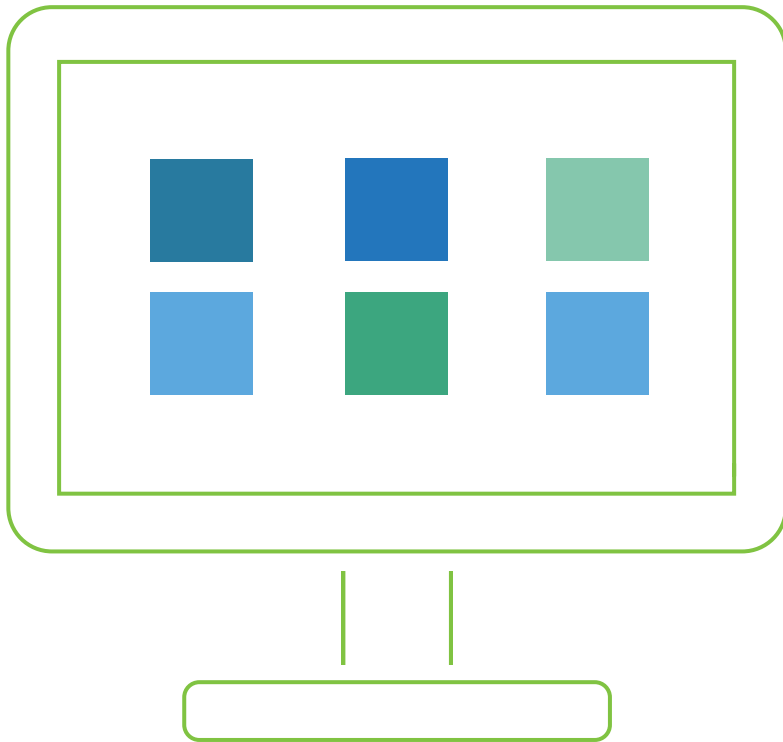
It's no secret that educational technology has become integral to teaching and learning—both in and out of the K-12 classroom—and administrators, educators, and students alike continue to access and rely on a wide range of edtech tools that enhance the learning process.

The EdTech Top 40 Report shares the latest on the use of digital solutions, tools, and resources in K-12 districts across the country, as well as insights on usage trends and categorical rankings. We hope the K-12 community can use this information to gain context for their own edtech use and make more informed instructional, operational, and budget decisions.

The findings of the EdTech Top 40 Report for the 2022-23 school year are based on
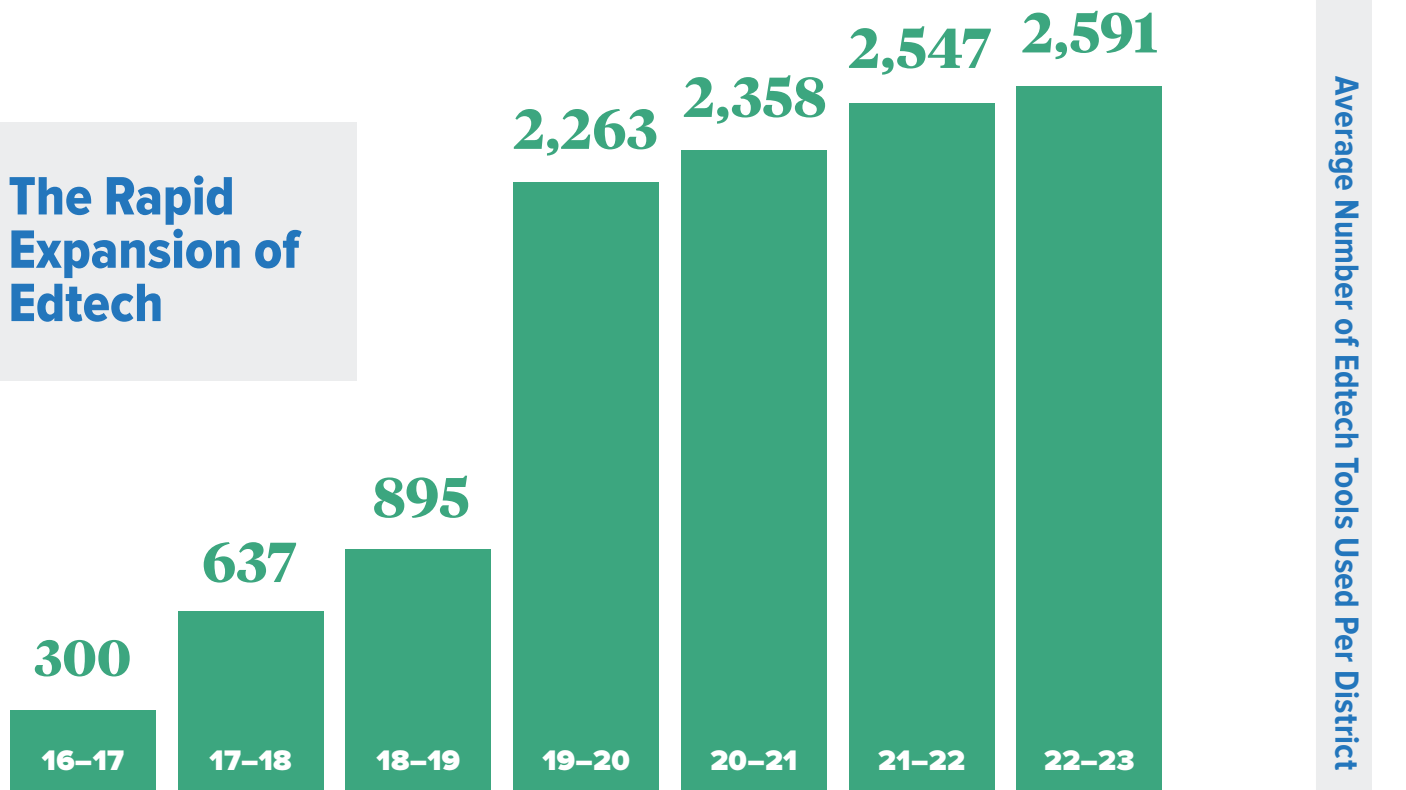
57bn+
interactions

3m+
students

465k+
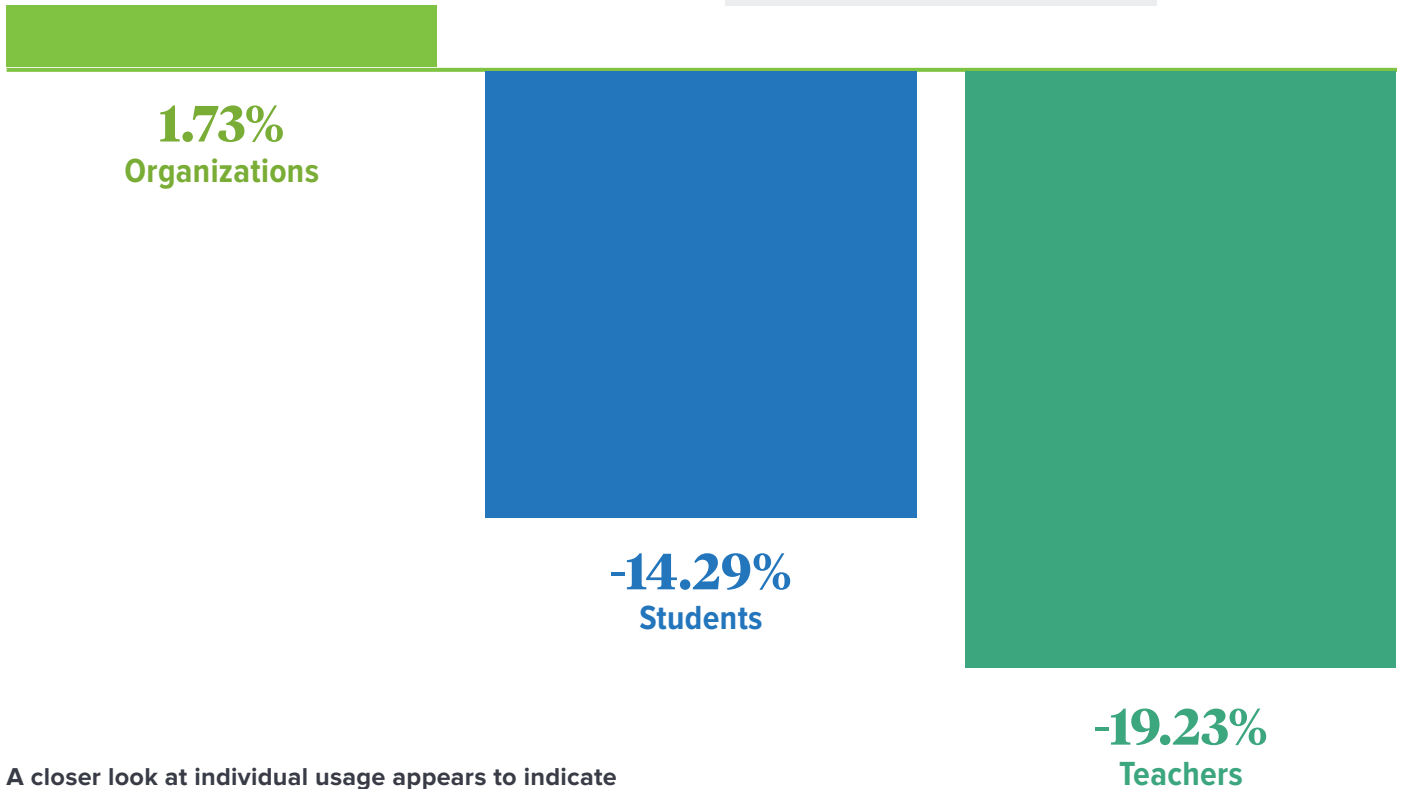educators

9,000+
edtech products

THE STATE OF EDTECH ENGAGEMENT

Over the last seven years, edtech engagement has dramatically increased; as expected, edtech usage experienced massive acceleration in the 2019-20 school year due to the shift to remote learning as a result of the COVID pandemic. Since then, edtech usage has continued to increase slightly in the aggregate, signaling technology in education is here to stay.

The Rapid Expansion of Edtech

Average Number of Edtech Tools Used Per District

Year	Value
16–17	300
17–18	637
18–19	895
19–20	2,263
20–21	2,358
21–22	2,547
22–23	2,591

PLATFORM

LEARN
BY INSTRUCTURE

A Look at Edtech Usage

Annual Edtech Usage by Volume and User Category

1.73%
Organizations

-14.29%
Students

-19.23%
Teachers

A closer look at individual usage appears to indicate that students and teachers are finding the tools that best suit their personal needs. For the 2022-23 school year[1], school districts accessed an average of 2,591 distinct edtech tools annually. That translates to an average of 1,379 tools accessed each month during the school year, indicating districts are not using a consistent set of edtech tools throughout the entire school year but instead engaging with new tools consistently over time. Interestingly, while the number of distinct tools accessed annually at the district level has increased slightly, the average number of edtech tools accessed by districts each month is down compared to the 2021-22 school year (from 1,417 to 1,379).

[1] **For the purpose of this report, the 2022–23 is defined as September 1, 2022-May 31, 2023.**

When we look at the usage data from the perspective of an individual student or educator, the volume of edtech tools used is down year over year. The number of unique edtech tools accessed by students and teachers significantly decreased compared to last school year, by 14.29% and 19.23%, respectively. On average, students accessed 42 tools during the 2022-23 school year, ten less than the previous school year (52). Educators also accessed an average of 42 tools during the school year (down from 49 in 2021-22).

Average number of unique edtech tools accessed per individual over the entire school year

42
by students

42
by educators

2,591

Average number of edtech tools accessed per school district over the entire school year

When it comes to specific edtech tools, the top 40 tools remain remarkably consistent year after year, although there have been shifts in a few areas; a noticeable shift this year is the increase in tools related to data security. Learner-focused tools have remained resilient, as educators continue to increase student engagement and enhance the learning experience through technology. In the 2022-23 school year, 58% of tools accessed were learner-focused.
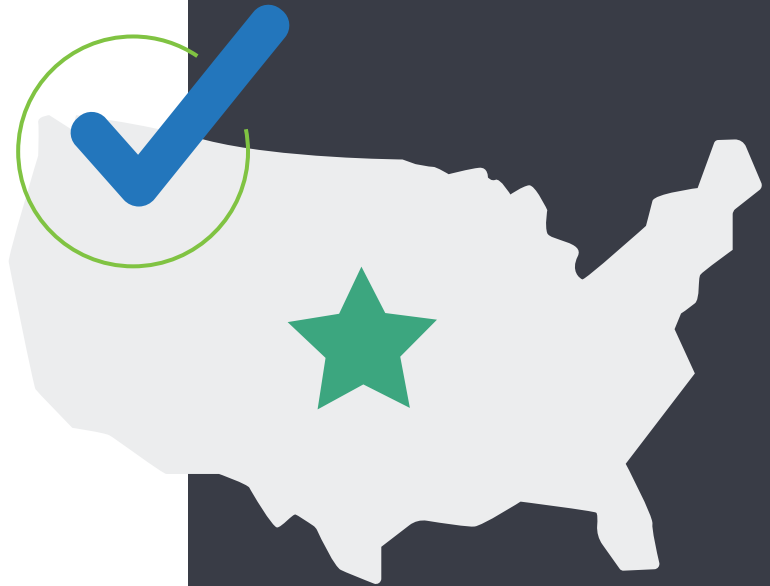
In response to the findings outlined in the Edtech Top 40 Report, the following questions remain top of mind:

- **While the number of edtech tools teachers and students use is decreasing, how will organizations best serve the increasingly diverse ecosystem of tools required to reach teachers and learners?**

- **Does the rise of learner-focused tools reinforce that learning is human-centered but increasingly tech-enabled?**

- **How can education leaders continue to work to safeguard student data privacy?**

- **How quickly will new ESSA evidence requirements and visible research impact purchasing, renewal, and product development decisions?**

- **With the advent of AI, will K-12 solution providers who incorporate into existing highly used solutions continue to grow, or will new AI tools disrupt incumbents in future years?**

EDTECH Top 40

The EdTech Top 40 represents the edtech solutions accessed by the most students and educators across the United States from September 1, 2022 and May 31, 2023, as tracked by LearnPlatform by Instructure.

The Breakdown of the Top 40 by Category & Purpose

All products on the EdTech Top 40 are classified by category and purpose. Solutions are categorized as being primarily learner-focused, educator-focused, organization-focused or general and pervasive.

Learner-Focused

Tools in this category are generally used by individual learners—with individual self-determination—during various learning processes both in and out of the classroom. Activities of study, creation, research, games all fall into this category.
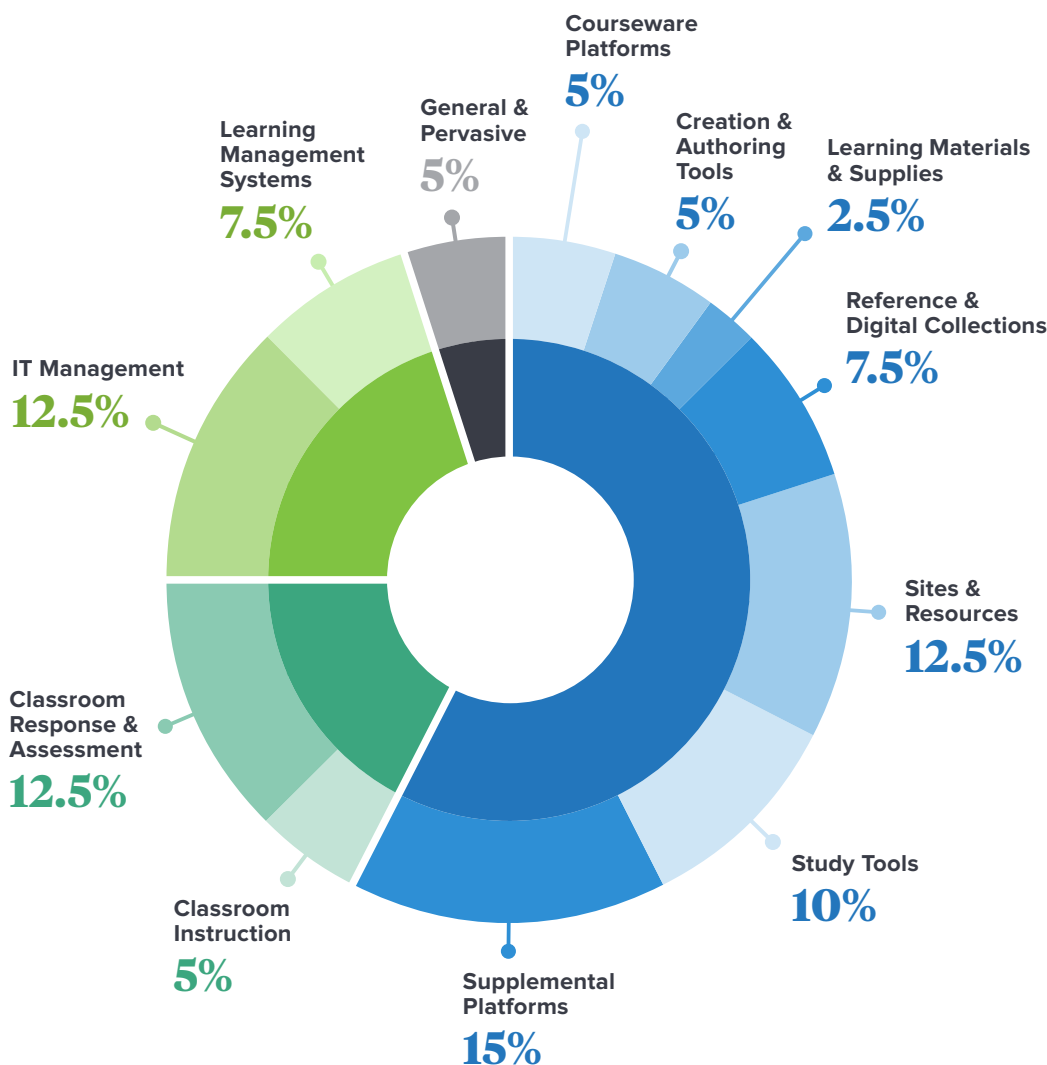
Educator-Focused

These products are primarily used by educators to support the teaching and learning process, including activities and engagement for multiple learners with some direction or alignment. Shared tools, assessment, planning and operational tasks in/around/between educators and students are in this category.

Organization-Focused

Products in this category are used by organizations to serve groups of educators and learners. These tools are generally used to align, support, and manage operations of multiple learning environments. Activities of administration, operations, technical support, finance, and learning management, all fall into this category.

General & Pervasive

Tools categorized as general and pervasive are not exclusive to education settings, but are broadly available consumer technologies that are used in education for multiple and generic purposes. Examples include video conferencing, email/calendar platforms, cloud storage, etc.

Courseware Platforms 5%

General & Pervasive 5%

Learning Management Systems 7.5%

Creation & Authoring Tools 5%

Learning Materials & Supplies 2.5%

Reference & Digital Collections 7.5%

IT Management 12.5%

Sites & Resources 12.5%

Classroom Response & Assessment 12.5%

Classroom Instruction 5%

Study Tools 10%

Supplemental Platforms 15%

EDTECH Top 40

The EdTech Top 40 represents the most-accessed edtech solutions September 1, 2022 and May 31, 2023, as tracked by LearnPlatform by Instructure.

ABCya!
Learner-Focused, Sites & Resources

Blooket
Educator-Focused, Classroom Response & Assessment

BrainPop
Learner-Focused, Supplemental Platforms

Canva
Learner-Focused, Creation & Authoring Tools

Canvas LMS
Organization-Focused, Learning Management Systems

ClassLink
Organization-Focused, IT Management

Clever
Organization-Focused, IT Management

Code.Org
Learner-Focused, Supplemental Platforms

CoolMathGames
Learner-Focused, Sites & Resources

Desmos
Learner-Focused, Study Tools

EdPuzzle
Educator-Focused, Classroom Instruction

Encyclopedia Britannica
Learner-Focused, Reference & Digital Collections

Epic!
Learner-Focused, Supplemental Platforms

Gimkit
Educator-Focused, Classroom Response & Assessment

GoGuardian NEW
Organization-Focused, IT Management

Google Classroom
Organization-Focused, Learning Management Systems

Google Workspace for Education
General & Pervasive

History.com
Learner-Focused, Sites & Resources

i-Ready
Learner-Focused, Courseware Platforms

IXL Learning
Learner-Focused, Courseware Platforms

Kahoot!
Educator-Focused, Classroom Response & Assessment

Kami
Educator-Focused, Classroom Instruction

Khan Academy
Learner-Focused, Supplemental Platforms

Math Playground
Learner-Focused, Sites & Resources

MIT App Inventor
Learner-Focused, Creation & Authoring Tools

Nearpod
Learner-Focused, Supplemental Platforms

NYTimes.com
Learner-Focused, Reference & Digital Collections

PearDeck
Educator-Focused, Classroom Response & Assessment

PhET Interactive
Learner-Focused, Study Tools

Prodigy
Learner-Focused, Supplemental Platforms

Quizizz
Educator-Focused, Classroom Response & Assessment

Quizlet
Learner-Focused, Study Tools

Scholastic
Learner-Focused, Learning Materials & Supplies

Schoology NEW
Organization-Focused, Learning Management Systems

Securly Filter NEW
Organization-Focused, IT Management

Study.com
Learner-Focused, Study Tools

Weebly
Organization-Focused, IT Management

Wikipedia
Learner-Focused, Reference & Digital Collections

Youtube
Learner-Focused, Sites & Resources

Zoom
General & Pervasive

EDTECH RANKINGS BY SOLUTION PURPOSE

In addition to the top 40 most-accessed edtech solutions, we dive deeper into the rankings of certain solutions designed specifically for education use, including learning management systems, courseware platforms, supplemental platforms, classroom response & assessment tools, study tools, and sites and resources.
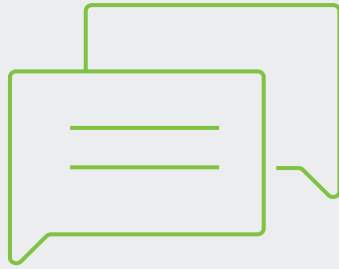
The Top 5 Learning Management Systems

Products classified as learning management systems (LMS) are an all-in-one platform for teaching and learning. An LMS provides school districts with a centralized platform for course management, content authoring and delivery, reporting grades and data, and communication between students, teachers, families, and administration.

1 Google Classroom

2 Canvas LMS

3 Schoology

4 Savvas Realize

5 Seesaw

The Top 10 Courseware Platforms

Courseware platforms include solutions in which an entire set of curriculum products have been selected and taught in a sequence to be foundational and comprehensive towards a set of learning goals.

1 i-Ready

2 IXL

3 McGraw Hill

4 Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH)

5 Amplify

6 Lexia

7 DreamBox Learning

8 Learning A-Z

9 DeltaMath

10 ReadWorks

The Top 15 Supplemental Platforms

Solutions in the supplemental platforms category enable students to actively engage with educational content through different subjects, topics, purposes and modalities, with or without a firm course progression, providing targeted supplement to their learning process.

1 Nearpod

2 Prodigy

3 Epic!

4 Code.org

5 BrainPop

6 Khan Academy

7 Newsela

8 TypingClub

9 CommonLit

10 Typing.com

11 NItro Type

12 Discovery Education

13 PebbleGO

14 ConnectEd

15 NoRedInk

The Top 10

Classroom Response & Assessment Tools

The classroom response and assessment category encompasses diagnostic tools used to provide ongoing feedback to educators, allowing them to adjust their teaching methods based on a student's learning style and ability.

1 Blooket

2 Quizizz

3 Gimkit

4 Kahoot!

5 Pear Deck

6 SurveyMonkey

7 Boom Learning

8 Mastery Connect

9 Breakout EDU

10 Edulastic
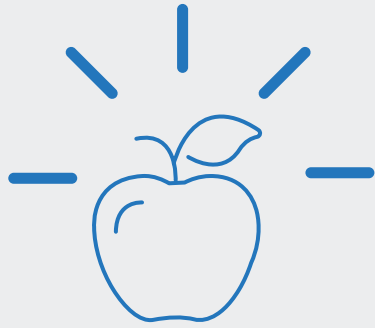
The Top 10 Study Tools

Study tools provide student users with resources to prepare for assignments and assessments, as well as tutoring and other aids for studying that help students learn or reinforce specific knowledge or skills.

1. Quizlet
2. Desmos
3. Study.com
4. PhET Interactive Math & Science Simulations
5. Grammarly
6. SparkNotes
7. Brainly
8. PBS LearningMedia
9. Mathway
10. Course Hero
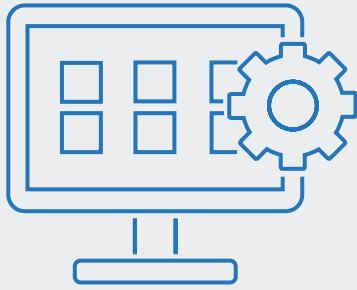
The Top 10 Sites & Resources

This category includes content used by students as a resource in learning.

1. YouTube
2. Coolmath Games
3. ABCya!
4. Math Playground
5. History.com (History Channel)
6. PBS
7. ExploreLearning
8. Quora
9. Ducksters
10. Math is Fun

OUR PERSPECTIVE & CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE K-12 COMMUNITY

Edtech engagement data surfaced in this report highlights the need for further conversations between stakeholders across the K-12 landscape. We've outlined three key takeaways and related actions to consider in support of that work.

1

Takeaway 1: Good decisions need good data and evidence.

Technology is a pervasive and important part of our world today—but tech for tech's sake won't cut it. District leaders need to be intentional about what outcomes they are hoping to achieve with individual tools, what criteria they are using to drive edtech evaluation, and how they are ultimately making decisions about what and how tools are implemented. Putting deliberate, thoughtful processes like this in place requires evidence, and evidence comes in many forms. The most effective decisions—and those that gain the most traction—are supported with a combination of staff feedback, empirical data, and reputable research, and paired with clearly stated intended outcomes. With solid rationale, concrete goals, transparent communication, and clear implementation plans, administrators can feel confident about gaining buy-in and adoption of chosen solutions.

ESSA-aligned research is a critical, and now required, component of evidence-based decision making. When it comes to research, leaders need to consider quality, quantity, recency, and context. The **ESSA framework** provides an 'on-ramp' to effective, innovative tech use, while ensuring public dollars support research-based interventions to help get the best outcomes for all. Every solution paid for with federal dollars should be backed, at a minimum, by a Level IV study, or Theory of Change, that describes the research the program was based on, what implementation with fidelity looks like, and the outcomes it's intended to achieve. Level III-I studies provide evidence of the actual impact of a tool in real-world teaching and learning situations, and are required for any ongoing funding.

It's also critical to remember that edtech decisions are not one-time events, and, as the end of federal stimulus dollars approaches, evidence will be critical for tough decisions. As district challenges, demographics, and initiatives evolve over time, edtech ecosystems need to be continuously evaluated and refined. District leaders can build virtuous cycles of feedback—both anecdotal and empirical—by aligning edtech use with desired outcomes, and measuring against progress towards those outcomes over time.

Considerations for District Leaders

- **When evaluating new edtech tools, look for products that have one or more ESSA-aligned studies, and consider the recency and context of those studies.**

- **Build a centralized edtech library so teachers have visibility to safe, approved tools.**

- **Implement an ongoing, iterative evaluation of your edtech ecosystem to ensure edtech tools are moving the needle towards desired outcomes.**

- **Ask edtech providers you are partnering with about their ongoing commitment to building an evidence base.**

2

Takeaway 2: Privacy and cybersecurity need to be top of mind for organizations, and are expected by individuals.

As we all spend more time online, the amount of information being shared is growing exponentially. This is just as true in districts, schools, and classrooms as anywhere else, and the privacy and security implications are real. Several pieces of federal legislation—the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)--codify parental rights and consent when it comes to their children's information online. However, a growing number of states, including California, Minnesota, and Illinois, have passed legislation that directly addresses the safety and privacy of students' educational data. Elsewhere, local education agencies, regional service agencies, and individual schools are implementing their own student data privacy policies.

The goal of all this work is to protect students and educators from malicious uses of any of their personal information, and protect districts from costly, disruptive, and reputation-damaging data breaches. Maintaining compliance is key, and may include requirements like having Data Privacy Agreements (DPAs) on file with all edtech providers or identifying a 'Chief Privacy Officer' within your district.

Considerations for District Leaders

- **Take inventory of the tools that teachers and students are using, and uncover any unapproved edtech.**

- **Ensure the edtech solutions used within your organization are compliant with local, state and federal privacy requirements and regulations.**

- **Build student data privacy and cybersecurity checks into your edtech vetting and purchasing processes.**

- **Create a community of stakeholders dedicated to protecting student privacy.**

3

Takeaway 3: It's about more than vetting tech; it's about aligning learning solutions.

Effective edtech vetting processes are about much more than just tech— they are holistic, cross-functional processes that need to consider equity and accessibility, and will shift and evolve with district needs as well as the individual products being considered. Having clear desired outcomes for every edtech tool in use is critical to success. What those outcomes are should drive the stakeholders involved and the criteria for evaluation.

Depending on the tool, key stakeholders involved in vetting should include classroom teachers, curriculum and instruction leaders, and assessment leaders in addition to IT. Each of these groups has different areas of expertise and priority, and all perspectives should be taken into account. Consider things like standards alignment, student data privacy compliance, interoperability, ESSA-alignment and more. Many districts leverage edtech vetting rubrics to make sure the right individuals are asked to weigh in on the right questions.

It's also important to consider transparency in your edtech vetting process. District staff and leadership will turnover, and it's important to have a 'system of record' of why different edtech decisions were made. This kind of documentation and explanation can also be valuable to parents, school boards, and other community stakeholders. Finally, keep in mind that edtech vetting typically begins with product requests from teachers, who want visibility to the status of their requests and the rationale behind approval status decisions. As Artificial Intelligence (AI) gains broader adoption, these requirements will become even more important to support students and teachers, protect against the exploitation of data, and expand equitable access.

Considerations for District Leaders

- **Make it a priority to involve stakeholders throughout the organization and gather a range of perspectives in your edtech evaluation processes.**

- **Create a rubric to help standardize your vetting process.**

- **Prioritize communication as part of your processes, and provide documentation to support transparency in decision-making.**

IN CLOSING

It's undeniable that technology is shaping the future of education. Now more than ever, school districts need to think about their edtech ecosystem holistically, and take the necessary steps to ensure they are investing in products that are safe, equitable, and effective for all students.

If you'd like to receive research updates or have any questions about this report, please contact us at **evidence@instructure.com**.

METHODOLOGY

Findings are based on the analysis of de-identified data from September 1, 2022 to May 31, 2023. Data was collected using LearnPlatform's browser integration, which is freely available to any U.S. education organization.

The EdTech Top 40 2022-23 Report reflects a total of more than 57 billion data points from education organizations utilizing LearnPlatform's browser integration, including 4,136,198 individuals (466,665 educators and 3,661,346 students). The synthesis examined quantitative data on product usage during the designated time frame from the LearnPlatform for Educators and LearnPlatform for Students browser extensions; specifically web traffic for digital tools utilized. In some cases, the data includes central logins that could be used to access multiple edtech solutions. Analysis, tools and reports are compliant with all federal and state student data privacy laws, including FERPA, COPPA, CIPA and PPRA. The EdTech Top 40 is based solely on quantitative analysis. No marketing, advertising or qualitative insights were used.

The number 1,379 (average for the year) was calculated based on the average number of products accessed by school districts per month between the designated time frame. Districts were only included in this specific analysis if they had at least 1,000 browser extension student users and at least 50 teacher users per month. Any changes or increases in the average number of edtech products accessed from year to year in the EdTech Top 40 may be influenced by sample size, participant distribution, additional tools tracked and distribution of edtech tools accessed.

The average total number of products accessed by an individual educator (42) and individual student (42) during the period of September 1, 2022 to May 31, 2023 was calculated by taking the average of the distinct edtech tools accessed by each individual user, educator or student, in our sample during the time period.

For questions about the data included in this report, please email **evidence@instructure.com**.

57
billion+
data points

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