



JOURNAL

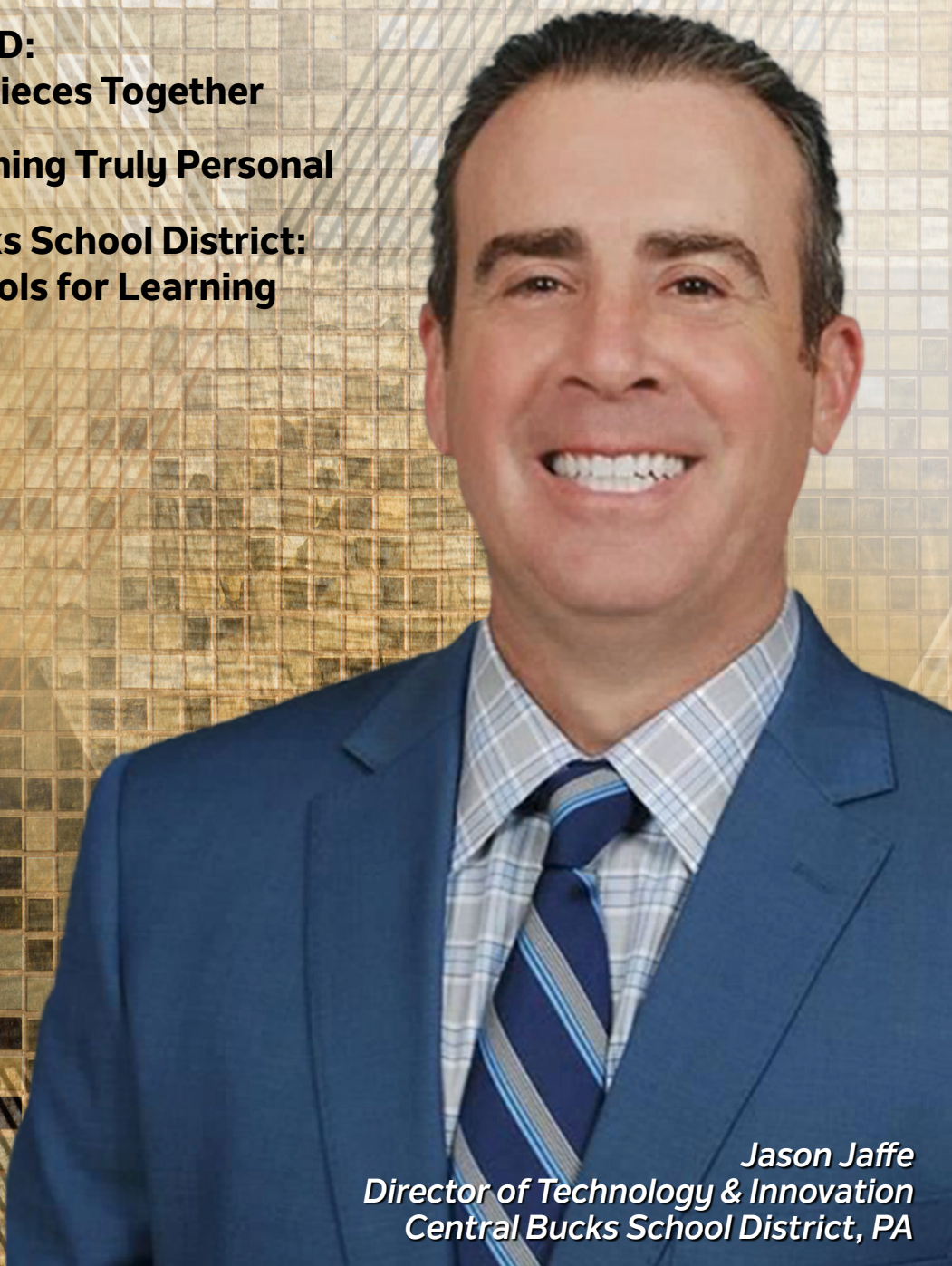
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Unlocking Limitless Learning

Because tomorrow's leaders are sitting in our classrooms today

There has never been a time in history when it was more possible to unlock limitless learning for students of all ages. Even the youngest learners now have an opportunity to engage in meaningful learning. Previously, we would ask young learners, "What do you want to do when you grow up?" Now we can simply ask, "What would you like to do?" Children are finding learning pathways, collaborating with others across the globe and making real-world contributions. At the same time, their teachers, parents and grandparents are enriching their own lives, those in their communities, friends and strangers across the world.

Personalized tools are leveling the playing field by granting access for the first time to learners whose individualized learning styles and abilities once precluded them from an equal access to education. Collaboration tools are linking learners with ease, creating synergy and encouraging creative thinking and problem solving. In education, silos are breaking down, merging professional learning, technology and curriculum into one powerful stream of teaching and learning. The only limit that still exists is our own imaginations.

From a practical standpoint, limitless learning can be realized in virtually any classroom by transforming classroom time using easy to manage technology to achieve better learning outcomes. The steady stream of technology innovation, along with the availability of the Internet, has given rise to schools and districts leveraging technology to ignite student ideas and student learning.

New technologies are now making their way into the education landscape at a dizzying pace. Sophisticated gaming like Minecraft was followed by easily accessible cloud services, Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality. As the focus in education has shifted from a school-centered approach to a student-centered approach, schools are using available technology to coordinate, collaborate and catalyze self-directed learners, helping them unlock limitless learning.



The Dallas Independent School District: Putting all the Pieces Together

Dr. Shannon Terry is the Executive Director of Professional and Digital Learning at the Dallas Independent School District. Her title gives a clue to her district's philosophy. Her department includes professional learning and digital learning, no longer separating the worlds of professional development and student learning and includes library media services. The district is transitioning into a learning organization as opposed to a school district made up of disparate systems.



According to Terry, "Dallas ISD established the Professional and Digital Learning (PDL) Department as part of the district's Teaching & Learning Division. The PDL Department is comprised of three departments, including the Professional Learning, Digital Learning, and Library Media Services departments. The PDL Department is responsible for facilitating the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of a vision of professional learning that is shared and supported by the Dallas learning community at large. The PDL Department scope of work also includes the modernization and transformation of the library – the place, the professional and the program. Collectively, the mission of the three (3) departments is to design and deliver engaging experiences that innovate and activate learning."

Terry's PDL Department is responsible for the design and delivery of:

- a robust, standards-driven professional learning system aligned to federal, state and local expectations
- transformational learning experiences that optimize district resources and facilitate effective teaching and learning
- an infrastructure of digital learning resources that promote evidenced-based practices as part of a micro-credentialing ecosystem
- next generation library media centers that exemplify innovation, advance research, build community and develop global leaders

"Of critical importance, school libraries and library programs provide sustainable literacy and informational supports to students across Dallas ISD schools, as well as to staff and administrators, to ensure students master the essential fluencies required as 21st century learners," said Terry. "As point of access for dynamic, timely and relevant information, Dallas ISD library programs are uniquely positioned to respond to three fundamental shifts impacting learners this century: 1) the rapid growth of a new global 'knowledge economy,' 2) the shift from a limited amount of information to a glut of information that is constantly in flux, and 3) the enormous impact of media and technology on how young people learn and relate to others."

Dallas ISD is partnering with Microsoft as their primary technology partner but recognizes the importance of a multiple skills base in today's world. Terry explained, "Similar to how diversified stock portfolios have the greatest potential to yield results, so will diversifying students' experience across different learning ecosystems have the greatest potential to yield the same. While diversifying learning ecosystems assigns priority to meeting the needs of learners, the benefits of this design extend beyond the learner. Using a variety of platforms supports the development of an "ecosystem (or platform) agnostic learner." By providing students with the opportunity to master different learning ecosystems, the district is modeling what it means to exercise a mind for the future with the future in mind."

Scaling the Learning Process

Dallas ISD began having sessions to determine which company would be their primary technology partner. This partner needed to take responsibility for professional learning to support the district's long-term learning plan. A combination of Digital Learning, Digital Leadership, the CTO and small groups all reviewed resources and technology. The STEM department and Strategic Initiatives had already engaged Microsoft as an industry partner. That was the starting point. From there, Microsoft was willing to help the district build capacity from proof of concept, all the way to scale, and mapped out the training necessary to achieve the district's learning goals.

Training Academies, Teacher Certification and other Professional Development

A crucial part of the learning picture was a system of teacher-led technology training to self-perpetuate the sustainability of the Dallas ISD. Microsoft provided the district with a strategic partner, Educational Collaborators. One in-person strategic customer meeting was conducted to collaboratively plan how to best serve the needs and existing initiatives

of Dallas ISD. One 2-day Microsoft Innovative Educator (MIE) Trainer Academy, where two trainers will be on-site to train 20-50 teacher leaders, has been scheduled. Participants will be registered for the MIE Trainer badge in the Microsoft Educator Community upon completion. Currently, plans are underway to offer three 1-day Microsoft Innovative Educator (MIE) Teacher Academies this summer and next school year. Each Academy will enroll 10-25 participants. Additionally, four 1-hour virtual sessions/webinars are being provided through the district's partnership with Microsoft. The topics for these sessions will reinforce the work of the academies and will support the alignment of Microsoft resources with other Dallas ISD initiatives. Microsoft will provide all Teacher Academy attendees with Microsoft Office



Specialist (MOS) or Microsoft Certified Educator (MCE) certification vouchers. Microsoft underwrites the academies and the Innovative Educator Program, as well as the certification of the teachers. When asked about the support by Microsoft, Terry said, "I felt like we won the lottery!"

Southwest Local School District in Ohio is Making Learning Truly Personal for the Learner

"With Office 365, students have access to amazing tools like Microsoft Teams and OneNote. I've seen first-hand the increase in student engagement and watched them embrace using their devices in creative ways."

– Corinne Hayes

Assistant Superintendent, Southwest Local School District



Southwest Local School District in Ohio has six schools, 350 staff and 9000 parents ready to cheer their children on to graduation. They place a high degree of importance on ensuring that all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential inside and outside the classroom. Southwest's mission, "Academic and Social Growth for ALL students, every day," is the foundation of everything they do and living that mission with intention takes considerable time and effort.

In the fall of 2017, the district initiated a program issuing a laptop to every student in grades 5-12, with a mix of devices for younger students. The district also adopted Office 365, a suite of productivity tools that enable note-taking, document creation, online collaboration, analysis, and creative expression.

Writing, science, and math are all started, finished, and turned in digitally. Special-interest groups such as choir set up their own Microsoft Teams site to collaborate and stay updated on practices and concerts. Students save time and stay better organized while teachers are better able to track individual students and respond more effectively when students need a bit of a push or more of a challenge.

Laura Bubnick, an Instructional Technology Consultant from Hamilton County Educational

Service Center who is partnering with the district said, "Before our one-to-one device initiative, our teachers would reference a YouTube video link on a piece of paper for added instruction about how to do something. But, sometimes, students would get confused about where to find things. Now a teacher can put everything in OneNote or in Teams and with a few clicks send an assignment to every student." The result is students stay productive at school and at home. Even if they get to their homework late in the day, there's no fumbling around for assignments or lost paperwork.

More personalized learning is also possible. In one language arts class, the teacher sends customized reading assignments based on each student's ability. "Each student progresses at his or her own level," said Bubnick. "They can feel good about being able to accomplish tasks without the typical peer pressure that presents itself in a traditional classroom environment."



Central Bucks School District: One Step at a Time

The Central Bucks School District may not be a household name. Unless you're familiar with beautiful Bucks County, Pennsylvania, you may not know the Central Bucks School District (CBSD) is the third largest school district in Pennsylvania. This system of 3,000 staff and 18,000 students is leading edge in technology, yet has the wisdom to roll it out one step at a time.



For example, CBSD is in their first year rolling out Microsoft Teams. They started out using only Microsoft Office 365, then graduated to using Microsoft OneNote. As teachers and students became comfortable going to the cloud, they fell in love with the digital notebook that captured and organized everything across their devices. When Microsoft introduced Teams, it allowed Central Bucks to automate the process, working with their SIS and allowing a single sign on with everything.

Now the district is becoming a cheerleader for Digital Inking. On Windows 10 devices, it allows students and staff to interact with built-in Windows features and Microsoft products.

Some of the tools they are utilizing are:

Screen Sketch – This is when the user snips the whole or portion of the screen and is able to draw directly on the picture. This could be used for showing directions, having students show their work, or for annotating website, etc.

OneNote – Digital inking in OneNote allows teachers and students to write, draw, highlight and annotate on a variety of resources. This is great for giving students real-time feedback. Many teachers also use this as their direct instruction tool because it gives them infinite white board space to teach on in real-time, which then students can access anytime, anywhere.

Word/PowerPoint – These programs all have a “Draw” tab built in, which allow for additional annotation features. Plus, with inking you can add handwritten notes and convert to text or mathematical expression.

Edge – Has a built-in inking toolbar within the browser when using a device that has a digital pen. This is a great teaching tool – a lightning-fast browser with a host of organizational tools that simplifies browsing and reading.

According to Lindsay Smith, Supervisor of Educational Technology at Central Bucks, “Using Microsoft allows us to explore a variety of real-time tools to collect data that will give students and teachers the ability to access feedback. One of the best tools for this, which is unlike any other, is OneNote. This tool is incredible for creating classroom resources, pushing out information to students, differentiating materials, promoting group collaboration and providing students feedback in various forms (audio, written, typed, stickers, etc.). Another data collection tool is Microsoft Forms. We are exploring the use of Teams, which automates rostering into a collaborative space with students and teachers. Microsoft also gives us access to Single-sign on options for many of our data collection tools.”

Central Bucks School District is saving time on device management so the Technology and Innovation staff can concentrate on delivering projects to transform teaching and learning. In only two weeks, the district enrolled 3,000 devices in Microsoft Intune and can now manage them from the cloud wherever they are. “We knew we had a tight crunch over the summer,” said Jason Jaffe, Director of Technology and Innovation. “We had our regular refresh of 5,000 older devices from classrooms, libraries, and labs. Then we had to

add 3,000 new laptops on top of that.” By streamlining device management and the deployment of updates, Jaffe’s team has gained back time it can use for other cloud projects. They’re using Microsoft 365 to simplify and secure its IT while enabling better student-teacher collaboration and more engaging learning experiences. The district is on track to use Microsoft OneDrive for all its file storage by July 2019, and students and teachers will collaborate and share with Microsoft OneNote and Teams.



“Having a Technology and Innovation Department allows us to make technical decisions through an educational lens,” said Jaffe. “Our team is made up of experienced members who collaborate regularly. Our Network Team, Application Team and Education Team work together to help plan for the future of Central Bucks, resolve common issues and communicate clearly to our staff about technical situations. Microsoft offers us support in many ways. We have access to trainings, resources, support, and webinars. No matter what the product, we seem to have connections to a large network of representatives from a variety of their teams to get us the help we need around most of our initiatives.”



The Central Bucks Technology and Innovation team signing the EDUJedi Promise at the Learning Counsel's National Gathering (from left to right) Brian Novick, K-12 Technology Staff Developer; Brian Merrill, Educational Technology Analyst; Jason Jaffe, Director of Technology and Innovation; Laurel Podraza, Manager of Information Technology Services; Lindsay Smith, Supervisor of Educational Technology



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LeiLani Cauthen CEO & Publisher

A Research Publisher and Media personality for 20 years, LeiLani conducts national research on digital curriculum trends and spend. She is well versed in the digital content universe, software development, the adoption process, school coverage models, and helping define this century's real change to teaching and learning.

Charles Sosnik Editor-in-Chief

Charles has more than 30 years' experience as a journalist and editor, with a diverse background in magazines, newspaper, television, radio and digital media. For the past ten years, he has been immersed in education, helping to bring context to the ongoing narrative.



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