

Moving to a Culture of Blended Learning

Case Study



Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District Uses Schoolology PD Expertise to Transform Their District

Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District 191 is a dynamic and innovative suburban public school district serving approximately 9,000 students spread out across 10 elementary schools, three middle schools, one high school, and one alternative high school.

In 2010, they began to realize they needed to integrate more technology into their education experience. They had no 1:1 program, no learning management system (LMS), and no technology program. This changed once they launched [Vision One91](#), with the goal to “redesign the district to meet the needs of today’s learners and ensure the district’s mission of ‘Each Student Real-World Ready.’” Burnsville-Eagan-Savage secured a 10-year \$2.5 million levy specifically for education technology, allowing them to execute on this Vision One91 plan.

Burnsville-Eagan-Savage started by executing a Chromebook 1:1 program and implementing Schoolology in order to act as a “[home base for all things academic](#).” Along with this new technology, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage had purchased professional development with their software package. The Burnsville-Eagan-Savage Technology Coordinator saw an opportunity. This was their time to not only train Burnsville-Eagan-Savage’s instructors on new technology but also bring in a shift in their pedagogy. They wanted to create a culture of blended learning, where teachers infuse technology into their day-to-day activities.

Burnsville-Eagan-Savage knew the best people to work with a group of teacher leaders from their district on this new way of thinking were the educational experts on Schoolology’s Professional Development team.

Key Facts

Public School

Located in Burnsville, Minnesota
9,000 students across 15 schools

Educational experts on Schoology's Professional Development team created a 9-month Blended Learning professional development program based on research:

- Effective professional development provides participants with opportunities for research and inquiry, application of learning, reflection on teaching practice, collaboration with peers, and opportunities to refine and improve their instruction. (Source: Goodwin, 2014)
- The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) specifies that high-quality professional learning should meet six criteria: sustained, collaborative, intensive, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2017)
- When teachers receive well-designed professional development, an average of 49 hours spread over six to twelve months, they can increase student achievement by as much as 21 percentage points (Source: Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, and Shapley, 2007)

As Rachel Gorton, Instructional Technology Coordinator for Burnsville-Eagan-Savage puts it, it's important to teach "Here is WHY you create a discussion group" instead of "How to create a group." Burnsville-Eagan-Savage knew that this professional development program wasn't about teaching how to teach or on particular features within Schoology. They would be centered around collaborative sessions on how to think about technology in the classroom to see the experience as a student and extend that experience outside the classroom.

Burnsville-Eagan-Savage's Technology Coordinators and Schoology's Professional Development team started by meeting with each of the school principals to get their buy-in. They wanted to ensure that this shift in practice would be approved at the highest levels and would be supported throughout the district. The principals agreed to an initial group of 15 trainees who were excited and ready to take this deep dive. "We were looking for folks that were ready to take the leap," said Rachel Gorton. This created internal champions for Blended Learning who could talk to their colleagues about the benefits they were seeing with their students. Teachers in the first cohort immediately began sharing their learning and excitement with their colleagues and were quickly fielding requests for an additional cohort. Due to this high demand, cohort 2 started four months after the first cohort.

By 2016, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage expanded their 1:1 technology initiative use to grades 6-12, and with it their Blended Learning Professional Development programs. The original group of 15 teachers had become instructors teaching their own blended learning courses based on what they learned. Over the original 9 months they were able to supplement Schoology's materials with internally made materials personalizing the program for Burnsville-Eagan-Savage. Since all of these materials are in Schoology, each instructor copied the course making this PD easily scalable and customizable for the entire district. For example, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage was able to adapt this PD program to reinforce their commitment to a Culturally Proficient School System. This work was embedded into the Blended Learning PD program to align and support their vision of digital learning that more effectively supports their diverse student population.

“We all know that the devices are the easy part but changing learning and teaching in our classrooms is a much more complex process,” explained Rachel Gorton. “The Schoology Blended Learning PD Program has been fantastic in providing our teachers a pedagogical approach in utilizing the strong features in Schoology. Our Blended Learning Cohort teachers are applying their learning immediately, sharing their learning and successes with their peers, and building momentum and excitement among their colleagues who now want to begin the program. Teachers in the cohort commonly share that they enjoy the sessions and find it among the best professional development they have experienced.”

Watch this short video walkthrough to see an LMS designed to help you measure and magnify the impact of your initiatives.

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

References

Goodwin, B. (2014, May). *Research Says / Keep Professional Learning Groups Small, but Connected*. *Educational Leadership*, 80-82.

Every Student Succeeds Act. (2017). Retrieved from U.S. Department of Education: <https://www.ed.gov/essa?src=ft>

Yoon, K. S., Duncan, T., Lee, S. W.-Y., Scarloss, B., & Shapley, K. (2007). *Reviewing the Evidence on How Teacher Professional Development Affects Student Achievement* (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2007–No. 033). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>