

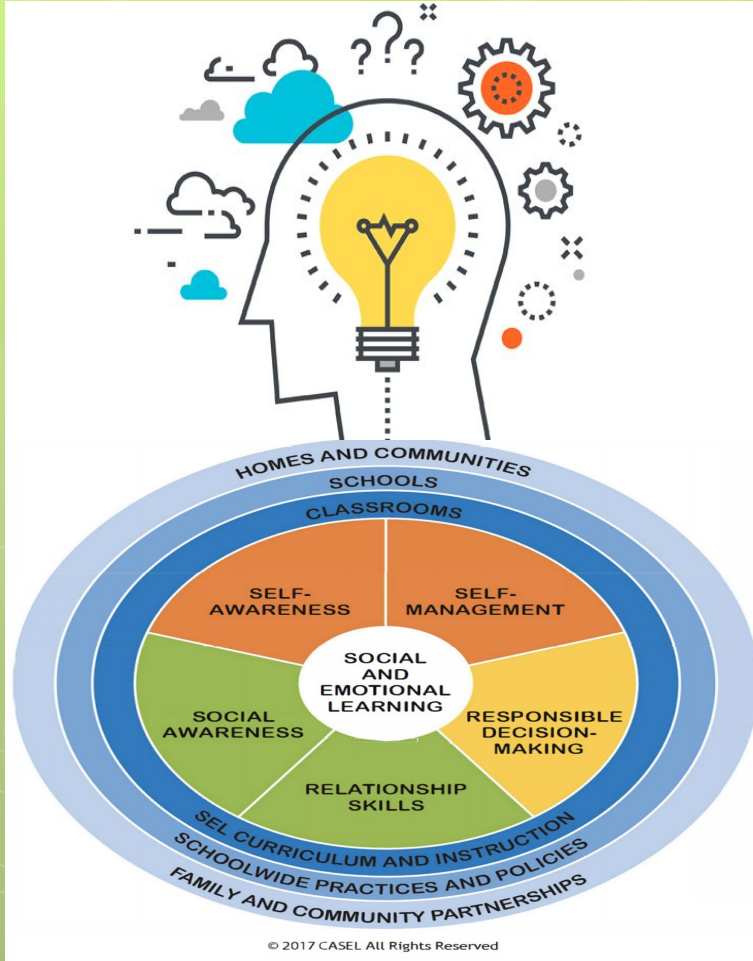


Learning Management System Proposal

Cheshire Public Schools

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Our Mission



Complex Thinking

If the Cheshire Public Schools engages in a strategic, systemic alignment of curriculum, assessment, instruction, professional development, and resources around complex thinking, then classroom instructional practice will demonstrate a clear focus on complex thinking, and student work will demonstrate complex reasoning, inquiry, problem solving skills, and the exploration of ideas.

Social Emotional Learning

If the Cheshire Public Schools consciously focuses on the social-emotional development of our students, then school practices will demonstrate a clear focus on social-emotional growth, and students will demonstrate self-awareness, self-management skills, cultural awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

How can an LMS help us?

There are 3 problems that an LMS can address.

1. Teacher workload
2. Lack of personalization in the learning process
3. Lack of accessibility for learning activities in our special needs population.

LMS opportunities for K-12 teachers and students in our district

Educators

- Can help educators (and students) stay organized through the management of learning content
- Analytics can be performed in an automated fashion, which can reduce the number of places that student data needs to be stored
- Can be used for professional development and training

Students

- Social learning integration
- Personalizes the learning process
- Provides interactive activities to enhance learning
- Includes accessibility features for special needs students

Deciding on an LMS for our district

This process requires us to:

1. Analyze needs
2. Define requirements
3. Vet products
4. Evaluate product
5. Make selection

With our district goal in mind, I analyzed three different products based on reported use in k-12 education (Hill, 2017).

Google Classroom



Blackboard



Canvas



What will make an LMS the right candidate for our district?

Academic Learning Management Systems are not an instant panacea. I approached the first step of the decision process by asking a few important questions as recommended by EdSurge (Madda, 2018).

1. Is the platform user friendly for our student population, including young children?
2. Why do we want to use this platform?
3. Is there an ability for students and teachers to communicate with one another easily, possibly even within the LMS itself?
4. Does the LMS fit in with how we track student progress?
5. Is the platform compatible with the platforms we are already using?

With those questions in mind, I developed a list of 10 requirements for our LMS to meet the needs of teachers and students.

Requirements

Student-centered requirements

1. The LMS user interface must support the following languages
 - Russian
 - Urdu
 - Spanish
2. The LMS must enable learners to identify and access tasks that have been assigned to them
3. The LMS must have a social learning feature that allows students to respond to discussion board topics and each other, and communicate with the instructor within the LMS
4. The LMS must enable learners to view their own grades and their own progress towards grade level standards
5. The LMS must include the following accessibility features
 - Text to speech/ speech to text
 - Use of high-contrast colors
 - Text editors
 - Accessible multiselect lists

Teacher-centered requirements

1. The LMS must be compatible with Google Suite for Learning
2. The LMS must have a function for automated grading
3. The LMS must have the capabilities to allow teachers to create rubrics and multiple types of assessments such as:
 - Multiple choice
 - Short answer
 - Performance tasks
4. The LMS must have the capabilities to provide synchronous learning to students via video
5. The LMS must have a function to attach multimedia software such as videos, pictures, and pdf documents

Benchmarking

A benchmarking tool was developed to evaluate the LMS. The benchmarking descriptors are based on 3 levels of proficiency that the LMS adhere to according to the requirements set as described in the previous slide.

1. Does not meet requirements
2. Partially meets requirements
3. Fully meets requirements

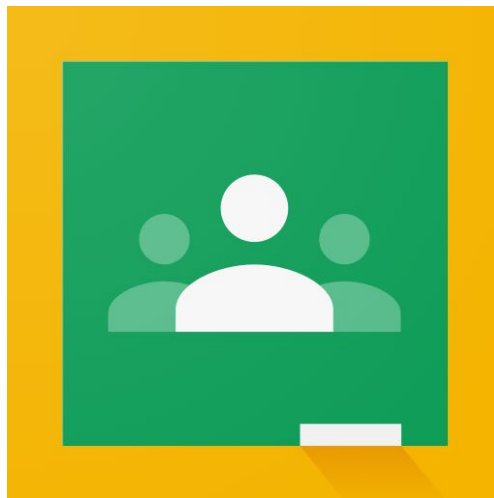
Additionally, the requirements were sorted into 6 overarching categories:

1. Accessibility
 - a. Language Features and other accessibility features previously listed
2. Navigation
 - a. Ability to access/ view assignments with minimal clicking
3. Assessment
 - a. Ability to create multiple types of assessments within the LMS
4. Analytics
 - a. Ability for students to see their own grades, automated grading,
5. Content
 - a. Multimedia capabilities, capable of importing content from Google Suite for Learning
6. Social learning
 - a. Synchronous learning capabilities, video chat, discussion boards, and ability to communicate with classmates in response to course content

Pros

- User friendly, especially for younger students
- Includes ability for parents to view student work
- Google Meet synchronous video chat capabilities
- Full Google Suite for Learning Integration
- User friendly across different devices
- Simple, user friendly, and non-overwhelming design

Google Classroom



Cons

- Discussion board component is weak
- Less customizability for teachers
- No “Commons” feature to allow teachers to use/ reuse content from other users

Blackboard

Pros

- Strong discussion board component which allows for deep discussion
- Social learning integration
- OER Commons library integration
- Accessibility features included
- Ability to create multiple different types of assessments
- System for continuing education for teachers included within the platform itself; can be useful for staff training in order to implement the LMS



Cons

- Communication with instructor must be done outside of the LMS, which can be difficult for younger students
- Not clear which content is an assignment, and which is material
- Visually overwhelming in design

Pros

- Assignments tab displays assignments to students
- Social learning integration present, includes
- “Big Blue Button” feature allows for synchronous video meetings
- Content is posted in a streamlined fashion
- Modules clearly defined and organized
- Google Suite for Learning Integration
- Commons feature allows instructors to use content created by other users

Canvas



Cons

- Click heavy navigation
- Design for students is also visually more overwhelming than Google Classroom
- Communication with instructor must be done outside of LMS as well

Learning Management System Comparison

3- Fully meets requirements

2- Partially meets requirements

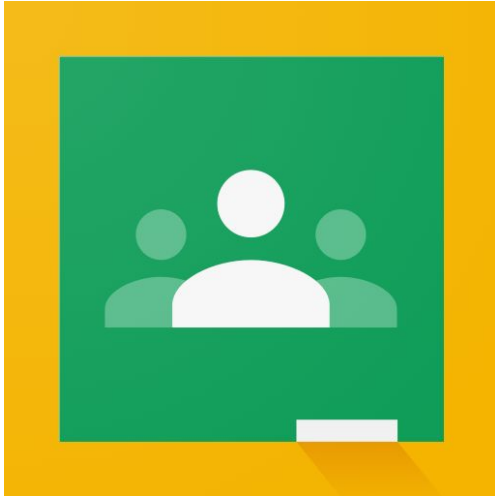
1- Does not meet requirements

Requirements

	Google Classroom	Canvas	Blackboard
Accessibility	3	3	3
Navigation	3	2	2
Assessment	3	3	3
Analytics	2	2	2
Content	3	3	3
Social Learning	2	3	3

Final Recommendation

Google Classroom



I recommend that we purchase Google Classroom as our LMS for our district. While its discussion board feature is not as strong as Blackboard or Canvas, it is compatible with all of the Google Suite for Learning software that we currently employ in the Cheshire Public Schools. Additionally, it fully meets all of the requirements in regards to accessibility, navigation, assessment, and content while also having a very user friendly design, which is the main impetus for choosing this LMS. Also, much of the content that teachers have already produced exist on Google Suite for Learning. Teachers have been using Google Suite for Learning tools like Google Slides or Google Docs to produce learning material for a very long time, and this will make the transition to the LMS seamless. Although Blackboard and Canvas feature more robust and well-developed social learning features, we fear the navigational components of these LMS will make it harder for younger students in the k-6 classroom to navigate. For the purposes of managing teacher workload and improving student outcomes by providing accessible learning content and personalized learning paths, I recommend the use of Google Classroom this coming school year.

References

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