“We were hoping to change the gambling feeling so many technology leaders have when making an edtech purchase. We’d had quite a bit of informal networking going on in which folks used social media or email to inquire about what resources colleagues valued and used. We wanted to provide something more structured for our members.”

Sarah Hanawald
ATLIS Executive Director
One of the biggest challenges of edtech and analytics is being patient and knowing that you have to start the process at the beginning. Too often we jump straight to the evaluation of a product rather than determining whether and how it is used. Are we really using what we think we use? Do we know what other schools are using? How do we know? We needed accurate information for the answers to these questions to be useful in determining the value of any product.

CHALLENGES for ATLIS Members

Independent schools have unique needs, due in part to the principles on which they are founded and the lack of an overarching intrinsic network structure upon which public or independent school districts can rely. This is the case with each independent ATLIS member organization as well, as they often have unique considerations and requirements for edtech purchasing and implementation. ATLIS brings their members together and provides applicable methods and resources for overcoming common obstacles, while supporting their individual challenges.

When it comes to edtech, ATLIS member schools want to:

• Gain insights into the products they, and schools like them, are using.
• Determine if they are getting a fair price for products they’re using.
• Access lower network or bulk buying per-unit or license pricing.

These organization-wide challenges can make daily operations tricky for individual independent school leaders. Further complicating matters is that most school technology leaders wear many hats — responsible for discovering, purchasing, implementing and evaluating edtech, while also teaching classes and planning professional development.

5 Challenges of EdTech for Independent K-12 Networks

• Aligning edtech usage with school improvement plan goals.
• Collecting product and utilization data that is sharable and consistent across member schools.
• Instituting equitable edtech procurement processes across member schools.
• Accessing supporting data for ESSA fulfillment and other reporting requirements.
• Sharing rapidly-growing edtech product libraries across schools.

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Sarah Hanawald
SOLUTION

After an initial plan to use an open source solution to manage edtech data and connect its members, ATLIS leaders realized they lacked the capacity to build and manage that type of system. They selected LearnPlatform for end-to-end edtech discovery, management, procurement, implementation and analytics capabilities — a completely configurable and scalable solution that could grow with the ATLIS network.

Today, members use LearnPlatform to make informed edtech purchasing and implementation decisions, with a collaborative network that unites schools from across the country in a "walled garden" of management tools, shared resources and insights.

IMPLEMENTATION

When the ATLIS team implemented LearnPlatform, the priority was to gather and share member feedback on a variety of different edtech products through a unique product library. As the implementation process progressed, so too have the benefits available to ATLIS members.

With LearnPlatform, ATLIS members can now:

• Fully aggregate edtech access data across the network with comprehensive dashboards from free Chrome Extensions.
• Connect with fellow members and share information, resources and best practices.
• Compare educator feedback and insights on various classroom applications.
• Evaluate which edtech products and programs are improving academic performance, and under what circumstances.
• Achieve pricing transparency and increase ROI on software investments.
• Transform instruction, improve teacher capacity and maximize student learning.
RESULTS

Of the capabilities and resources offered through their edtech management system, ATLIS members were particularly interested in the information they could get from installing the two LearnPlatform Chrome Extensions. These extensions allow members to see which digital learning products are accessed in individual member schools, as well as across the entire network. They also give school administrators answers to questions like “which edtech products are educators and students accessing?,” “which products are most popular among my educators?,” or “have all the products being accessed been approved by administration.”

When looking at early edtech access analytics, it’s easy to see how much information member networks can quickly glean from this kind of data:

- Total number of active ATLIS members providing educator-specific product usage data: 1,900
- Number of edtech tools identified in participating ATLIS schools: 1,300+
- Number of active students: 4,000+

Based on the success of the initial LearnPlatform implementation, ATLIS continues to expand its data-led edtech management capabilities. Administrators created a pricing transparency hub in LearnPlatform called the ATLIS Edtech Resource Center to help members determine if they are paying too much for products (licensing, PD, etc.) they’re already using. The procurement portal provides a centralized location for product companies to accept terms and conditions for student data privacy and usage data. Product companies are able to streamline the sales and renewal process and reduce the time to secure a deal with faculty and staff at ATLIS member schools by up to 75% while also collecting valuable insights from users who share product feedback on what’s working for their needs.