



Best Practices in the Use of Data Analytics

DISTRICT PROFILE:

Lincoln Public Schools

Lightspeed Systems® and Digital Promise have joined forces to provide participating Digital Promise League of Innovative School Districts a better way to track and monitor student-level digital engagement: the use of CatchOn® [Lightspeed Analytics™]. This award-winning data analytics tool enables schools to analyze the efficacy of their technology investments and identify those students at risk of falling through the cracks—all in real time.

Seven districts ranging in various sizes and locality participated in the project, including Nebraska's Lincoln Public Schools. This profile outlines how Lincoln's leaders are using data to inform decisions and spark new conversations and collaborations with their educational community.

How Lincoln Public Schools Leaders Used Data to Inform Their Decisions

IDENTIFYING THE PAID TOOLS USED BY STUDENTS IN SPECIFIC COURSES

The Lincoln Public School (LPS) leadership team had a very specific objective at the beginning of the Digital Promise and Lightspeed Systems program: To gain visibility into the paid tools being used by students in specific courses to assess the district's return on investment regarding those paid tools and determine if the district is at the right level of licensing.

To achieve this objective, Kristi Peters, Lincoln's EdTech & Training Coordinator, leveraged Lightspeed Analytics to create dashboards that showed engagement at the student level for individual courses per school. This enabled the Lincoln team to compare application usage analytics to make informed decisions regarding some of their paid edtech tools.



It is not surprising that the monetary piece is what initially draws people to data analytics, but once you dive into the data, there are a lot of components and possibilities that make you want to better understand the tech tool story that aligns with a specific course or an age group of students.

- Kristi Peters, EdTech & Training Coordinator, Lincoln Public School



Although LPS began their data analytics journey with one defined objective in mind, seeing their actionable data has opened the door to a new realm of possibilities for the district. **“As we increase literacy around how we can merge these data stories we are seeing, we will get a lot of growth across the entire curriculum department,”** said Peters. **“I’m so happy to see the very specific questions our curriculum team has been asking regarding the analytics, which I think has helped us uncover what they are after. It is not surprising that the monetary piece is what initially draws people to data analytics, but once you dive into the data, there are a lot of components and possibilities that make you want to better understand the tech tool story that aligns with a specific course or an age group of students. I think we will continue to mature in how we use CatchOn [Lightspeed Analytics].”**

Key Insights and Next Steps

IDENTIFYING PERSONALIZED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Moving forward, the LPS team plans to start using their actionable data to identify and categorize digital tools based on their effectiveness for certain subgroups of students. Rather than having every student use the same set of digital tools and applications, the district wants to further personalize each student’s learning experience by giving them access to the specific tools that are the most effective for them.

TRACKING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The LPS team is also interested in monitoring when students are engaging with their digital platforms and identifying which tools they are using during specific windows of time. **“The time of day of usage tells a really important story about how students are engaged outside the classroom,”** said Peters. **“The information you can uncover about that is really compelling.”**

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- Kirk Langer, Chief Technology Officer,
Lincoln Public School **”**

ASSESSING RETURN ON INSTRUCTION

Although LPS began the program primarily focused on assessing the fiscal accountability of their digital tools, the district’s team expanded their scope to identifying and evaluating each tool’s return on instructional investment as well. **“You cannot put a price on time, so we need to have a better understanding of what our instructional investment is with a program or platform and have a means of determining if it is paying dividends,”** said Kirk Langer, Lincoln’s Chief Technology Officer. **“What we are spending financially on the tool is not particularly relevant if it is not producing. The really critical part is assessing our return on instructional investment. A tool may be getting highly used, but if we are not getting anything out of it, we need to know that.”**



Digital Promise works at the intersection of education leaders, researchers, and technology developers to improve learning opportunities for all and close the Digital Learning Gap. Because when all learners have equitable access to technology, when everyone participates, and when everyone learns, we all benefit from a more engaged, informed and just society.



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