NEXT-GEN LEARNING PLATFORMS

With more than 200 learning platforms to choose from, making an informed decision is vital to the future success of learning. In the Smart Bundle Getting Smart on Next-Gen Learning Platforms several leading platforms were highlighted against a desired feature set. This graphic provides a snapshot look at the report's findings.

DECISION MAKING TIPS

As schools adopt digital tools and blended strategies, most will choose a learning platform, and many will become part of a network or user group associated with a platform. When choosing a learning platform, schools and districts should:

- START WITH LEARNING GOALS
- UNDERSTAND THE RANGE OF USE
- DEVELOP A SELECTION TEAM
- IDENTIFY WHAT SERVICES & FEATURES MATTER
- DEVELOP SELECTION CRITERIA
- CONSIDER TOTAL COST
- PICK A PARTNER

As technology creates more change, so will the platforms that support the most powerful learning. They will adapt to meet the needs of schools, students, teachers and families. While there may not be one learning platform that does it all, making informed decisions proves critical for schools and districts.

PLATFORM SNAPSHOT

Based on the informal research conducted, Getting Smart provided a snapshot of a few major learning platforms to consider.

PLATFORM	DESCRIPTION	CUSTOMERS	PRODUCT STRENGTH/WEAKNESS
Edsby	Ontario-based; K-12 designed; focus; mobile; social & personalized	US/Canada districts including Hillsborough FL	+ Course planning; affordable ($4/std), Google/Office integration — Gradebook update in September 2015
itslearning	Norway-based; started in HigherEd; designed for blended learning	US district users include Forsyth GA, Houston TX, Minneapolis MN	+ Course planning; automatic reporting and grading; strong parent view + Reporting update and Microsoft OneNote integration planned
RealizeIt	Dublin-based; adaptive learning platform ; usually augments an LMS	HigherEd CTE programs including UT system, UCF, Indiana University and high school pilots	+ Ingests content, creates adaptive competency-based sequence, improves over time — Less flexible for teacher-led units, complements an LMS
Milepost, Silverback Learning	Boise-based; instructional improvement system leveraging Gooru content	Widely used in Idaho and Intermountain West; newer adoptions in West Allis WI, Santa Ana CA, El Paso TX	+ Launched by superintendent and powers personalization with or without RTI; big OER library — Not full feature LMS but leverages NWEA and Gooru
PEAK, Fuel Education	Personalized Learning Platform that updates LMS/SIS	Specialized use in US Districts. Examples include: Evergreen WA and Poudre CO	+ Big content library including OER and teacher created content; Learn Bop 5-9 math tutoring, integrates with existing district system — Complements a full LMS
Fishtree	Dublin-based learner relationship management and learning platform	Initial focus was K-12, growing in HigherEd. Solution for educators in blended, flipped, and project-based classrooms	+ Ingests content, creates adaptive sequence, improves over time — Less flexible for teacher-led units, complements a full LMS
Alma	Portland-based K-12 holistic student engagement platform including SIS. Main goal is to reclaim admin and instructional time	K-12 Districts and Independent Schools; ECO Charter School in NJ, Creative Minds International Public Charter in DC, Howard Street Charter School in OR	+ Course planning, standards tracking; communication; has elem/secondary modules — No mobile version yet, student submissions not yet implemented
Edmodo	K-12 focused free teacher-centered social learning platform with premium enterprise features including sign-on, assessment, and apps	51 million users. 39% of districts in CA	+ Easy to make/manage assignments and share libraries; premium assessment and mastery tracking — Not a full LMS
Edgenuity	LMS and robust content	Widely used in credit recovery; well know blended use in Carpe Diem network	+ Comprehensive secondary platform — Less flexible but beginning to accept outside content
Buzz, Agilix	Personalized K-12 learning platform, updated in July	Districts focused on personalized learning, example: Michigan Education Achievement Authority	+ Support for project-based and competency-based learning — New product
Canvas, Instructure	Salt Lake-based LMS with mastery view, mobile features & object repository	Fastest growing in HigherEd; as many K-12 customers; NC K-12 adoption	+ Canvas.net for mini-MOOC; Canvas App Center — Well suited for high school, fewer elementary users
Schoology	Full LMS; focus on communication, collaboration, engagement, and instruction	US K-12 focus; adopted by Delaware and Palo Alto CA; growing HigherEd	+ Easy integrations; mastery tracking; PBL and portfolio support; single sign-on — Doesn't come with OER
Gaggle	Launched as safe email in '99, now full LMS with safety and privacy features	Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools in TN, Mountain Brook School System in AL	+ Safe Classroom filtering — Less mature blended solution; new gradebook and assignment management planned
Highlight, Education Elements	Cloud based personalized learning platform	100 US K-12 schools serving more than 60,000 students	+ Supports new instruction models with multiple digital content sources — Not a full LMS

DESIRED FEATURES

The following features have been identified to be most useful in a learning platform for schools and districts:

DESIRED FEATURE SET:

- **CMS:** content management system; multiple sources, playlists
- **AM:** assignment management; communication tools; groups
- **IIS:** instructional improvement system, RTI, achievement analytics
- **BL:** blended learning support; scheduling, grouping
- **PBL:** project based learning support, rubric-based grading
- **SBA:** standards-based assessment, quiz builder, item bank
- **AA:** adaptive assessment, recommendations, machine learning
- **SBG:** standards-based gradebook; mastery tracker
- **PM:** progress monitoring; goal tracking; student portfolio
- **SS:** single sign-on, interoperability, extensibility
- **DA:** device agnostic, mobile optimized
- **CS:** comprehensive solution; robust parent communication

PLATFORM	CMS	AM	IIS	BL	PBL	SBA	AA	SBG	PM	SS	DA	CS
Edsby								*				
itslearning												
RealizeIt												
Milepost												
PEAK												
Fishtree												
Alma												
Edmodo												
Edgenuity												
Buzz												
Canvas												
Schoology												
Gaggle												
Highlight												

RATING KEY: *(assuming full use of premium product)*

- ○ Not present / not applicable
- ◔ Rudimentary / limited functionality
- ◑ Basic
- ◕ Optimal
- ● Exemplary
- * update scheduled

NOTE: This information is based on informal research, is not exhaustive and is ever changing due to the continuous updates platforms make to meet market demand.