



Advanced Blended Learning

with Canvas LMS & iPads

 Pennsylvania  2,278 Students  Adopted Canvas LMS: 2019

Became an Apple Distinguished School: 2022

Known for its innovative approach to teaching and learning, Elizabeth Forward School District strives to create lifelong learners by “creating learning environments that nurture the academic, social, and emotional skills of each student.” Educators at Elizabeth Forward embrace the ever-changing educational landscape by integrating technology into all learning objectives and offering courses that challenge the status quo. The forward-thinking district was part of the [Digital Promise](#) for eight years, a global initiative committed to closing the digital learning gap, and remains committed to providing equitable access to learning technology today.

THE CHALLENGE

As digital learning evolves, Elizabeth Forward intends to keep up. Its advanced blended-learning model required technology tools that could grow with the district and its needs.

“While EBackPack worked for us for a while, one of its shortfalls was that its functionality was very limited. With Canvas LMS, it’s so robust. There are so many different things you can do, including outside applications, collaboration, group features.”

– Steve Hartnett, former Director of Digital Teaching and Learning

Leaders at Elizabeth Forward needed a learning management system that had the ability to connect all of their favorite apps and learning tools in one centralized location. Additionally, they needed a system that was scalable and reliable to ensure that every teacher, especially in K–5, could fully adopt the tool and connect it to their instruction—both in and out of the classroom.

Key Insights

- Elizabeth Forward is using Canvas LMS in grades K–12 to strengthen instruction and technology literacy at young ages.
- In just one day, the district was able to pivot to remote learning with Canvas LMS when classrooms closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- iPads & Canvas LMS are reliable. Educators don’t have to worry about technology working - they simply do.
- Apple and Instructure are more than vendors; they’re strategic partners that guide Elizabeth Forward to deepen technology adoption.

THE SOLUTION

In August of 2019, Elizabeth Forward implemented Canvas LMS to establish a sense of consistency in teaching and learning, increase engagement in K–5 grade levels, and fuel teacher collaboration.

Adopting any new initiative, especially something as large as a learning management system, can be overwhelming. However, teachers quickly saw the value of Canvas LMS and were willing to dive in early on. District leaders have rolled out Canvas LMS with a “boots on the ground” approach by implementing grade-level meetings to address concerns and celebrate successes related to Canvas LMS every step of the way.

We took one day off [after the fire] to ensure we were in a good position, and by that Tuesday, our high school teachers were following a schedule through Canvas LMS. Students knew to go directly to their Canvas page. They were jumping on Zoom every 37 minutes, having office hours, and submitting assignments; we just didn't miss a beat. It was because we kept [Canvas LMS] accessible, and everybody still knew how to use it. We did two months of remote learning, and our high school teachers and kids are back in-person now.

Keith Konyk, Superintendent

TEACHERS AS LEARNERS

At Elizabeth Forward, teachers are learners, too. That's why administrators also use Canvas LMS as a professional development tool to provide individualized instruction that enables teachers to grow in their craft. Using Canvas LMS in this way also helps teachers understand the tool from a student perspective, allowing them to reflect on their own instruction even more.

"Investing time and resources in getting teachers trained really helped during the pandemic. When we began remote learning, we felt that our teachers were prepared and our students would still be able to learn. Canvas LMS was an integral piece of keeping the classroom routine going"
– Steve Hartnett, former Director of Digital Teaching and Learning

Implementing technology at primary-grade levels can add an extra layer of difficulty, but teachers quickly discovered the many ways in which Canvas LMS can simplify learning for young students and strengthen their understanding of technology early in their education.

The use and purpose of Canvas LMS in grades K–5 is not to replace one-on-one instruction, but rather to capture evidence of learning and increase student engagement. Primary teachers can easily track student progress with project- and performance-based learning, and students can easily connect with all learning tools with just one click, thanks to the single sign-on (SSO) feature.

THE RESULTS

Adopting Canvas LMS at Elizabeth Forward couldn't have come at a better time. With the unexpected shift to remote learning during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the school district stayed ahead of the curve by using Canvas LMS to keep the learning going when the classroom closed. And Leaders at Elizabeth Forward felt like they hadn't missed a beat.

In addition to the consistency Canvas LMS provided during the pandemic, it has also enabled the district to accelerate personalized learning by creating learning playlists and MasteryPaths and develop and retain great teachers with meaningful professional development. Leaders at Elizabeth Forward have also taken the opportunity to expand their Canvas LMS network to learn from other users in their area.

FOUR YEARS LATER: CONTINUING TO THRIVE IN DISRUPTION

Over the last four years, much has changed at Elizabeth Forward. Assistant Superintendent Keith Konyk is now their Superintendent, Mary Carole Perry is their Assistant Superintendent, and Victoria Lojek is their Director of Digital Teaching and Learning. However, their commitment to providing high-quality digital learning experiences remains the same. Remote learning returned to Elizabeth Forward in 2023 when a fire at their high school closed their physical building. However, Elizabeth Forward's students kept learning because of previous collaboration and smooth implementation of Canvas LMS years prior.

I appreciate the relationship between Apple and Canvas. We did a session with both of them, which included the positives of both, and how the [iPads and Canvas] are working together. We're all on the same page.

Victoria Lojek, Director of Digital Teaching and Learning

APPLE DISTINGUISHED SCHOOLS: INNOVATION & PERSONALIZATION

As digital learning evolves, Elizabeth Forward's team continues to keep up. Their partnership with Instructure and Apple is vital as they innovate today and plan for the future.

"I appreciate the relationship that Apple and Canvas have. We did a session with both of them. Just the back and forth, the positives of both, and how the [iPads and Canvas] are working together is super helpful," Lojek explained. "We're all on the same page."

Konyk explained that to be considered for Apple Distinguished Schools, the Apple team came to tour schools in March 2022.

"At the end of that tour, we allowed all the folks to have personalized learning time. They could walk wherever they wanted in the building, go into any classroom in the building, and just test our theory that we scale this work effectively and that wherever they go, they'll see many of the same good things. That's something we're very proud of," Konyk said. As a testament to their efforts, all 6 of their schools received the Apple Distinguished School title.

When asked about the impact of Canvas LMS and iPads together, Perry shared, "When our high school students switched to remote learning in February, there was no learning curve. Students could join their teachers and classmates on Zoom and begin their assignments in Canvas on the first day. Teachers can design their Canvas page to be visually appealing, and the iPads work seamlessly with this platform. Regardless of the class content, everything can be found in one spot, and it is easy to submit assignments. This experience has given our students an advantage because many colleges and universities use Canvas as their LMS."

SEAMLESS INTEGRATIONS

Lojek also shared that teachers can create an assignment in Canvas LMS, and students can choose how they submit an assignment from their iPads.

"We also value the iPad as a teaching tool which the teachers use with Canvas LMS..., the iPad serves both as another tool for tasks such as grading and a model for the teachers to see what students can see," Lojek said.

Elizabeth Forward knows they will continue to innovate - even as the road ahead in education evolves.

Education has become more student-centered, and with the new advances in technology it has changed the way we teach and prepare students for the evolving societal demands. We are all adjusting our practice and feel using Canvas LMS has only helped us prepare our teachers and students with the significant changes ahead.

Mary Carole Perry, Assistant Superintendent

KEEP LEARNING

We'd love to share more about how Canvas LMS can help you personalize learning, deliver professional development at scale, and fuel collaboration. Visit [Canvas by Instructure](https://www.instructure.com/k12) to learn more.