

Williamsburg-James City County Schools

Supporting schools with the right message at the right place and time with Impact

 Virginia  11,000 Students  Adopted Canvas LMS: 2015
Impact: 2022



Williamsburg-James City County (WJCC) Schools' Coordinator of Instructional Technology & Personalized Learning, Kristin Barr, discusses the district's experience with furthering meaningful technology adoption in the classroom with Canvas LMS and Impact.

THE CHALLENGE

Up until the pandemic, WJCC Schools used Canvas LMS in a limited capacity. According to Barr, WJCC Schools previously started developing a plan to expand their use of Canvas LMS in tandem with their 1:1 device program over the upcoming years.

"We had this three to five-year plan, roll it [Canvas LMS] out, pilot groups...and then COVID hit and it went to three to five months, so we did a lot of things much more quickly," Barr said.

This rapid transition to remote learning came with its challenges. Teachers and guardians expressed their concerns as the semester came to a close. Their feedback highlighted the need for a more consistent, district-wide digital learning experience moving forward, supported by a data-informed strategy and real-time assistance for teachers as they navigated a new digital landscape. To facilitate instruction in Canvas LMS, the curriculum and instruction team invited Barr to work with teams to create digital curriculum resources for both students and teachers. This project also included Canvas LMS training.

Key Insights

- Campaigns in Impact give teachers, students, and families the right information in the right place at the right time so that they don't need to check multiple places for how to complete an action in Canvas LMS.
- Insights in Impact empower district administrators with the data they need to understand how tools are being used across the district and report on progress toward goals.
- Schools can evaluate compliance and plan support accordingly with the ability to see who took action in Impact campaigns.
- Using Impact to announce programs like online tutoring promotes equity and provides students with another avenue to get the help they need to succeed.

THE SOLUTION

In the evolving learning environment that came with the new school year, Barr and her team needed to be able to differentiate and distribute messages to students, teachers, and guardians in a channel where they would actually engage with the information.

Global Announcements in Canvas LMS was the main line of communication with users. Later, they added Impact by Instructure to gain deeper insights into both technology usage and user engagement.

“...[With Impact] we can get really rich information from different aspects of Canvas and our Canvas use which support a lot of our strategic goals in terms of utilizing technology for learning, assessment, equity, and inclusion.”

Kristin Barr, Coordinator of Instructional Technology & Personalized Learning

REAL-TIME, APPLICABLE HELP

WJCC Schools use the campaign feature in Impact to communicate with their users and guide them through specific tasks.

“With Impact, what we liked about the campaigns was that you could point out a button specifically. You could have it pop up on the appropriate page [within Canvas LMS]. It doesn’t have to be something... that’s really out of context,” Barr said. “It’s...a flashing button more or less that’s right there saying ‘click this button to view your grades or your teacher’s feedback.’ And then we can track how many people actually clicked the button.”

This ability to track engagement has been critical in determining a campaign’s success, especially when a new online tutoring service became available at WJCC’s secondary schools.

When it came time to promote the new resource to the district, Barr turned to Impact. “I used three different campaigns. One for students, one for parents, one for teachers...[Impact] was the main way we communicated with them about what the service was and how to access it,” Barr said.

The tutoring service told Barr’s team that they could expect around 20% of students to explore the website. However, data from Impact showed that 97% of WJCC Schools’ students who were targeted by the campaign engaged with the tutoring service’s website, says Barr. While not all of these students ultimately participated in tutoring, having the service available in a self-serve, accessible format in Canvas LMS was an equitable solution.

“...[Students] knew [the tutoring services] were available. So, if you’re talking about differentiation, equity, and inclusion and students being able to get the resources that they need when they need them... This is one way that students could hear another voice that presents the material a little differently,” Barr said. “We considered that to be a really successful campaign.”

PERSONALIZED, IN-APP MESSAGES

In addition to the success of the tutoring service campaigns, Barr created a series of popup messages for guardians and students to access the full capabilities of the View Feedback & Grades button in Canvas LMS. These messages began on the Dashboard, continued on to the student course menu, and showed guardians where to click to access assignment information and teacher comments.

“...There were a lot of people that gave us positive feedback that didn’t know they could get all of that information in that way from that page,” Barr said.

Insight into Canvas LMS usage, customized messages, and support for users when and where they need it most are some of the benefits that WJCC Schools have reaped since implementing Impact by Instructure this year. To learn more about how these features work explore, [An Intro to Impact for K-12: Deepen Canvas Adoption and Streamline Support](#).

THE RESULTS

At the time of interviewing, Barr had just launched an end-of-the-year procedures campaign with Impact to explain the steps teachers needed to take before their Canvas LMS courses were archived for the year. Initial feedback from this campaign was positive; teachers said that the information was “just-in-time, needed, and helpful.”

Looking ahead, Barr has started planning Impact campaigns for the next school year. She also looks forward to building a custom support center to house documents that will continue delivering the right support to the right person at the right place and time in WJCC Schools.