

Software Systems: Procurement and Implementation Considerations for Comprehensive Distance Learning

Data, Security, and Privacy

Procurement Considerations

- FERPA and OSIPA (2014) protect personally identifiable student information; however, given advancements in technology, “de-identified” student information can be readily re-identified and used for restricted purposes; this introduces many data privacy concerns, see for instance, questions 4-10 [about student data privacy](#).

Implementation Considerations

Platforms

- Does the platform’s chat or message feature allow private messages that could put students at risk?
- Does the platform allow students to upload pictures?
- Is the data available for extracts and backups?

Video Conferencing

- What personally identifiable information may be visible on web cameras?
- Can the meeting be started without the organizer present?
- Does the meeting require a password or login to access?

Cost

Procurement Considerations

- If the platform has a tiered pricing structure, do the paid enhancements provide an adequate return on investment?
- Are there limits placed on the number of participants or on the length of the session?
- Is a multi-year contract needed, or will a single year suffice?

Implementation Considerations

- Is the platform fully-featured such that educators would not need to supplement it with another tool?

Integration and Administration

Procurement Considerations

- To what degree does the platform integrate with other district software (e.g., Google Apps for Education, Microsoft 360) and hardware?
- Does the platform support a single sign-on integration?
- Does the platform integrate with the district’s SIS and gradebook tool?

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- Is the platform able to be supported remotely for distributed devices?

Implementation Considerations

- Is another login/password required?
- Do educators and students have access to help resources and/or a Help Desk?
- (LMS) Does the system allow educators and students to track grades and progress?

Accessibility

Procurement Considerations

- Does the platform support live captioning/transcription?
- Are there markup tools to help highlight and draw on the screen?

Implementation Considerations

- Is the tool developmentally appropriate for the students who will engage it for learning?
- Have educators and students been trained to use the full set of accessibility features provided in the platform?
- Have students' IEPs and 504 plans been reviewed accordingly?
- Have families been provided resources to effectively support the platform at home?

Screen Layout and User Interface

Procurement Considerations

- If the platform is to be used for whole-class meetings, can every student's video be seen?
- Is the layout of buttons and tools intuitive and easy to use?
- Does the tool allow for the sharing of system audio and video?

Implementation Considerations

Platform

- Is the interface user-friendly so that all students, including emerging readers, English learners, and students experiencing sensory disabilities, will be able to navigate the platform?

Video Conferencing

- Can educators control audio and video for students?
- Can the session be recorded?

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Connectivity and Bandwidth

Procurement Considerations

- Is the platform available on multiple devices, operating systems, and web browsers?
- Does the platform consume a lot of network bandwidth (particularly considering that multiple family members may be using the same home Internet connection)?

Implementation Considerations

- Have alternative options been provided for families that may not have broadband internet access at home?