

How CatchOn Is Helping Desert Sands Unified School District Make the Most of Its 1:1 Program



The Challenge

Desert Sands Unified School District, located in California's Coachella Valley, is a 1:1 district that serves 27,000 students. Not only is that a great many devices to manage, but district leaders must also track and monitor the tremendous number of applications and online resources used on those devices.

The Solution

To tackle this challenge, Desert Sands deployed CatchOn, a data analytics tool, which provides administrative leaders a window into the the efficacy of their technology investments and integrations. Incorporating data analytics into the district's holistic instructional strategy equipped Desert Sands with the measurable data required to improve learning outcomes and assess ROI.

Learning Impact Outcomes

CatchOn has helped DSUSD achieve measurable learning impact outcomes across numerous KPIs, particularly when the pandemic disrupted in-person classes for DSUSD.

"CatchOn helped us move to remote learning by giving us insight into student engagement," said Dr. Kelly May-Vollmar, DSUSD's Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services. "The tool enabled us to answer these essential questions: How much time are students spending on their devices? What are they doing on their devices? What apps are they spending time on? That's how you measure engagement, and CatchOn empowers us to do that."

Additionally, CatchOn helps the district ensure students are spending their time on devices productively by giving educators real-time visibility into each student's performance. "We're getting better outcomes for our students because we're monitoring performance along the way," Dr. May-Vollmar said. "We're not waiting until the annual state testing to find out how a student is doing; instead, CatchOn lets us monitor daily, weekly, monthly, whatever we want to do."

CatchOn has also helped DSUSD keep its students safe and their data secure. "We initially chose CatchOn because of our data privacy concerns," explained Dr. May-Vollmar. Upon deploying CatchOn on all the district's devices, her initial findings were alarming: in just a few minutes, she had identified several apps in use that violated the district's privacy policies.

CatchOn also made it easy for her to then shore up the district's security. "Thanks to CatchOn, I could lock things down in minutes," Dr. May-Vollmar said. "The tool is incredibly valuable to us because it empowers us to ensure that we are only using and working with vendors that have the same data privacy standards as we do for our students' information. That has helped us make a safer environment for our whole community."

Return on Investments

Dr. May-Vollmar has also leveraged CatchOn to more effectively invest in the district's educational technology. Thanks to CatchOn, she can now track who is actually using which apps and determine the apps that teachers actually need. "Sometimes we may think we're only paying a dollar a license," she said, "but if hardly anyone is using the app that rate might effectively go up to fifteen dollars a license. That's something we need to know when we're determining how to invest our resources."

CatchOn also gives her the data she needs to analyze each app's performance. "We buy apps because we really believe they're going to improve student outcomes," she said. "If that's not happening we want to know why because we don't want to waste money. CatchOn gives us visibility into real results." This insight is boosting the district's ROI.

Relatedly, CatchOn helps her deal with the inevitable proliferation of apps throughout the district. "When a district gets a new app to fill a need," Dr. May-Vollmar explained, "sometimes they don't get rid of the old one but instead just add on. CatchOn helps us determine which apps give the best return on investment and which ones need to be eliminated."

Leveraging CatchOn to build DSUSD's data story has given the district's leadership team the insight required to improve learning outcomes, better safeguard student data, and assess the ROI of their apps and online resources.