IMS 2016 Learning Impact Award Finalist: Project Summary
Newton Public Schools, MA
SAFARI Montage

Connecting the Dots to Personalized Learning at Newton Public Schools

Challenge
Several years ago, Newton Public Schools devised a plan to build a classroom ecosystem that went beyond just a software solution, like an LMS. District leaders wanted to create an environment that leveraged interoperability standards to tie together both the virtual and physical space, providing a more efficient classroom workflow and allowing for more personalized instruction, empowering both the student and the teacher. The district looked for an all-in-one tool that would handle all of those tasks district-wide, but after some some lengthy trial and error they found that that tool just does not exist.

Solution
The district found the best solutions for each individual areas of need—LOR, assessment, SIS, LMS—and, by using standards, combined them to build a platform that would work for all schools. This 'best-of-breed' approach utilizes IMS Global standards to create a classroom ecosystem that ties together multiple systems to meet not only instructional needs but logistical needs as well. "IMS interoperability standards like LTI and OneRoster have allowed us to remove the silos of technology across the learning environment within Newton and tie them together in a meaningful way, to really grasp the concept of 'growth mindset." - Leo Brehm, Director of Information Technology and Library Media (CIO/CTO) Newton Public Schools, MA

Learning Impact
Newton Public Schools (MA) are combining the strengths of multiple digital tools to deliver a highly functional learning environment through a single "pane of glass". By using the power of interoperability, the district has successfully integrated the SAFARI Montage Learning Object Repository with the Schoology LMS as well as the district's SIS (Skyward) and Assessment (Performance Matters and SchoolCity) solutions. This integrated design blends best-of-breed platforms to provide teachers with a toolkit of features from lesson delivery and content creation to evaluative assessment and attendance. The district is now working towards leveraging this interoperable infrastructure to create a fully integrated classroom ecosystem where the physical learning environment ties seamlessly with the virtual.
"Our vision of a fully integrated learning environment, where the physical ties seamlessly into the virtual, is still evolving, but using these IMS standards, it's becoming a reality, and that is truly exciting." – Leo Brehm