A Message from the Future to Superintendents

No More Endless Fixing

Superintendents typically are saddled with having to have a “fixer” attitude, fixing graduation rates, fixing test scores, fixing curriculum, fixing teachers, always fixing. Increasingly, this tinkering with the internal methods and attitudes works only limitedly and the politics of it all can be soul-crushing. School leaders today are finding no safe equilibrium, just overwhelming challenges ratcheting up year-by-year. Turning to more technology feels right in some respects, wrong in others.

Meanwhile, the world has changed, but the organization of educational institutions has largely remained the same. Companies like Amazon, Uber, Fed-X and others overturned their industries by reorganizing both their service delivery and organizational structure. Schools, meanwhile, have automated the same methods of old and kept hierarchical and siloed administration with manufacturing-like models of learning centered on classrooms. Millions of students are still being left behind despite piling on more technology. The point is, the increasing pressure on education is calling out for transformation far deeper than adding tech tools. All the evidence points to a more contemporary and precise redesign – and it’s already happening in pockets nationwide.

The Future says that an educational structure redesign takes concepts from ecommerce, the modern digital routing of the shipping industry, and parts of social media, to transform the workflow of schools and teaching in an entirely different way. Interestingly, a way that brings back humanity in learning by reverse engineering from the student out to intersect more significantly with teachers. One of the principles decouples teacher roles and creates a matrix of expertise, sometimes from exterior shared sources to create widespread leverage at lower cost. Another principle aligns cohorts of students in on-campus “houses” as a central physical or virtual hub for varied personalization paths. Yet another uses airline-level algorithms for school scheduling.
The Future says what will work is definitely not the old-fashioned turn-around strategies of the last few decades.

The Goal? Saving education and thwarting the mass attrition happening nationwide. For schools not yet feeling the struggle, helping them survive the threat of disintermediation directly online, a trend indicated by many facts including:

- American consumers (parents and students) already spend $8 Billion more on quality animated and adaptive digital learning resources than all schools put together.
- Mathnasium store-front services and other entities that guarantee student achievement in math growing at phenomenal rates nationally.
- Online learning overtaking physical campuses for total students in Higher Education.
- The rise of smartphone use overtaking computers in retail purchasing and dominating as digital reading platforms.
- More than 7,500 software companies in the digital curriculum space, not including the main App stores or free resources.
- Personalization dominating industry tech trends in other markets.

“It’s not the individual bits and pieces of the greater tech scene... rather it’s the sum of the effect, and more interestingly, which technology is missing and unapplied.”

LeiLani Cauthen
CEO the Learning Counsel & Founder, Knowstory, author of The Consumerization of Learning

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2019 Events

January 15  San Antonio, TX
January 31  Orange County, CA
February 6  Austin, TX – EduJedi Conclave Dinner
February 12  Seattle, WA
February 14  Phoenix, AZ
February 26  Sacramento, CA
February 28  San Jose, CA
March 19  Atlanta, GA
March 21  Philadelphia, PA
March 26  Chicago, IL
March 28  Salt Lake City, UT
April 9  Boston, MA
April 11  Detroit, MI
June 25  Philadelphia, PA – EduJedi Conclave Dinner
September 17  Minneapolis, MN
September 19  Denver, CO
September 24  Houston, TX
September 26  Portland, OR
October 3  Columbus, OH
October 8  Baton Rouge, LA
October 10  Los Angeles, CA
October 15  Orlando, FL
October 17  New York, NY
October 24  San Diego, CA
November 5  Washington, DC
November 15-17  Dallas, TX – National Gathering

(Dates subject to change)
Established in 2014, the Learning Counsel is the first mission-based organization to develop a thesis of education’s future based on tech industry advances, and the first to start documenting real-life implementations in schools.

Learning Counsel is fundamentally a research institute and news media hub. We provide context for schools in digital transition from a deep understanding of tech user experience, systems, and organization. Our readers are comprised of 215,000 Superintendents, tech and instructional directors, curriculum specialists, thousands of publishers, tech companies and interested enthusiasts anywhere in the teaching and learning field.