4 Cost-Saving Opportunities for Schools and Districts
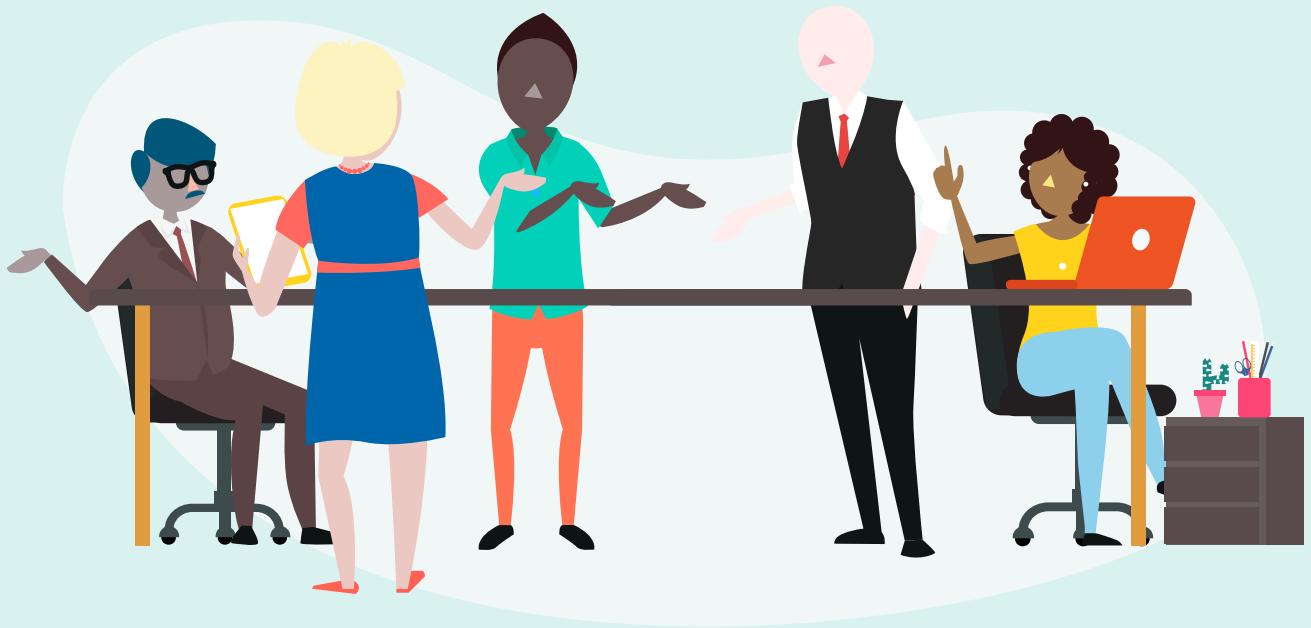
A Budgeting Guide That Won't Cost Teachers or Students

KIDDOM

Who Should Read This and Why?

Anyone who intends to make the most of the limited resources available to their school should read this report. If you're involved in the process of procuring the school budget, read on.

What is Covered in This Guide?

Inside are four simple but powerful ways a school can save both time and money while freeing their teachers to focus on students.

A Letter to Educators

Dear School and District Leaders,

First and foremost, on behalf of the Kiddom team, thank you for your service to teachers and learners.

As you are well aware, this academic year has once again highlighted chronic disinvestment in K-12 classrooms across the United States. Many states are spending less per student today than they were before the Great Recession. Over the past decade, states with the steepest funding declines have seen nearly a fifth of their funds vanish. To be clear, it has been a punishing decade for school funding and the long-term outlook is not much brighter.

While some superintendents remain enthusiastic about the future of their district, they are less excited about the future of American public education. Protests across the country have Americans asking why public school teachers are not paid a living wage. Americans are also concerned about students using dated textbooks and attending classes in crumbling school facilities.

If education is to be the American engine of opportunity and mobility, schools and districts will need to get scrappy with their funds. As you know, the majority of school funding goes towards instructional staff and administrators. Rethinking how we support instructional staff and how to thoughtfully incorporate education technologies can create the conditions necessary to most optimally stretch your dollars.

This eBook offers school and district leaders opportunities to save time and stretch dollars with minimal effort. As you prepare to close this year and embark on another, these recommendations can help you do more with less in order to increase teacher retention, better educate students, and better equip students with the skills they need to be model citizens.

We must ensure solving this budget crisis does not come at the expense of our young people. Thank you for fighting the good fight.
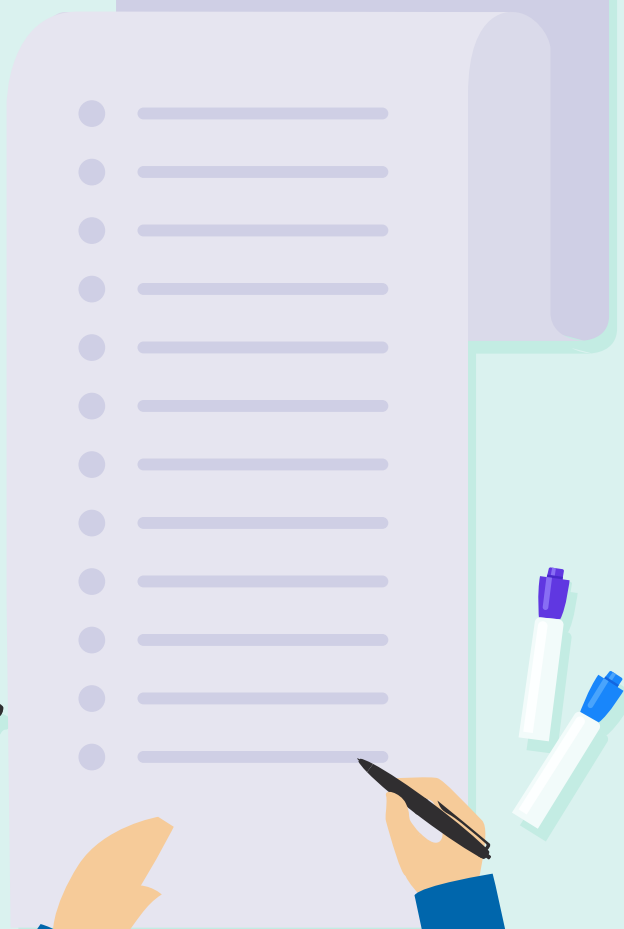

In solidarity,

Abbas Manjee
Chief Academic Officer
Kiddom

1.

Reduce Redundancies in Routine Workflows

Budgeting season is a testing time for all involved. Eventually, difficult decisions must be made that will affect your entire school community. However, there are ways to get thrifty with those decisions while affecting your community in a *positive* way: by reducing redundant tasks that burden teachers and take their time away from students.

The most overlooked cost-saving opportunities lie in the everyday workflows schools come to see as unchangeable. In this section, we'll cover the most expensive redundancies in curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and then we'll take a look at how schools are using Kiddom to overcome them.

To learn what Kiddom can do for your school, you can explore tips and additional resources in these gray boxes along the way.
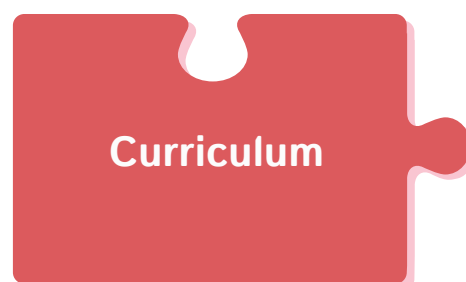
a.
Identifying Inefficiencies in Curriculum Development

What you can measure, you can manage, and what you can manage, saves money. The curriculum workflow looks different at every school. However, whether owned by the curriculum developer, assistant principal, department head, or their teachers, one commonality most schools share is a trouble with measuring their curriculum's effeciveness.

Many schools find this task nearly impossible. Trying to implement a thorough curriculum evaluation across differing classrooms with diverse teachers and students is a painfully complicated task. In truth, there are so many variables involved in curriculum development that many important aspects go unmeasured, which leaves schools ill-equipped to make informed, responsive decisions.

This inability to measure curriculum effectiveness costs schools in a number of ways. In order to create a repeatable, measurable curriculum, some schools and districts adopt a more rigid top-down structure. But this type of program rarely holds realistic expectations for the true nature of a classroom, which requires flexibility and personalization. Eventually, this structure inversely affects the work of teachers, who are given little room to work their magic in the classrooms, and when teachers aren't

Curriculum

given the trust and creative freedom to teach every child in the most effective manner possible, our students will suffer .
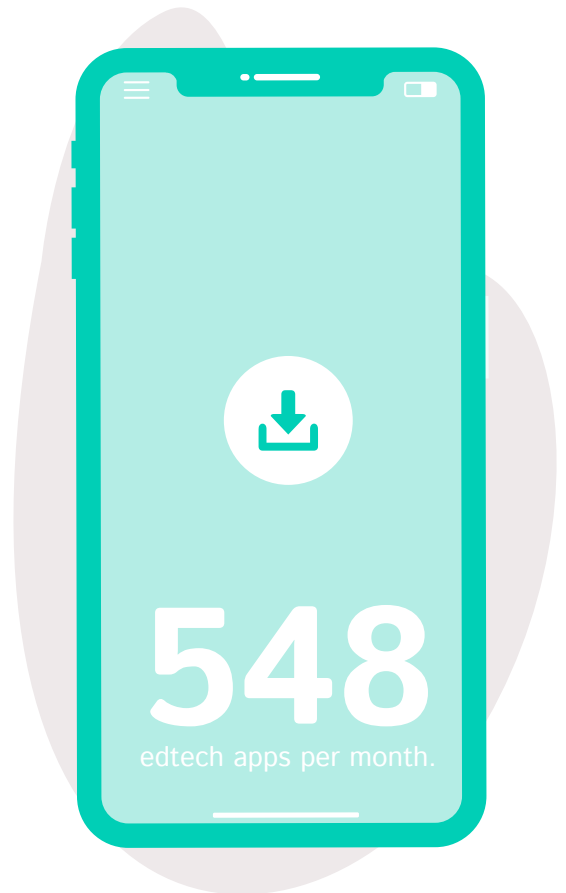
There is also a monetary cost to prescriptive curriculum. This is evident in the proliferation of content providers and applications that go largely unused. A recent article on better edtech buying (ISTE) reports that "educators are rarely involved" in the testing and pro-curement process for edtech products. This leaves teachers with products that often fall far short of their needs and forces them to search out alternative products on their own, which explains why districts are using an av-erage of 548 edtech apps per month.

Without a doubt, there is room for increasing efficiency in curricular purchasing decisions by one, asking teachers for their input on classroom tools, and two, surveying the edtech products used at your school and/or district and looking for overlap and redundancy..

Most important to curricular budgeting decisions is the ability to measure the quality of your curriculum in order to scale the most successful content. Conversely, by discovering trends to the opposite effect, you'll know which tools to retire.

How Kiddom schools do curriculum:

Schools who use Kiddom have more insight into how curriculum looks in the classroom than nearly any other platform, creating rich views of trends like teacher engagement,

548

edtech apps per month.

which content and practices are working best for student skill mastery, and school-wide views of cross-disciplinary standards.
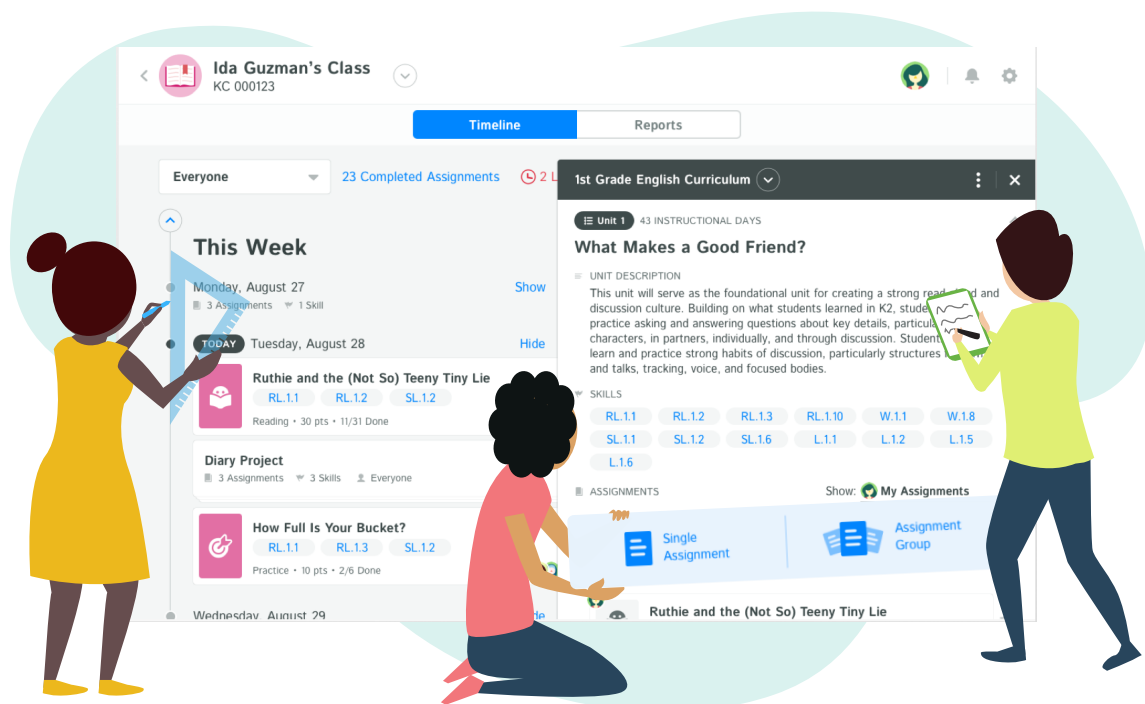
Additionally, they are able to copy those high-performing units at the click of a button. This ability to scale your best tools to other classes and schools saves teachers from having to redo their lesson plans year after year. Storing curriculum is especially helpful as a starting point for first year teachers.

Three other ways Kiddom improves the curriculum workflow:
- Centralizes curriculum management to increase collaboration and transparency
- Establishes an early warning response system so schools can adjust curriculum accordingly and in a timely manner
- Enables a scalable way to personalize learning

b.
Save Time & Money with Better Lesson Planning

One of the greatest inefficiencies in education today is the amount of hours we ask teachers to spend on planning quality lessons for students, without giving them the proper tools to do so.

Often teachers are given a wide array of non-coordinated, inferior tech tools, most of which are unable to perform basic functions like data sharing and flexible lesson planning. This lack of quality tools means teachers lose precious hours scaling their lessons into a prescriptive program, or per-forming double data entry. This holds teachers to unrealistic demands of prescriptive teaching and double data entry.

Many other factors affect lesson planning for today's teachers, including brave new initiatives like differentiation, standards based grading, and data day, to name a few. These add up, making an already challenging task even more complex and stressful for teachers.

A few important figures:

$ 59,660
Avg. teacher salary

53
Avg. hours in teacher work week
(without Kiddom)

$ 28.14
Teachers' hourly wage:
(without Kiddom)

45
Avg. hours in teacher work week
(with Kiddom)

$ 33.14
Teachers' hourly wage:
(with Kiddom)

Instruction

In fact, most teachers report spending 12 hours a week finding and creating teaching resources (Education World) for their students. But what if schools took the proactive step of giving their teachers tools they could actually use to find great resources in less time: resources that connected directly to their grade books?

Just think of how much more time your teachers would have for classroom interactions if they had instant access to a wealth of quality resources for their lesson plans.

How Kiddom saves time lesson planning:

Kiddom's free content library contains over 70,000 resources from trusted favorites like Khan Academy and Newsela. These resources are searchable by standard, grade, subject, and content type, saving hours in lesson planning each week. Teachers can easily save their favorite resources into their Planner, or add them directly as assignments into the student Timeline.
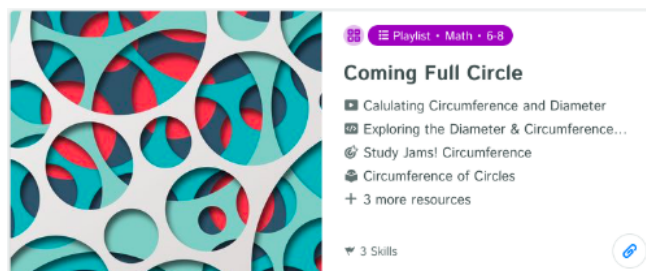
Curated lesson plans like the one seen to the right are designed by Kiddom's specialists to give teachers a headstart by providing a collection of vetted, socially responsible resources. These mixed media resources are perfect for blended learning classrooms and are discoverable by theme, subject, or gradeband.

C.
More Actionable Analysis, Less Double-Data Entry

While many teachers applaud the use of Data Day as an alternative to standardized testing, it can be a daunting experience—especially for first-year teachers.

The truth is, many teachers are discouraged or disengaged with administrative attempts to "use data to drive instruction." And can you blame them? With the emotional labor required during a typical school day, it's challenging to ask teachers to switch gears and crunch numbers for hours every week.

Using clear, actionable dashboards to keep everyone engaged and educated about progress towards district initiatives can make Data Day less intimidating by leaps and bounds. In addition, having the data collated and presented in a meaningful way can also pave the path for new budget allocations by providing a business case for why a certain initiative needs funding.

Assessment

How Kiddom simplifies data analysis:

Kiddom's dashboards are simple, beautiful and actionable, enabling your school community to recognize trends swiftly and align on interpretations and next steps.

Administrators can start their day with a school or district-wide dashboard showing progress on:
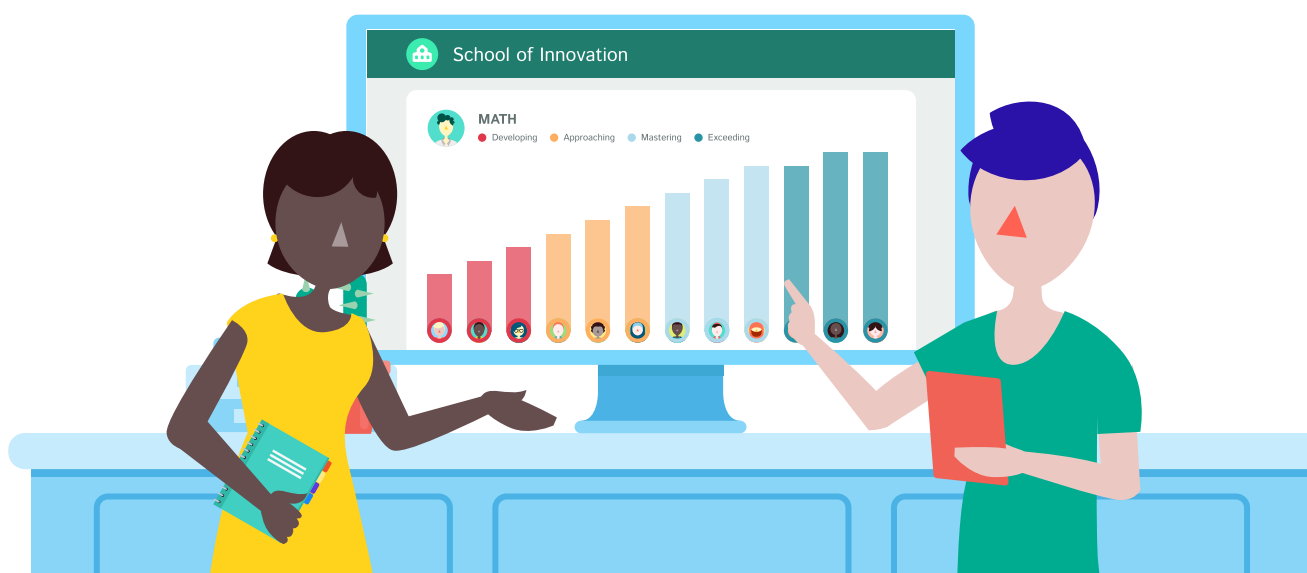
- At-risk schools or students
- School or district-wide initiatives
- Teacher and student engagement

Because grades only need to be recorded once in Kiddom, teachers save hours otherwise spent on transferring grades and managing spreadsheets. They can now use that energy towards making decisions based on clear, actionable views.

With skill-based reports available on most devices, the learning conversation can continue well after the bell rings.

Kiddom's dashboards are simple, beautiful and actionable, enabling your school community to recognize trends swiftly and align on interpretations and next steps. Visit go.kiddom.co/PDinsights

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2.

Save Money Going Paperless

The average U.S. school spends $30,000 - $50,000 annually on paper (NWNIT). This is a significant amount of money, especially when you consider that the average state spending per student is only $11,000 and has been steadily dropping. Schools can reduce the hefty amount spent on paper by investing in the right tool to digitize manual, paper-heavy processes. This one move reduces paper costs while improving teachers' lives, and student outcomes.

In place of printing worksheets, teachers can assign interactive content on Kiddom. Not only does this help students stay organized, but it saves teachers time avoiding the copy machine. No more paper jams!

Beyond the ability to access a student account and see realtime reporting at any moment, parents can receive report cards through email, which reduces printing four to eight times a year. Our Guardian Access feature allows you to send weekly reports that provide parents updates on students' progress on both assignments and standards.

Even PD can be handled through Kiddom. You can create a class in Kiddom, have teachers join, and add articles, case studies, and assignments for teachers to complete at their own pace. No more stapled packets left scattered around the library after a workshop.

Find out exactly how much Kiddom Academy can save you with paperless report cards at go.kiddom/paperless
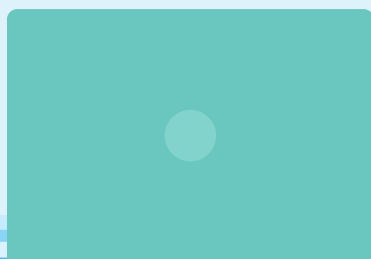
3.

Using Title 1 Funds on Tools That Support Every Learner

Title 1 was created as a means to ensure every school is supporting their most vulnerable students. But what goes behind the purchasing decision of the tools and methodology being vetted? One feature educators look for is a diverse range of content, or better yet, the ability to personalize instruction so students who require additional support are able to get the extra attention they need.

Another critical feature for students with diverse needs is the ability to track cross-disciplinary skill development, with emphasis on skills such as social emotional learning, or literacy. And lastly, the third important feature is simplicity of use or adoption. Fortunately, a powerful tool or methodology that helps special needs students can be equally useful for the other students in your school.

To learn more about how Kiddom helps students with diverse needs, check out our Special Education Tool Kit at go.kiddom.co/SpEdKit
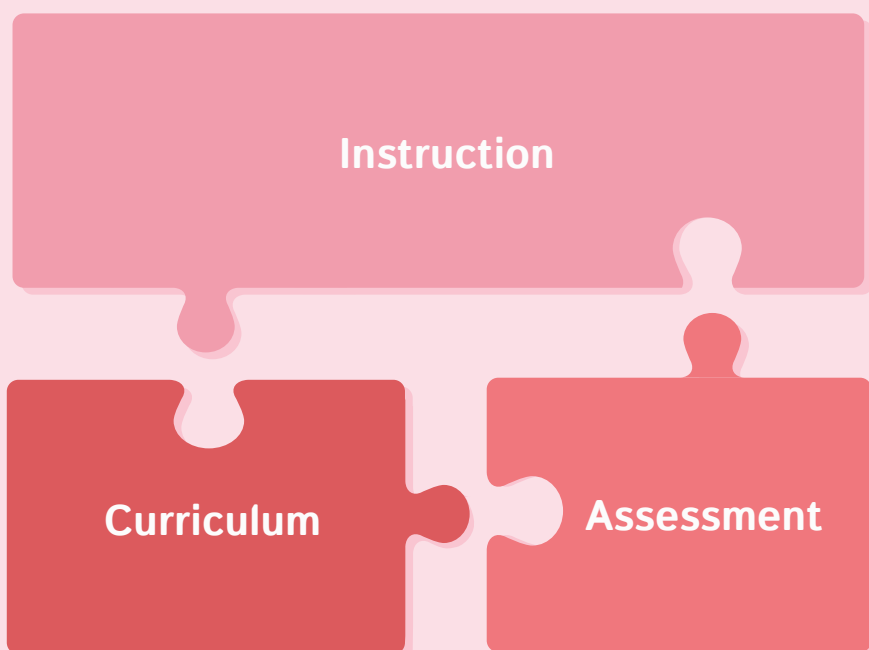
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4.

Increase Collaboration Across Workflows

It is well-known that teacher collaboration has a positive effect on student outcomes: in one study of 1,000 4th and 5th grade math teachers, student math scores increased drastically in classrooms with teachers who discussed their math lessons together regularly (SSIR). But why stop at instructional collaboration?

The fact is, curriculum, instruction, and assessment are heavily intertwined. The greater the disconnect between these domains, the more time, money, and student progress falls through the cracks. In this section we'll cover the ways in which streamlining workflows can increase collaboration to the betterment of not just your budget, but your entire community.

Instruction

Curriculum

Assessment

a.
Save Money by Replacing Three Tools With One Platform

Most schools use at least 3 different ed-tech tools to manage their curriculum and assessment needs. They will use one system to oversee curriculum management, another to coordinate learning and instruction, and a third for data assessment. Many times, these systems can't interact, and can become a technical challenge for the teachers who must use them. Fortunately, schools have the opportunity to replace these piece-meal systems with one that can address all of their curriculum, instructional, and assessment needs.

With so many variables to student achievement, you need a baseline curriculum so you can make adjustments to instructional practices, materials, and other factors. But this is no good if it isn't responsive—like an at-risk alert system, you can use Kiddom to discover students whose grades are slipping early and get to the root of what actions need to be taken.

When all stakeholders can access the same platform and collaborate in real time, you also have less time wasted on meetings. Just imagine the following two scenarios:

Responsive curriculum planning: These sessions would be much more efficient if every teacher and supervisor walked into the room with a full under-

standing of which curriculum resources are working, which ones can be cut, and where common leverage points exist.

Informed teacher observations: Administrators have to do less digging and teachers have to do less justifying when all of the artifacts of student learning are organized right along side the curriculum. This allows administrators and teachers to spend more time on collaborative efforts rather than repetitive explanations.

Despite every teacher's best intentions, eventually a parent may take issue with an assessment or instructional decision made in class. When a parent feels their child has been wronged in some way, the conversations can quickly become emotional.

Imagine, as a school leader, having all of the reporting and assessment data at your fingertips at any given moment. Now administrators won't have to call a teacher from class to gather pertinent information about a student, but can access all necessary records as needed. You have a clear view of your entire school or district's progress towards your new social emotional initiative and you're know exactly which classrooms need more support. You're able to reallocate funding to those who need it the most. Lucky for you, your Monday morning dashboard just got a serious upgrade.

To calculate how much your school would save if you replaced these 3 tools with Kiddom, visit go.kiddom.co/3-for1

b.
Build a More Involved Community with Real-time Reporting

Every school wants to build an engaged community that can support their common goals, and the most successful have one thing in common: full data transparency. When every stakeholder in your school has a clear view of how student progress stacks against district initiatives, school and subject goals, and even personal goals, everyone benefits. Administrators can find information they need to make crucial decis-ions, and any school leader can clearly see which students are at-risk and need addi-tionalsupport.

Otherwise, hours are wasted trying to share information with a variety of stake-holders on a request-and-search basis. Keeping instruction and reporting on one platform gives these hours back to all stakeholders, but most importantly, it builds more owner-ship.

When students can see grades, feedback, their own work, and the lessons leading up to their assessments, they will form a more complete picture of their own learning pro-cess and how to improve it.

When parents stop frantically switching tabs, going from a parent grade portal to another app to view their child's work, they can easily track their child's learning and encourage them to revisit content

related to assessments. This means fewer unnecessary emails between parents and teachers and fewer phone calls asking *how do I log-in again* and *when can we have a meeting to learn my child's progress*?

School leaders know the best way to manage relationships is proactively, and gradebacks* contribute to building positive rapport with parents. When grades are immediately transferred into the teacher gradebook, there are fewer surprises about how students grades that might be caused when a teacher delays entering a score.

*What Are Gradebacks?

Gradebacks, or **automatic transfer of student grades from content platforms to the Kiddom gradebook**, remove the need for time-consuming and confusing requests for grade corrections by students and parents. Some of our content providers integrate with our platform to provide gradebacks.

Gradebacks help to remove the capacity for error—another time threat to the grading process. Of course, teachers are human, so they might occasionally make a data transfer error.

To learn more about how to track skill-mastery across your entire school or district, check out our Standards Based Grading Guides at go.kiddom.co/SBGkit

About Kiddom

Kiddom enables educators to collaborate and individualize instruction. Kiddom's Academy product helps school and district administrators build and assess curriculum, measure student achievement, and make data-informed decisions. Kiddom's Classroom product helps teachers build lessons, find teaching resources, and communicate feedback to students. Both products work together as a K-12 school operating system to help everyone support the work happening in classrooms in a more impactful way.

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