

# The Best of Blended Learning

## From the Perspective of Educators in Virginia & Beyond

### Recipes for Success

Educators are inundated with digital tools. Yet, in today's schools, finding the best balanced blended learning approach remains vital to student success. Recent years have allowed educators to hone their blended learning recipes by testing many tools and strategies in their classrooms.

Virtual Virginia held its 3rd annual free virtual conference, The Perfect Blend, to allow educators to share these recipes. The conference attracted educators nationwide, and 53 speakers in 46 sessions covered the latest blended learning topics. Read on to relive some of the highlights from the conference.



**Katie Fielding**

STEM COACH  
PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY SCHOOLS

### Virtual Virginia Value

#### A TRUSTED PARTNER

Virginia school divisions partner with Virtual Virginia to elevate their K-12 instruction, Outreach Programs, Professional Learning, and Summer Session.

At Instructure, we exist to elevate student success, amplify the power of teaching & learning, and inspire everyone to learn together. Partners like Virtual Virginia are essential in accomplishing our mission.

### THE PERFECT PD CUP: PLACE YOUR ORDER

Robust professional development equips educators with the training they need to succeed all year.

Katie Fielding, STEM Coach at Prince William County Schools in Virginia, defined sustained professional development as "engaging PD that occurs over an extended time, allows participants to share resources while practicing what they've learned, observing each other in action, and discussing what they've learned."

Fielding also highlighted the benefits of using Canvas LMS to engage educators while they learn and inspire them with ways to utilize the tool in their classrooms.

Other key takeaways included:

- using Canva templates to build teacher reflection rubrics
- providing asynchronous opportunities for teachers to learn on their time
- opening the communication & collaboration lines by organizing a schoolwide book or podcast club

# How to Roll Out a New LMS: One District's Story

## BLENDED PD FOR SMOOTH CANVAS IMPLEMENTATION

For all the non-coffee drinkers in the (Zoom) rooms, Ashley May and Jasmine Oguntuga from the Educational Technology team at Spring Branch ISD led a session on creating "the perfect Canvas LMS smoothie." After their previous LMS left the North American market in June 2021, they needed a new solution to support every student. They chose Canvas LMS as their new learning management system. Content migration was top-of-mind for their educators.

"We had seven years on our previous LMS. We gave our teachers and staff this analogy: migrating to Canvas LMS is like moving. When you pack your house, you don't take everything with you. Let's take this moment to look at what we want to pack up and take with us and what we want to leave and replace with something great," May said.

By working together, they outlined a three-phase approach to implementation. Phase One began in Spring 2022 with their "Canvas Ready Roadshow kickoff." On their tour, their team visited every school in the district to ensure every teacher felt confident about the change and facilitated an asynchronous Canvas Foundations course. Phase Two involved meeting with district leaders to ensure they were also Canvas Ready. For every in-person training they led, they made a companion Canvas course available to attendees, their families, and parents.

**Canvas LMS is more open, and users can see more.  
We had to have a course there for our parents to  
see too.**

**Jasmine Oguntuga, Educational Technology Facilitator**

And the final phase - Canvas Go - extended into the school year. Oguntuga held Tech Tuesdays and Lunch and Learns for educators to dive deeper into Canvas LMS as they used it in the classroom. By engaging all stakeholders and making resources available online and in person, May said they had "the smoothest transition possible."



**Ashley May**

**DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL  
TECHNOLOGY AT SPRING BRANCH ISD,  
HOUSTON, TX**



**Jasmine Oguntuga**

**EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY  
FACILITATOR AT SPRING BRANCH ISD,  
HOUSTON, TX**

**The biggest impact I have seen from the conference is networking and sharing ideas. This year our presenters came from across the nation (we even had one international presenter from Canada!), and it was amazing to see Virginia educators connect with—and learn from—all of them in a unique way.**

**Steven Sproles, Professional Learning Coordinator at Virtual Virginia**

## **POSITIVE DIGITAL CULTURE WITH NEARPOD**

Leticia Citizen, an Instructional Coach from California, led a session on how to build a positive digital culture. She started with the value of the Common Sense Digital Learning Initiative from Harvard School, which defines digital citizenship as "...the responsible use of technology to learn, create, and participate."

The ultimate goals when creating a digital culture are for students:

- To find balance in digital lives
- To define who they are
- To be kind and courageous
- To care about everyone's privacy
- To know the power of action and words
- To encourage critical thinking and creativity

Citizen showed how Nearpod provides classrooms a space to build rapport and healthy digital habits with diverse, interactive slide types and polls to engage students' well-being. Even better, Canvas LMS and NearPod seamlessly integrate and can be used together to create a positive classroom environment.



**Leticia Citizen**

**INSTRUCTIONAL COACH AT  
HAWTHORNE SCHOOL - BEVERLY HILLS  
USD, CALIFORNIA**

## **BLENDING AND CAFFEINATING FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Positive relationships are also essential to keep the broader school community connected. Chris Jones, Executive Director at VASCD, covered using social media and clear, effective communication to enhance engagement.

"The value of being excellent writers and intentional videographers grows for today's schools," Jones said.

Jones said schools should meet students & families where they are on social media with content that informs, promotes, celebrates, or inspires. He also recommends using these platforms to run town halls and build shared vision and goals with the community.



**Chris Jones**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT  
VACSD, VIRGINIA**

## **The Perfect Blend: Delivered**

The Perfect Blend conference provided educators with knowledge and ideas for sustaining and elevating blended learning. From creating meaningful professional development to positive digital cultures and more, Virtual Virginia and Instructure are thrilled at the diverse perspectives offered and the opportunity to bring educators together. [Enroll in the Perfect Blend course](#) to relive the event through access to the full catalog of recorded sessions.