

## Edsby

# Unique Social Learning System for School Districts

**N**ot so long ago, Hillsborough County Public Schools in Tampa, Florida faced a communication problem—its gradebook system was outdated and not web-based. Officials at the eight-largest district in the U.S. wanted something secure and easy to access, as kids from kindergarten to K12 were involved. In came Edsby, a web based, social learning and engagement platform optimized for the smartphone generation. This radically changed Hillsborough’s ability to reach students and parents on the devices they use today, and now more than a quarter million students, staff, and parents use Edsby in Hillsborough County.

Edsby uses today’s modern web and mobile technologies to connect teachers, students and parents in exciting new ways. Its set of web and mobile applications for K-12 school districts include attendance, school news, group collaboration, grade books, timetables and calendars, course planning, report cards and more. Edsby is ideal for whole school districts, because it integrates with existing SIS and authentication systems, leveraging data and security systems that already exist, and allows deep per-district customization.

“School districts in the U.S. are enormous organizations but with relatively small IT budgets. So we deliver rich solutions for users at a manageable cost that assist with complete collaboration between students, teachers and parents in social classrooms,” states Scott Welch, VP of Sales at Edsby. Kids as young as five are now accustomed to fast, mobile social solutions. Edsby recognizes this trend and provides a product

that feels familiar to users, yet integrates with the existing databases school districts already use. “Using Edsby is as effortless as posting a file on Dropbox or sharing a picture on Instagram,” says Welch. “We are giving students the social tools that they want, while also keeping the Chief

“**Edsby gives teachers the tools they need for teaching, in a way that integrates elegantly with districts’ existing systems**”



Information Officer (CIO) happy because we are doing it in a safe and cost effective way,” he adds.

As with every social platform, there’s a persistent concern regarding security and access. To address this concern, Edsby connects to school districts’ existing back-end authentication systems to ensure security and scalability, fitting the policies of each specific district. Also, an innate understanding that different school boards and CIOs have different requirements sets Edsby at the front of the pack. “Rather than offering a generic product to every school district, we provide a very customizable solution,” says Welch.

Today, school-goers are not just communicating during school hours. Mobility becomes a critical tool. According to Welch, 20 percent of students and 40 percent of parents who use Edsby access it from a smartphone. On-the-go Edsby applications can be downloaded on popular mobile devices, helping contribute to why some schools call Edsby their killer app. The company is working to enhance the features of its offering. “One of the features we are building right now is parent-teacher interview functionality, for easy communication,” says Welch.

Welch credits the company’s success to a strong culture built out of trust and continuity. Key management has worked together for almost three decades. “We are in a world where companies come and go in weeks and months, but we have stood our ground for thirty years. Our ability to function effectively as a team makes us a unique organization,” remarks Welch. In terms of expansion, the company plans to spread its roots in Europe and the Asia Pacific. **CR**