



# BEYOND THE PRICE TAG

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District and building administrators are determined to ensure high-quality classroom experiences that help students meet learning goals.

Securing federal and state funding for the classroom and infrastructure technologies needed to improve student outcomes is tough work. And even with public funding for edtech, it can be difficult to find the right mix of solutions to fit your budget. This is especially challenging for districts and schools with stretched resources.

The push toward edtech coincides with higher expectations for student engagement and achievement. Districts and educators are evolving the three R's to STEAM to teach 21st-century skills that emphasize cognitive, noncognitive and workplace skills.

These two trends encourage educators to teach differently. According to the [New Media Consortium's](#)

[2016 Horizon Report](#), "Teachers simply cannot take on the same roles they have traditionally held as lecturers and information dispensers. This ... underscores the need for teachers to rethink their pedagogies and curriculum in ways that enable students to customize their own paths."

For example, Gema Day, a teacher at the Mathson Institute of Technology at Mathson Middle School, says edtech enables her to facilitate learning, rather than deliver lectures. "I ask critical questions, but they are able to illustrate or demonstrate the understanding [using technology]." Technology enables teachers to create flipped classrooms and deliver blended learning experiences.

Smart technology purchases increase your ability to deliver high-quality instruction on a limited budget. The right solutions enable educators to deliver more engaging, robust lessons that allow students to interact with curriculum in ways that make learning stick.

The key is looking beyond the price tag and whiz-bang demos to focus on the instructional value that the technologies bring to the classroom.

## INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY & INFRASTRUCTURE

School districts are bumping up their edtech investments this year, with gains expected in the areas of hardware, software and teacher training, according to EdNet Insight's "State of the K-12 Market 2015." Here's a quick look at where districts are concentrating their dollars.



want content that supports personalized learning

plan to increase their hardware purchases



aim to invest in interactive displays

expect to boost their software investment



Source: Report: [Education Tech Spending on the Rise](#)

## CHOOSING WISELY

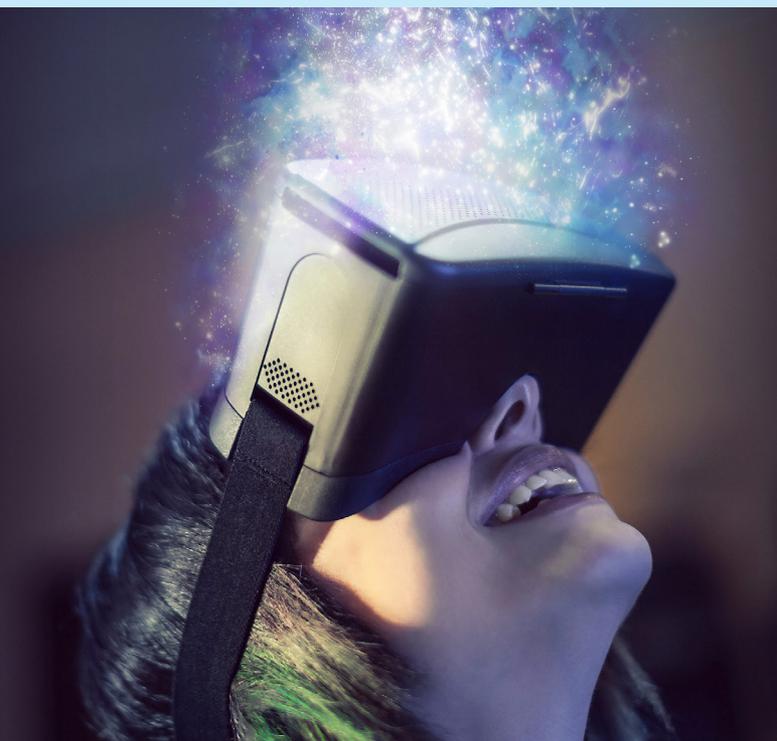
What's most important when selecting technologies? Here are six factors to consider when evaluating products and services for your district:

- **Scope:** Avoid solutions that address only one problem or content area. Look for technology that has broad effect in all STEAM classes to reduce spending on additional tools.
- **Authenticity:** Authentic learning experiences help students apply real-world concepts in real-world contexts.
- **Collaboration:** Solutions that encourage teamwork improve collaboration and small-group accountability.
- **Creativity:** Students imagine, experiment, take risks and make discoveries more freely.
- **Experiential:** Technology with the greatest effect empowers students to make their ideas real (either through 3D printing or augmented and virtual reality) and enables them to see what works and what doesn't in a concrete way.
- **Evaluation:** Solutions that support complex and evaluative thinking teach students to analyze options and situations, solve problems and grasp abstract concepts more fully.

Savvy edtech investment changed instruction at the Bradwell Institute, says Scott Carrier, the school's principal. He chose a solution that "would benefit most of the subject areas we have here," he says. "We're moving in the direction of STEAM; it's been a great benefit all around. We're now able to give [students]

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Edtech that meets these criteria doesn't have to break your budget. You can give your teachers and students exceptional tools and experiences by researching and investing in solutions designed to work across the curriculum and up and down the grade levels.

## BETTER STUDENT OUTCOMES

Smart investments in edtech deliver powerful learning experiences. Here's how technology in four schools has benefited their students:

**Provide better resources.** Virtual reality lets students dissect animals and organs, manipulate compounds and structures in 3D and run experiments without the need for costly lab equipment and supplies. “We don't have a lot of money to buy dissection tools and animals,” explains Misty Eastlake, a science teacher at Lewis Frasier Middle School. The school has a 3D lab supplied by zSpace. “With [virtual reality], we don't have to purchase everything. I can say, pull up the digestive system [and] let's look at the liver.”

**Span the digital divide.** Technology can help span the digital divide and improve achievement for students with limited internet connectivity and little access to devices at home. “The digital divide is huge in our community,” says Oscar Leon, principal, Mathson Institute of Technology at Mathson Middle School. The school's STEM lab, outfitted with zSpace displays, helps provide “students all the skills they need to succeed in Silicon Valley ... and [to be] ready for the next generation of skills.”

## THE ZSPACE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

What if you could make one technology purchase that supported multiple content areas and delivered better student outcomes? zSpace combines elements of VR and AR to create lifelike experiences that are immersive and interactive, specifically designed for STEAM education. The hardware and software enable students to interact with 3D objects that help them gain a deeper understanding of how things work. From human hearts to helicopters to high-rise buildings, students learn math, design, physics, engineering and biology on zSpace, an all-in-one computer with AR and VR capabilities that allows a student to move seamlessly between zSpace experiences and normal computing tasks.

### THE SOLUTION FEATURES:

- Objects that can be “lifted” from the screen and manipulated with a stylus
- Multisensory feedback, so students working with a virtual heart can see it pumping, hear it, and feel it beating
- Lightweight glasses rather than head-mounted displays, so students can easily make eyecontact with one another, communicate and collaborate

More than 450 school districts use zSpace to provide realistic learning environments and learning experiences that align with the Next Generation Science Standards, Common Core State Standards and many state-specific standards.

For more information on the zSpace all-in-one for K-12 education, visit <http://edu.zspace.com/>.



**Reflect the real world of work.** Solutions based on ubiquitous platforms let students become familiar with the same apps and programs they're likely to use after graduation. Day's school uses Microsoft solutions across the curriculum. "I love that we are able to give them [a] work-related environment because that's what they're going to see when they're older," Day says.

**Support 21st-century skills.** Technology does more than expose students to the tools, devices and apps they'll encounter in the world of work. It also helps them develop important life and career skills in the four C's: collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking. "What I love about it is the collaborative approach," says Jill Gierasch, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, for Plainview-Old

Bethpage Central School District. "I can have two students being a part of that lesson, and they need to work together to problem-solve." This kind of instruction also supports inquiry skills.

**Drive curiosity and foster exploration.** "You're not just playing with something on a flat plane, so you have the ability to look at it from multiple angles, you have the ability to go inside it," explains Joy Lopez, director of technology on Sacred Heart Schools. "It's a game changer. It doesn't have you doing science the same way."

Use this advice to build a case for investing in classroom technologies that open doors to more effective teaching and deeper learning. ■



“ We're now able to give [students] real-life experiences without even taking them out of the building. ”

## ABOUT ZSPACE

■ zSpace delivers the ultimate learning experience to inspire curiosity and accelerate understanding. Our product, zSpace®, combines elements of VR and AR, on an all-in-one computer, to create lifelike experiences that are immersive and interactive. Among its numerous awards and accolades, zSpace was named "Cool Vendor" by Gartner, Inc., "Best in Show at ISTE" by Tech & Learning Magazine for three consecutive years and was ranked #143 on the 2016 Inc. 500 list. zSpace is a privately held, venture backed company located in Sunnyvale, California, and has been granted more than 25 patents for its innovative technologies. For more information, visit [www.zspace.com](http://www.zspace.com), or follow on Twitter [@zSpace](https://twitter.com/zSpace).

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