



SIIA
EDUCATION

ED TECH SUCCESS STORIES

During the 2020 pandemic America's colleges and universities needed to immediately transition from in-person learning to virtual. SIIA's Ed Tech members products help schools across the country bridge the gap keeping students and instructors engaged and learning. Here are their stories.

IN FOCUS:


edWeb.net

**VIRTUAL SUPPORT FOR
EDUCATORS DURING
COVID**





EDWEB SOCIAL NETWORK FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The state of Georgia has 181 school districts with less than 30 full time social studies specialists and supervisors helping develop curriculums for K-12 students across the state. The shortage of specialists challenges districts to find quality lesson materials without the proper amount of time or talent to do so.

To help teachers across Georgia access quality instruction materials for all students in social studies, Joy Hatcher, Social Studies Program Manager at the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) turned to [edWeb.net](https://edweb.net). The online social network of more than 1 million education professionals worldwide creates virtual professional learning communities (PLCs). edWeb's PLCs are online spaces where education experts and other professionals can share insights, class materials and learn from each other in a variety of topic areas ranging from teaching styles, subject specific content, and professional development webinars. Hatcher decided edWeb was the best fit for Georgia because of edWeb's national and global reach, and as a hub for individualized content for every grade level, providing an easy way to "communicate a consistent message from the DOE to the classrooms, and provide a way to highlight great resources we were creating for those standards."

When classrooms switched to virtual learning due to the pandemic, the GaDOE PLCs on edWeb were even more important as educators all across Georgia flocked to the PLCs Hatcher created to provide resource materials and create community. More than 1,000 new members joined the GaDOE PLC during the first year of the pandemic and more than 700 during the following school year.

GaDOE used edWeb to share social studies resource materials for all grades and as a forum for teachers and leaders from all corners of the state to communicate. The PLCs made it easy to create a feedback loop among teachers and others to voice concerns and identify areas of needed support.

Through these forums teachers were able to exchange information and quickly identify where solutions were needed. Phil Sykes, Social Studies Content Specialist at Coweta County Schools in Georgia, said, "being able to talk with other leaders during COVID, during the talks that our DOE hosted through edWeb, was extremely helpful in locating resources, getting ideas from other district leaders, seeing what's working in other areas, and sharing our successes."





INCREASING EQUITY AND ACCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

By using the edWeb social networking platform, districts were able to share resources designed specifically for social studies classes at every grade level and access to content that would not have been available to all students. edWeb PLCs helped all districts provide a more equitable social studies education for all students in Georgia.

In addition to sourcing classroom materials, edWeb's PLCs allowed individualized lesson plans for ESL and students with special needs. This ensured all students, regardless of learning styles, would have access to the same quality of lessons, and receive the same information and learning opportunities.

GaDOE was able to identify gaps to help other needs, such as students without access to technology. Through the PLCs on edWeb, all students' needs were discussed and solutions shared to address those needs.

LOOKING AHEAD

As teachers in Georgia, and across classrooms everywhere, seek out resources to use in class, GaDOE PLCs on edWeb are a go-to resource for reliable and vetted information. By fostering a community of educators where ideas, resources and feedback are easy to communicate, PLCs on edWeb are an invaluable asset in supporting teachers where needed, and creating more equitable learning for students.

<https://home.edweb.net/state-model-ga>

For more information on SIIA's Ed Tech offerings and member stories, please visit, siiia.net/education

