

# "Moving toward the Future"

To access tutorials about our LMSs, click on the applicable image.



## Western Dubuque CSD LMS

## Why are you receiving this?

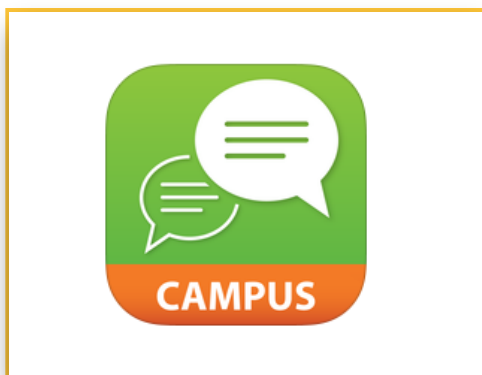
You are receiving this document because we were informed earlier this year that itslearning is being closed down by its new ownership. The next page of this document explains what happened.

As a result, we have been investigating and meeting with different Learning Management Systems (LMS) to determine which company or companies will be the best "fit" for our district. After many meetings and much investigating, we have narrowed our final selections to three companies: Infinite Campus (Campus Learning), Canvas, and Seesaw.

As respected educators, we are now asking for your assistance and patience as we move toward a new future with our district's new LMS. In fact, we will now be able to provide several options for grades K-12 so you can select the LMS that you prefer to use.

This document will share information you will find useful. We think you will enjoy the new opportunities we are all being offered!

To access tutorials about our LMSs, click on the applicable image.



## What happened?

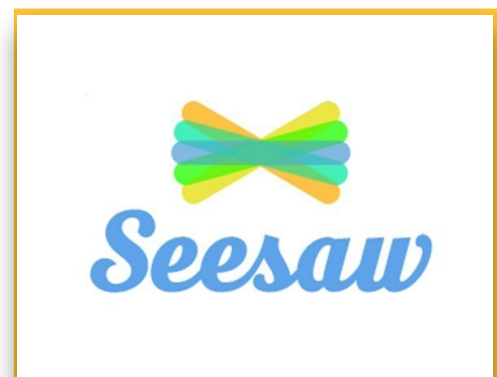
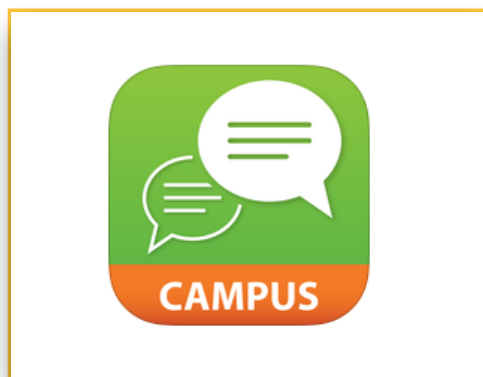
We were notified by itslearning that the company that purchased them (Altitude Learning) made the decision to discontinue the itslearning division. We were told that our contract will be honored until it expires (next school year). Following is the message that we received about this termination:

"In August 2020, Altitude Learning took over the ownership and management of all US customers from the European parent company of itslearning Inc. All US itslearning staff were transferred to Altitude Learning and this has meant our team could continue to successfully support and manage all partnerships. That agreement provided us the right to support these partnerships until the end of the 2021-22 school year and through to the end of current customer contracts beyond that. We had hoped to get approval for continuing and expanding itslearning partnerships in the US, but unfortunately this did not play out.

All existing customer contracts will be honored. However, given the new ownership of itslearning by the European-based Sanoma group and their European-focused strategy, itslearning will exit the US market over time. Consequently, there will be no new contracts or extensions to existing contracts beyond the terms of the original agreement. itslearning will continue to support and update the learning platform with essential fixes and new feature releases for US customers. However, while we envisage feature updates to continue, over time there will be a divergence in the features that are available to customers within and outside the US."

Jim met with representatives from itslearning as well as meeting with the CEO of the United States Altitude Learning division to discuss future options and share his disappointment that they decided to move in the direction they chose. However, the lake is large (Europe and North America: 26 countries and 4.5 million users used itslearning) and Western Dubuque is just a minnow in that lake so our voice was only that... a voice.

So, without warning, itslearning was discontinued. Literally, an email and a phone call. Learn more about our thought processes about this on the next page.



## What were we thinking after the news?

After receiving the news, Jim was stunned and, frankly, a bit numb. After all, countless hours (literally) were spent creating tutorials for teachers, students, and parents as well as learning how to use itslearning. At the time, it seemed like those hours were stolen and would never be able to be given back. To be a bit angry and disappointed would be an understatement.

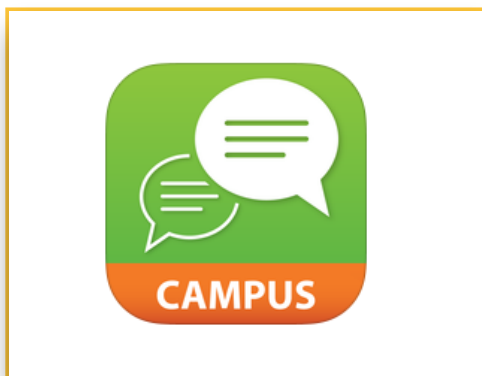
When Kelly received the news, she pretty much had the exact same reaction as Jim (in fact, she got very quiet). Even though LMSs were being researched as far back as 2014, and we needed to emergency-implement the best one researched at the time that COVID-19 changed our lives, it's quite a blow when a major company in the world pulls the plug on a product that we are using.

We immediately felt horrible for the teachers in the district who worked so hard to develop lessons, units, and courses. We felt horrible for the administrators who were so supportive of their teachers even when the development phase was less than "fun". We felt horrible for students and parents who learned how to navigate itslearning. Basically, we just plain felt horrible.

However, after a few days, we came to the realization that we had been offered a unique and exciting opportunity: We can build off what we learned with itslearning and have a better product to share with our students and our communities. And the best part is that we realized that the "stolen hours" were not stolen at all. What we learned with itslearning can definitely be applied to a new LMS.

After everything that happened, we realized that we were beginning to become excited about a new LMS. But now, we had the luxury of taking a slowed down approach and could investigate a variety of LMSs to see how they had grown during the COVID-19 shutdown and what they could now offer us. We could visit with school district's using different LMSs and learn what they liked and disliked. Suddenly, we were excited about bringing new possibilities to the Western Dubuque School District.

Which brings us to the present.

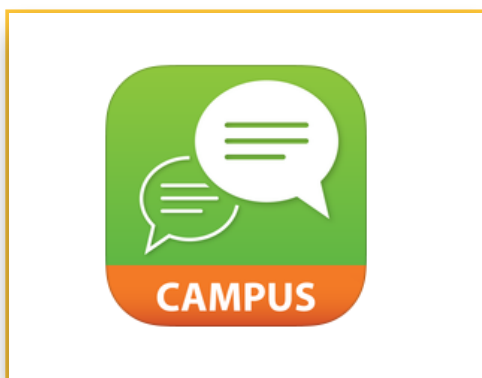


## What we learned

After using itslearning and receiving feedback from teachers (face-to-face, emails, meetings), we learned that itslearning has been a very good product (even though it hasn't always been loved). It did what we needed it to do, filled a need, and had more to offer than other companies. However, it doesn't matter how good a product is, there are always ways it can be improved. That's where all the feedback given to us proved to be valuable. Jim was able to use your positives and negatives to research companies and visit with representatives and have point-blank questions for them not only about their product but about their company's operating procedure and management structure.

Here are some things we learned while using itslearning:

- Our district has unbelievable employees who were able to take a product (LMS) and implement it in a few months compared to what should have taken several years.
- A LMS is crucial to the "way we do business". We learned that we can never assume that our learning will only happen within school building walls any longer.
- No program fits the needs of everyone. We need to "aim for the middle" and realize that some people will like what is decided and some people will not like what is decided.
- The community, for the most part, responded quite well to a LMS. For example, this school year, when students are confined to their homes, many parents have wanted their students to access itslearning and continue learning. (COVID-19 helped teachers by letting parents know that they probably aren't cut out to be teachers.)
- Many students found that learning online is not the way they prefer to be taught and they developed a new respect for sitting in class. This helps us focus on how to learn through an LMS because, if the student attends college, they will most likely need to take courses that are online.
- We learn by doing. We could have talked about LMSs for years, but talking and learning about a LMS are not the same as actually digging in and needing to use a LMS.
- We learned that the need to be flexible never ends. In an ideal world, our district would still use only one LMS to avoid confusion. In fact, the necessity to avoid confusion (and extra angst) are evident in an email sent by Kelly in May of 2020; *"Itslearning will be the only learning platform/communication system with families moving forward. Use of other third-party systems such as ClassDoJo, SeeSaw, Google Classroom, or others should no longer be used. Use of others systems will negate our pursuit of having a uniform format for kids and having families learn and use just one system."* Time to be flexible in 2022 and go back to the drawing board.



## Which LMSs were researched

Within days after learning that itslearning was closing its U.S. doors, the search was on for a new LMS. Below are the companies that made it to the "final cut" (in alphabetical order).

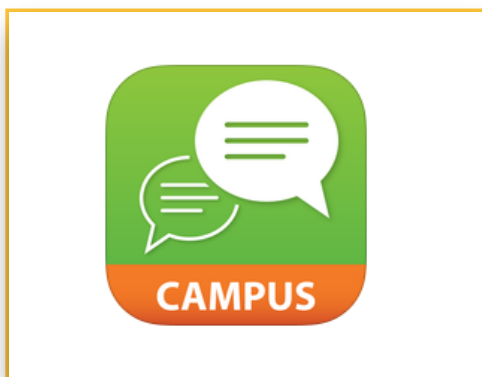
- Blackboard
- Brightspace
- Canvas
- D2L
- Edgenuity
- Google Education (technically not an LMS but can be used like one)
- Infinite Campus
- Moodle
- Schoology
- Seesaw

Other companies were researched but they were found to lack features that we learned were necessary after using itslearning and listening to teacher feedback.

After visiting with representatives from the researched companies, the list narrowed to Canvas, Schoology, Infinite Campus, and Seesaw. Knowing the needs of middle school and high school teachers, and the expectations of what students perceive when viewing a site, Schoology and Seesaw were removed from middle school and high school consideration. However, while Canvas is an outstanding LMS (and a perfect fit for middle school and high school), it is not particularly "friendly" for elementary teachers and students. That was when we had the revelation, "why not offer a separate PK-5 LMS and a separate 6-12 LMS"? Then, we realized that we can actually offer Infinite Campus as a LMS choice for those who would like to use it. In fact, Campus Learning is easy to use, is already part of what most teachers use every day, and the district already has it and some teachers are already using it.

After comparing what Schoology and Seesaw offer, and what many elementary teachers have shared that they wish they could be using (or are not-so-covertly using), the clear choice for the elementary buildings is Seesaw. The middle school and high schools list narrowed to Campus Learning and Canvas.

After meetings with middle school and high school instructional coaches and principals, the decision was made to use Campus Learning. While Canvas is an excellent product, the learning curve with Campus is very small and students already access their Student Portal account. For teachers who are already using Infinite Campus on a daily basis, this was the logical LMS choice. While it is not an "aesthetically pleasing" LMS, it is powerful especially when paired with 365.



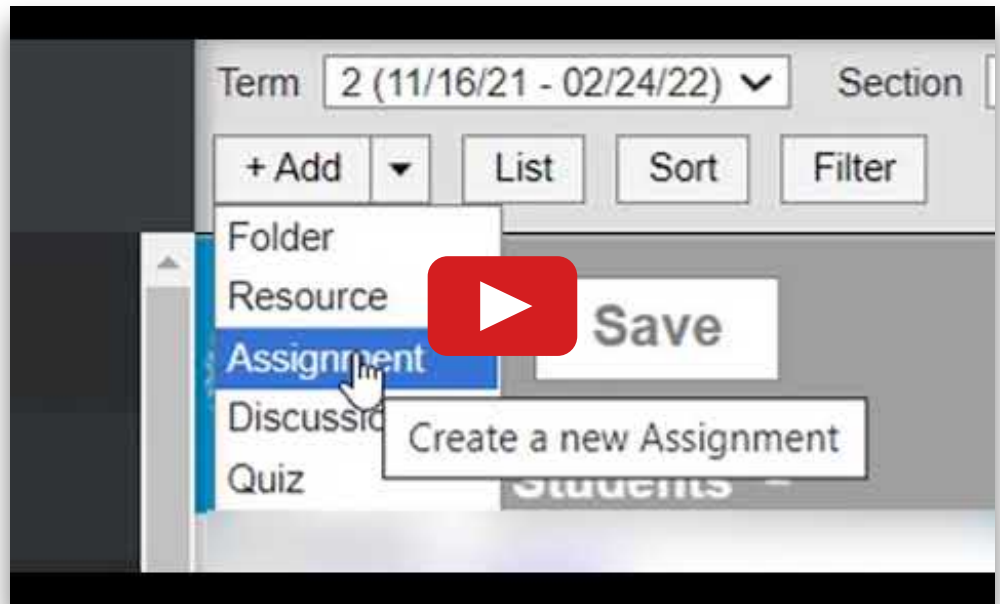


## What do the LMSs look like?

You will notice similarities between LMSs. Certain features are appearing to become standard. In the following videos, Jim (and Seesaw) will show you a quick snapshot of what the LMSs look like.

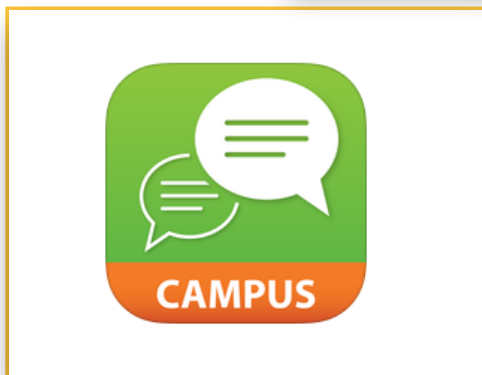
### Campus Learning

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6g5x28\\_zZQA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6g5x28_zZQA)



### Seesaw

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W205MgCF0RQ>

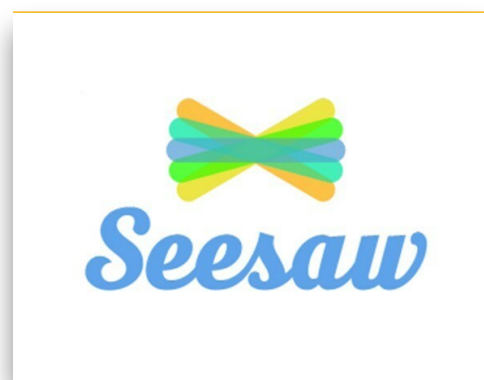
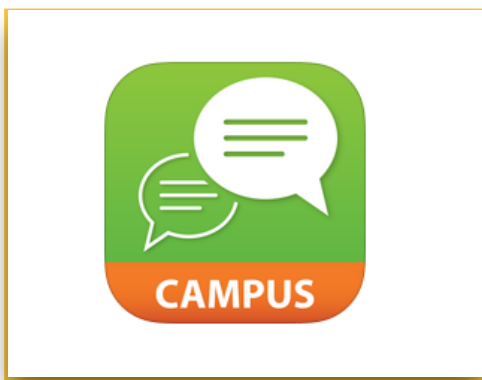


## What do the LMSs look like?

### So what's going to happen with the switch from itslearning to Campus Learning and Seesaw?

With the expectation that all district teachers maintain an LMS, professional development opportunities will be provided so you will be able to learn how to use the new LMSs. Feb. 25, 2022 will be a preliminary introduction, March 21, 2022 will provide you with a deeper dive into the LMSs, and TQ days will be offered to give you time to copy and paste content from itslearning into your new LMS (if you would like). Tutorials will be created for you, the students, and the parents showing how to use the LMSs so everybody is on the same page.

You can begin learning about both LMSs by clicking on the **Campus** and **Seesaw** buttons found in this document as well as right here:



This is an exciting new opportunity for all of us and we hope that you embrace the change (once you get used to the idea that itslearning closed its door). You have already been working in an LMS so the "language" will be familiar to you so you know that you are not starting from ground level. The future is looking awesome and it is exciting knowing that we are all part of new educational growth!



## Side by side comparison of LMS choices

### Comparison of Potential Learning Management Systems

Content	Campus (PK-12)	Canvas (6-12)	SeeSaw (PK-5)	itslearning
365 Integration	~	X	X	√
Accessibility	√	√	√	~
Assessments	√	√	+-	√
Aesthetics	X	√	√	X
Calendar	√	√	√	√
Class Roster Creation	√	√	√	√
Collaborating	+-	√	√	√
Company Stability	√	√	√	X
Cost	√ (Exists)	X (Add'l \$)	X (Add'l \$)	X (Add'l \$)
Familiarity	√	X	+-	√
Gradebook	√	√	~	√
Grading Messenger	√	√	√	X
Grouping (Students)	√	√	√	√
Learning Pathway	X	√	X	X
Message Teacher	√	√	√	√
Mobile App	√	√	√	√
Module Creation	√	√	√	√
Multi-Term Separation	√	X	X	X
Naiku Connection	√	X	NA	√
Parent Access	√	√	√	√
Parent Communication	√	√	√	X
Video - Embed	√	√	√	√
Video - Linking	√	√	√	√
Video – Record Live	X	√	√	√
Reliability	√	√	√	~
Resource Library	X	√	√	√
Rich Text Editor	√	√	~	X
Rubrics	√	√	X	√
Simplicity of Use	√	X	√	X
Standards Mastery	X	√	√	X
Syncing (OneRoster)	√	√	√	√
Teacher/Student View	√	√	√	√
Transferring Content	√	√ (Add'l \$)	?	√
Xello	√	X	X	√

√ = Available \* X = Not Available \* +- = Maybe \* ~ = Kind of \* NA = Not Applicable