



# Portland Public Schools uses e-learning to train staff efficiently and cost-effectively

## School district saves almost \$600,000 for software training project

School districts face several challenges providing professional development and training. They often need to train hundreds or thousands of teachers, administrators and professional staff in a short period of time and with a limited budget.

Many administrators are following the latest trend in e-learning by adopting the blended learning model, which uses a combination of online and classroom instruction. A large library of online courses - ranging in topics from Microsoft Office to government-mandated topics - is now available. Customized courses, such as how to use a student information system, can also be offered in an e-learning format.

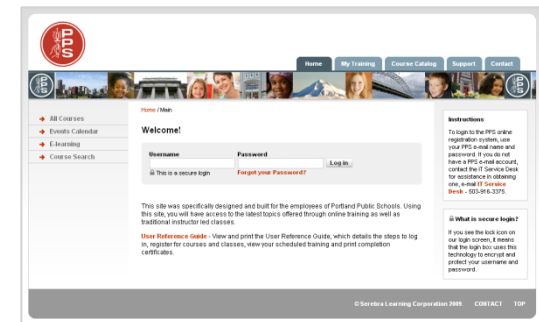
But school districts should realize that e-learning is more than just online courses. For administrators to get the most out of their training programs, they have to focus first on their goals and how success will be measured. More and more school districts are investing in a learning management system to help them manage and track learning for all their staff.

**A learning management system is a sophisticated technology that allows school districts to manage every aspect of training - from online registration and tracking to training histories and scheduling. A robust learning management system should handle all training needs done virtually or through instructor-led training in classrooms.**

One example of a school district using a learning management system with great success is Portland Public Schools. When it had to train 3,000 staff to use new human resources and financial software, the largest school district in Oregon realized traditional training methods couldn't be used due to time constraints and logistics.

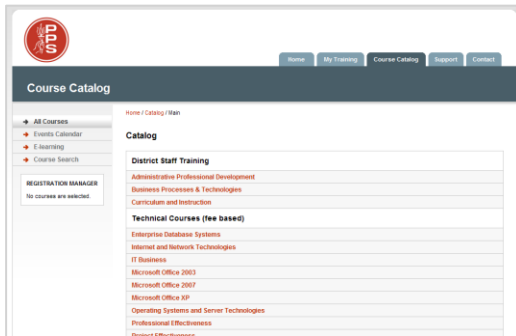
"We had a huge training need and we had to train our staff ASAP," said Bonetta Audette, who was the training coordinator at the time. "The staff had to have the skills to do their job - getting people paid, purchasing products for

the schools, HR functions. It was critical." School principals and administrators, secretaries and district office staff were among the people who needed to learn the new software in a short timeframe. Initially, Portland asked people to register for training via e-mail and the information was manually entered into a database. The plan was to then schedule all the staff through classroom training. With a class limit of 20 people, and a need for four hours in class time per person, training more than 3,000 people was very difficult. It was a process that Audette described as "demanding" and "extraordinarily stressful."



Portland Public Schools Online Learning Campus Home Page

“It was pretty challenging,” added Tom Voight, Portland Public Schools’ senior technical trainer. “We had a secretary who was almost devoted full-time (to data entry).”



Portland Public Schools Online Learning Campus E-learning Catalog

Realizing that a project of this scope couldn't be done using manual processes, the school district brought in Serebra Campus, a learning management system from Serebra Learning Corporation. It allowed Portland Public Schools to manage and track registrations, maintain training histories in a centralized location, and offer online registration. A customized online course was developed and the district successfully trained all 3,000 staff in only three weeks.

“It’s so much easier to give people access to the learning management system to manage their training and access online courses. It’s also more cost-effective because you don’t have to bring them to a classroom,” said Jay Keuter, director, IT client services, for Portland Public Schools. “And they can control their training needs on their schedule.”

“We were calculating it would take three months of constant training every day if we didn’t have a learning management system,” Voight said. “It was something that had to be done because it was a major upgrade in the system. The training wasn’t something we could stretch over time.”

**In addition to the efficiency that e-learning provided through the learning management system, it also saved the school district money. Keuter estimates it would have cost upwards of \$600,000 to provide the training without a learning management system - this includes current end users and any new users within a 3-4 year timeframe.**

“By using a learning management system and developing our own e-learning courseware, the return on that investment is five- or six-fold, meaning we probably had \$100,000 in development time and cost into those e-learning modules,” he said.

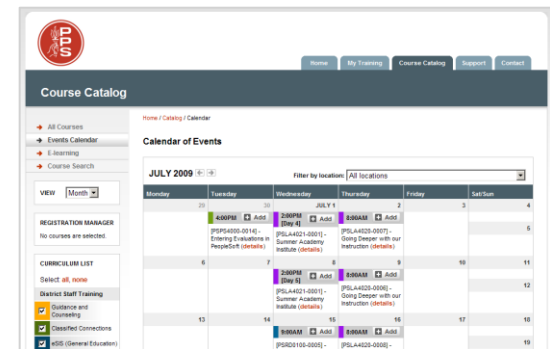
Serebra Campus gave Portland Public Schools an e-learning foundation that provides about 1,000 courses on a variety of topics. Staff can ask their managers for permission to have the district fund the course or they can pay for it themselves with a credit card.

The school district is now also inspired to create more training projects. It started creating its own customized courseware and using e-learning for other training initiatives, including a new e-mail and calendaring system, a new student information system, and a series of how-to video guides.

The school district was presented with another demanding challenge when the state of Oregon mandated child-abuse prevention training to anyone who worked with children. “This meant our 6,000 employees had to take this course within a three-week period of time,” said Voight.

Using its learning management system, Portland Public Schools quickly rolled out a course within the required timeframe to all staff for this prevention program, proving once again the value of e-learning.

Instructor-led training is also a major component of the district’s professional development program and its learning management system plays an important role here, too. It provides the same services as it does for online training: maintaining the course catalog, centralizing and giving access to training histories, online registration, and schedule management.



Portland Public Schools Online Learning Campus Event Calendar

District staff now efficiently manages all of its classroom and virtual training with the learning management system.

“Our culture has changed and over time we have convinced all of our departments to manage their professional development through Serebra Campus,” said Audette. “Instead of an IT system, it has become a district-wide system and that’s huge for us.”

Effectively managing your professional development and training – whether it’s offering the right courses, allowing online registration, monitoring training progress, or providing timely training – begins with the learning management system. Starting with a strong learning management system will ensure your school district provides efficient and cost-effective professional development for all your staff.

For more information about the Portland Public School project and how your school district can save money on training, contact Serebra:

E-mail: [info@serebra.com](mailto:info@serebra.com)  
Phone: 604 676.5480  
Toll Free: 800 567.7766

## About Portland Public Schools

Portland Public Schools, founded in 1851, is an urban school district in Portland, Oregon. With approximately 46,000 students in more than 85 schools, it is the largest school district in the Pacific Northwest.

PPS students participate in diverse programs and learning opportunities that are supported by teachers, families, community members, non-profit organizations, local businesses and higher education institutions, including Portland State University, Portland Community College, Oregon Health and Science University and the University of Oregon.

Portland Public Schools is headquartered in the Blanchard Education Service Center in North Portland.

## About Serebra Learning Corporation

Serebra Learning Corporation is an innovative global leader with more than two decades of experience in corporate and consumer e-learning.

Organizations throughout North America and throughout the world rely on Serebra to help them achieve their education goals. More than 5,000 course titles are available through Serebra’s aggregated course catalogue to the consumer and corporate markets. Topics include leadership skills, finance, project management, IT, and desktop applications.

The company also provides a proprietary learning management system, Serebra Campus, that allows companies and organizations to deliver customized e-learning experiences for their employees and members.

[www.serebra.com](http://www.serebra.com)

