

Fort Sam Houston ISD: Engaging Students. Ensuring Success.



Dr. Roland Rios

Director of Technology

“Ft. Sam Houston ISD is highly committed to increasing student engagement. Buncee has provided students a tool that is both powerful and easy to use and students enjoy using it immensely.”
~ Dr. Rios

About Fort Sam Houston ISD:

Ft. Sam Houston Independent School District is a unique district in San Antonio, Texas. Located entirely on Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, the district serves the children of military personnel who reside on the installation. Our students experience a lifestyle filled with stressful challenges as troops face military missions, more frequent deployments, increased family separations, and numerous relocations. These stressors are ever-present as students do their best to cope with the normal challenges faced by all school-aged children – attending classes, learning new subjects, ameliorating gaps in learning, earning graduation credits, and making new friends. Because of their unique situation and service to our country, we feel these students deserve the highest quality education we can provide.

To help provide that high standard of teaching, Fort Sam Houston ISD made a commitment in 2007 to transform our district into a learning organization by focusing on student engagement. Recognizing that designing engaging experiences for students

requires continuous innovation and the constant creation of new ways of doing business, we activated new systems and opportunities for our students. Teachers have received extensive training on how to design rigorous experiences for students that the students find meaningful. Going beyond mere “planning,” teachers design lessons that appeal to students’ interests, involve them in the learning, and connect them to real world experiences. Teachers are encouraged to explore other innovative ways to engage their students in learning and the use of innovative technological tools is key to that success.

Problem of Practice: What is the issue at hand that needs to be faced? Is there a barrier to learning that needs to be overcome? Is there a challenge students are facing?

Our district is blessed with a technologically rich landscape. We have a 1-1 Chromebook program with all students in grades 3-12. All classrooms are equipped with ceiling mounted projectors and speakers and interactive whiteboards. Our educational technology team works tirelessly to assure that our teachers are well equipped, both with tools and training, to design engaging work for students using the technology at hand.

The challenge in continuing to provide this rich technological environment for our teachers comes when trying to find tools for teachers and students that meet several needs...

First, the tool must be “powerful.” We seek out tools that will allow students and teachers to create engaging, interactive experiences for themselves and others - tools that allow them to collaborate and use a variety of mediums in their delivery.

Secondly, we seek out tools that are easy to implement. Buncee implementation has been one of the easiest we’ve ever had. Because of the well designed interface, it is a very easy to learn tool. That allows teachers and students to focus on the content of what goes into their Buncees, and not worry about the mechanics of creating the Buncee.

If a website or piece of software is too difficult to manage, use, or maintain, it often just “gathers dust” as no one uses it. We also seek tools that can be used in a variety of content areas and at a variety of levels.

Finally, we must remain fiscally responsible to our constituents and we seek out tools that are affordable and provide us a great return on our investment. Finding tools that meet our stringent criteria while helping us move towards engaging our students is not always easy, but Buncee was a perfect fit for us.

Buncee Solution: Describe the steps taken to integrate Buncee into teaching and learning to tackle the problem of practice.

When we first saw Buncee, we were immediately convinced that it had great potential in our district. It met our criteria for effective tools - powerful, easy to use and manage, applicable across grades and subjects, and affordable.

Most importantly, it was evident that it would help us design engaging work for students using technology.

We “piloted” the software with one grade level at our elementary school in the spring of 2016. We created accounts for the teachers and students and our technology team provided training for both groups (In all honesty, the training consisted mainly of providing their login credentials and then getting out of their way!). Within days, not only were those teachers and students giving us positive feedback, we were hearing from other teachers and students asking when they would get accounts. It was clear that Buncee was a great move for us.

At the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year we equipped all our 3rd-8th grade teachers and students with Buncee accounts. Again, the implementation was easy and students and teachers began using it immediately. In one our training sessions, we were five minutes into the training and a middle school teacher said, “I can tell you right now. This is my new favorite tool!”

We have already received requests to add accounts for our high school students and to add accounts for students in the early elementary grades. We have seen some incredible creations from our students and our teachers love using the tool. Buncee has been a great addition to our technology toolbelt!

Impact: Share quotes from teachers/students describing the impact Buncee has had on teaching and learning.

Feedback from our students and staff on Buncee has been great. They all love the ease of use and productivity of the tool. The primary use for Buncee thus far has been as a presentation tool. Students have been able to showcase their knowledge and understanding of subject matter through the creation of interactive and engaging multimedia Buncee presentations.

In a recent poll of those using Buncee, we found that Buncee is being used in all content areas, even foreign language and electives. Science is the class with the most Buncee use, followed by English Language Arts. The ease of insertion of YouTube is evident given the fact that 78% of users report regularly inserting videos into their Buncees.

When asked about to rank the ease of use of Buncee with 1 being very hard to learn and 10 being very easy to learn, 42% of our users rate Buncee a 10/10! Over 80% rated it at least a 7/10. We rarely see users report that software is that easy to pick up! This is evidenced in the number of Buncees being created in our system.

In the survey we captured the following remarks about Buncee ...

"I love Buncee. It has given me and my class a better opportunity to learn. Buncee makes learning fun."

"If you go on Buncee, you can create anything you want! It's good!"

"My students LOVE using Buncee to show what they know!!!"

"It's the best thing in the world!!!"

"I liked being able to put in videos and animation for my project."

"It is a fun and easy web tool for teachers and students to create and share engaging presentations and interactive lessons."