

CASE STUDY

Engaged K-12 online learning at Salem-Keizer

The business case for Engageli



“Engageli is like if Zoom and InSpace had a baby. It gives us amazing collaboration features, tracks data in an incredible way, and provides the control teachers need for classroom management.”



Christine Bowlby
Principal
Salem-Keizer Online

Salem-Keizer School District, the second-largest district in Oregon, serves over 40,000 students, with a growing population choosing fully online learning. Post-pandemic, the district transitioned its online program, Edge, into a synchronous, full-day learning model but quickly encountered technological limitations that impacted student engagement, classroom management, and attendance tracking.

After struggling with Zoom, Google Meet, and InSpace, Salem-Keizer sought a platform that could drive engagement, improve attendance, and provide data-backed ROI to justify funding. They chose Engageli as their active learning solution.

Through table-based collaboration, real-time analytics, and integrated classroom management tools, Engageli enables higher student engagement, stronger classroom control, and data-driven decision-making.

As districts nationwide navigate the demand for hybrid and online learning, Salem-Keizer's story serves as a model for how administrators can make a compelling business case for investing in virtual classroom technology.



The growing need for high-quality active online learning

Salem-Keizer's unique online learning model

Before the pandemic, Salem-Keizer offered only one online option — a fully asynchronous high school program using a basic plug-and-play curriculum. However, after 7,000 students enrolled in emergency distance learning in 2020, it became clear that families wanted a long-term online alternative.

Today, more than 1,000 students across K-12 are enrolled in the district's fully synchronous online program. Students log in for live instruction all day, every day, following structured bell schedules from kindergarten to high school.

"We are the only program we've found in our state — and even nationally at conferences — doing fully synchronous online learning, not blended or asynchronous."

The district's commitment to real-time, interactive learning made it essential to find a platform that could actively engage students and track participation in a meaningful way.

The challenges: engagement, classroom management, and funding

Despite the demand for online learning, Salem-Keizer faced limitations in their standard technology.

One of the biggest hurdles was keeping students engaged in an entirely virtual environment. Teachers found that traditional video conferencing tools did not support student collaboration, leading to disengagement and an increase in absenteeism.

"Kids just weren't talking to each other. There wasn't that academic discourse we needed. When classes were just a teacher talking, students would log out."

Managing a virtual classroom was another major struggle. Existing platforms provided little visibility into student activity during breakout rooms, making it nearly impossible for teachers to track discussions or re-engage distracted students. Additionally, students quickly discovered ways to bypass security measures, engage in off-task behaviors, and even invite unauthorized participants into sessions.

Attendance rates also suffered. The district's regular attendance rate dropped significantly in 2022-23, down from earlier years of online learning. Since state funding is directly tied to attendance, this decline had serious financial implications for the district.

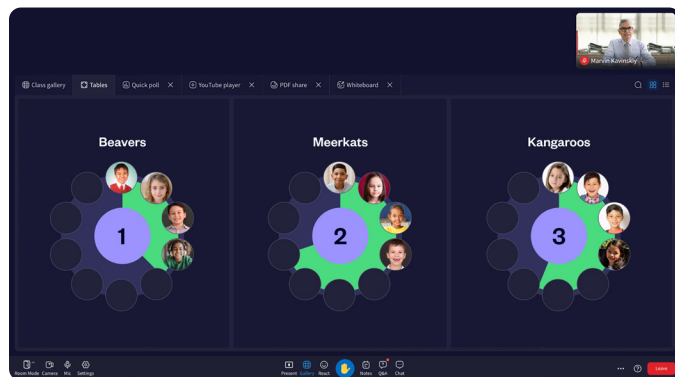


With these challenges impacting the program, Salem-Keizer needed a platform that could facilitate meaningful student engagement, effective classroom management, and combat chronic absenteeism to secure essential funding.

Why Salem-Keizer chose Engageli: The business case

Increasing student engagement and collaboration

Salem-Keizer found that Engageli's table-based structure allowed students to work together more naturally and effectively than in traditional breakout rooms. Unlike previous platforms, which left students in passive roles, Engageli encouraged active participation in small groups while still giving teachers full oversight.



Tables allowed for real-time academic discussions, peer collaboration, and structured group work, making learning more interactive and engaging. Educators could also incorporate quick polls, collaborative activities, and knowledge checks to reinforce key concepts in a way that kept students involved.

With built-in engagement tracking, teachers could immediately see which students were participating in discussions and who needed additional support. Instead of relying on guesswork, they had real-time data to ensure students were involved in learning activities.

Engageli's intuitive interface also made the transition easier for students — even the program's youngest learners. Despite initial skepticism from some more traditional teachers, elementary students quickly mastered the platform, proving its accessibility across grade levels.

“Our kindergarten and first graders picked up Engageli right away. One of our teachers said, ‘If my 5- and 6-year-olds can figure this out, anyone can!’”

Stronger classroom management and security

Engageli provided the [oversight and classroom control](#) that previous platforms lacked. Teachers could move students into collaborative table groups without waiting for them to join manually, ensuring that all students were present and participating.

Additionally, Engageli eliminated common security concerns by removing private chat between students and preventing unauthorized participants from entering sessions. This allowed teachers to focus on instruction rather than constantly monitoring student behavior.

“We say we don’t chase kids down hallways — we chase them over the internet. Before Engageli, if it was just a lecture, they’d start going to other websites, and we’d have to block them. But since we’ve been in Engageli, there’s been a big decrease in the number of kids our behavior specialist has to close tabs for. Teachers also love that if students don’t move themselves into breakout rooms, we can move them to their table — so they’re listening and getting the information.”



Data-driven decision making and funding justification

One of the most compelling reasons for choosing Engageli was its ability to track and analyze student engagement data.

Engageli's detailed analytics allowed teachers and administrators to see exactly how students were participating — whether through speaking, using reactions, or engaging in chat discussions. This data proved to be a valuable tool for identifying at-risk students and implementing targeted interventions.

For district leaders, the ability to quantify engagement directly supported funding requests. With attendance tied to state funding, Salem-Keizer needed to show measurable improvements to justify ongoing investment in its online program.

“We had three main reasons for choosing Engageli. First, it enables real student collaboration and discourse — so students are doing the work and driving the learning. Second is the classroom management piece, like preventing private chats between students while allowing them to chat directly with teachers. Third is the data and reporting — my supervisor is a data nerd, and he loved how powerful Engageli's reports can be for our grade-level teams and parent conversations.”

The link between engagement, attendance, and funding

[Research](#) shows student engagement is directly tied to attendance. When students feel involved in the learning process — through structured discussions, group work, and interactive lessons — they are more likely to stay logged in and complete their coursework.

Traditional video conferencing tools left students disconnected and disengaged, making it easy for them to log out or tune out, leading to attendance drops. Engageli changes this dynamic by keeping students actively involved in learning, reducing dropout rates, and increasing participation.

“We monitor kids on GoGuardian, and we could see when they disengaged because classes were just teacher lectures. Engageli gives teachers more control to re-engage students before they check out.”

This increase in participation has a direct financial impact. Many public schools receive funding based on average daily attendance (ADA), meaning that even a modest increase in logged-in students results in significant funding recovery.

Transform your K-12 classroom with Engageli

Salem-Keizer's decision to adopt Engageli highlights the platform's ability to drive engagement, improve attendance, and provide measurable ROI. As other districts evaluate their online learning strategies, Engageli offers a compelling solution for increasing student success while securing essential funding.

"One of our fifth-grade teachers was in Engageli with her students. They weren't doing their work, so she said, 'If you can't handle this privilege of collaboration in Engageli, I guess we're going to have to go back to Google Meets!' And the kids were not thrilled about that — they said, 'No, please don't make us go back!'"



Visit Engageli's [K-12 content hub](#) to download actionable resources and research.

[Book a custom demo](#) to see how Engageli can transform online learning in your school district.

engageli

