



STATE



OF



EDTECH



2020-2021



THE MINDS



BEHIND WHAT'S NOW &



WHAT'S



NEXT

# LEADING VOICES —

*What is the state of education, and technology's role—and, what's ahead?*

By **VICTOR RIVERO**



**For the third** time since our inaugural *STATE OF EDTECH: The Minds Behind What's Now and What's Next* report published in 2017-2018, we've again asked our readers to weigh in with their thoughts on these questions:

*What is the state of education these days?*

*What is technology's role in education?*

*What's just ahead?*

We could get a sense of 'where things are at' by a careful study of the numbers, but with this segment of our report, some of those "*minds behind what's now and what's next*" simply let us know exactly what they are thinking.

They include Directors of Technology, district administrators, startup founders, CEOs, investors, teachers, students, education

leaders, policy makers and others in and around education.

And what better way to begin to get a picture of the realities we face across the full education spectrum — from early childhood learning and K-12, to vocational and technical education, community college, traditional college and university, to corporate learning, workforce training, and skills development — than to lean in and listen!

Their voices stand alone, each one a point of view replete with its own experience and angle —but as a group, there is a certain resonance that begins to come through.

How this sounds to you, our reader, is for you to decide. Listen closely, hear them out, and keep the conversation alive with your own leading voice!



**“Higher education needs** to redefine itself and technology will play a big role. Currently, schools tend to buy multiple software platforms that do not integrate well. This leaves the student experience fragmented with frustrating UI/UX design. We see technology becoming more streamlined and intuitive to enhance the student experience. Every school now has to compete on a national level for non-traditional students and a shrinking number of high school graduates. As more learning moves online, fancy dorms and recreation centers will be seen as an investment with little return. Delivering meaningful experiences through technology will carry more weight. From apps that foster community to AR/VR software that removes distance barriers, technology will balance meaningful student experiences with the strategic objectives of the school.”

—**Jake Himmelspach** // Principal/Strategy Director, Peopledesign



**“District technology departments** are becoming increasingly more integrated with curriculum and instruction departments. With this integration, CTOs are now not just tech people – they are often former educators with classroom experience and expertise on what works (and what doesn’t) in the classroom. This shift is positive for today’s classrooms as it helps ensure new edtech is more consistently aligned to improving learning for both students and educators versus based on just what’s shiny and new.”

—**Adam Geller** // Founder & CEO, Edthena



**“There will be** continued investment and growth in the edtech industry this coming year. I expect that we’ll see more startups entering the space as well as the big players continuing to grow. As technology improves, companies will also find more and more ways to help improve the educational experience. There’s definitely a current trend with education being a part of a larger social justice movement and there’s an opportunity for edtech to help empower educators to have a

larger voice and role in the greater education movement.”

—**Mike Teng** // Co-founder & CEO, Swing Education



**“Huge changes are** coming in how teachers leverage technology for teaching. Yes, technology is well entrenched in education infrastructure, and in the delivery of video or distance learning. We are also inundated with B2C programs, from practice with math facts to memorizing vocabulary. These are significant and valuable contributions to education. But we haven’t yet seen widespread use of a tightly integrated blended learning approach, where we combine the best aspects of live, human teaching with the power of adaptive edtech programs. I’ve been lucky in my career to be involved with two game changers that do just that: DreamBox Learning, which helps K-8 math learning, and Blue Canoe Learning, which helps non-native English speakers learn clear spoken English. I expect to see many more.”

—**Sarah Daniels** // CEO, Blue Canoe