Cassopolis Public Schools:
An interview with Superintendent Angela Piazza

New Tech Network (NTN), a national nonprofit organization, is a leading design partner for comprehensive K-12 school change. New Tech Network partners with districts and communities to transform schools into innovative learning environments for students and adults. To explore more about the New Tech model and transforming your school, visit NTN's [School Design Studio](#).

Angela Piazza, superintendent for Cassopolis Public Schools, discusses why technology and innovative practices are integral to the improvement of her district.

Q. Why has the use of technology been a key piece in Cassopolis' journey to improve?

A. Students today are digital natives, and accustomed to being always interconnected (with information available at their fingertips, and social media making the world smaller), and they want to learn how things connect. Technology is the tool that connects and is part of how the real world functions. School should reflect how the real world functions, so it's crucial we give students the opportunity to practice using technology as a tool to strengthen that understanding of connecting content material to real world applications.

Q. Why is it important to move to a 1:1 environment even if all learning is onsite?

A. A 1:1 environment for our students means they're more prepared for college and career. Use of an LMS for onsite and virtual learning models how universities operate, where students submit work and receive feedback. We model those same behaviors with [Echo](#), our LMS.

Q. Why is technology that enables an important outcome when moving to project-based learning?

A. Technology allows students to discover; it encourages and fosters independent learning that enables students to explore and dive deeper in order to master a subject. It's where they conduct research, connect with professionals, collaborate with peers, and solve problems.

Q. Why is technology a key component to your adult-learning plan?

A. Echo is the place where learning happens for everyone. We use Echo to help manage student work and provide professional development to our teachers and staff. Staff use this LMS to manage their own learning, which in turn models the strategies we want them to use with students.

Q. Why did you choose to have a partner (instead of DIY)?

A. Someone always asks, "can't you do project-based learning on your own?" Yes, you can. But why would you? To me, incorporating a partner is a no-brainer. The connection, and the support and resources we receive from our NTN coaches for our adult learners has been integral to our improvement as a district., We wanted to take advantage of the 20-plus years that NTN has in research and developing strong research-based practices. The Network is constantly evolving and learning, and in the end, it's all to make us better and to make us stronger.