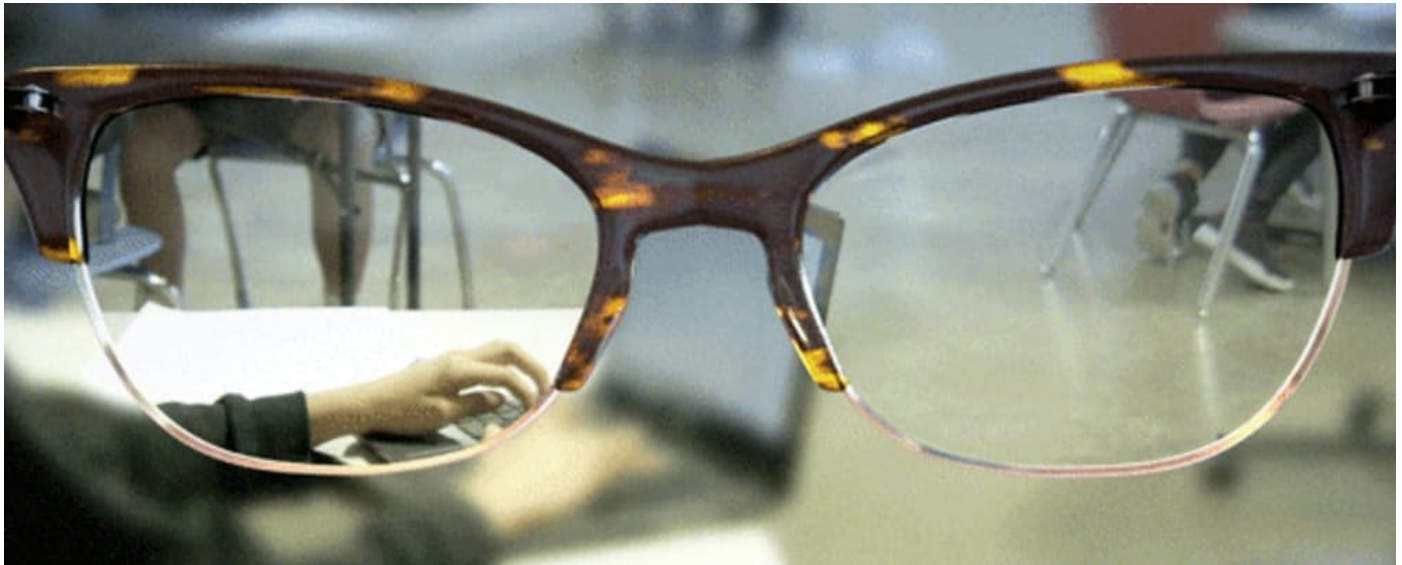# Learning As We Go: Looking Back on the EdSurge 2016 'State of Edtech' Report

Betsy Corcoran

Capturing a picture of education is a bit like looking through a kaleidoscope, with each group that comes to education bringing its own point of view on how teaching and learning has and should evolve. And yet one obvious conclusions shines through it all.

Here's where we started: Last January, we embarked a project that aimed to look at edtech's role in the changing picture of K-12 education through three different lenses: through the perspective of investors, entrepreneurs and teachers. We called it "The State of EdTech: Forces and Trends Shaping K12 Edtech" report.

Part One: The Trends

The State of Edtech
Technology Trends Shaping Education: Part 1 of a Yearlong Series
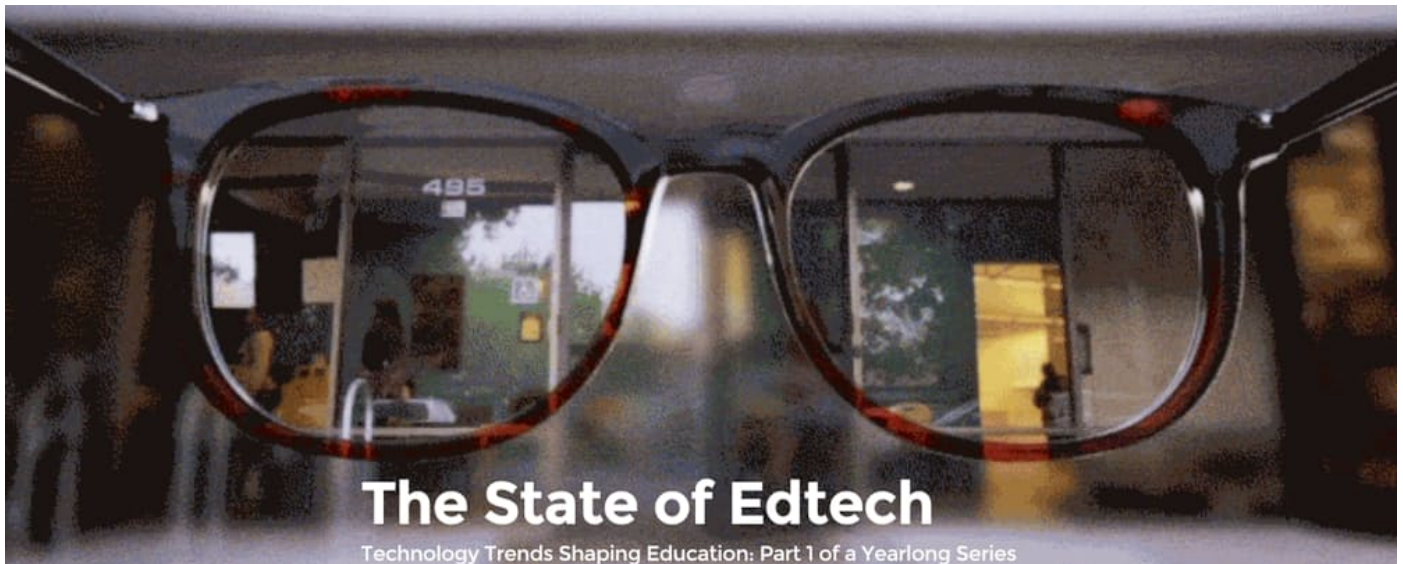
Our initial survey focused on the big trends that all these players saw shaping education technology. The most ambitious technologists teased us with promises of the next generation of technology—starting with augmented reality, bitcoins and drones. But the overwhelming technology concern for education remained sturdily mundane: How do we improve the **infrastructure of our schools**? Without a reliable communications infrastructure that is smartly used by school leaders, any other part of the edtech conversation is just talk. Schools continue to pay different rates for bandwidth. That's why a tool such as the **Education Superhighway's Compare & Connect K12** matters.

Part Two: The Funding

Check out what your local school pays for broadband here.

Figuring out how to **fund the development of education technology** continued to be complex: Investors in US edtech startups hit a high-water mark in 2015 with US companies raising $1.45 billion. In 2016, that edtech figure looks like it will be closer to $1.03B. Those levels are affected by many factors, including overall confidence in the economy and the maturity of companies. (In 2015, for instance, the bulk of the funding **went to later stage companies**.)

And 2016 saw plenty of companies stumble, **from literacy tools** to **assessment products**. The entrepreneurs who kicked off startups this past year had more information to coolly assess their prospects of building a self-sustaining business, from the **advice of industry veterans** and **long-time educators** to even **simple calculators that could position their intentions and prospects**.

Part Three: The Builders and Products

CHAPTER THREE

How Edtech Tools Evolve

Even more unsettled were the unanswered question about the **impact that emerging tools are having on teaching and learning**. We explored the framework offered by Ruben Puentedura that explores how teachers who wield technology move from simply substituting it into existing practices to redefining how they teach.

Part Four: The Buyers and Schools
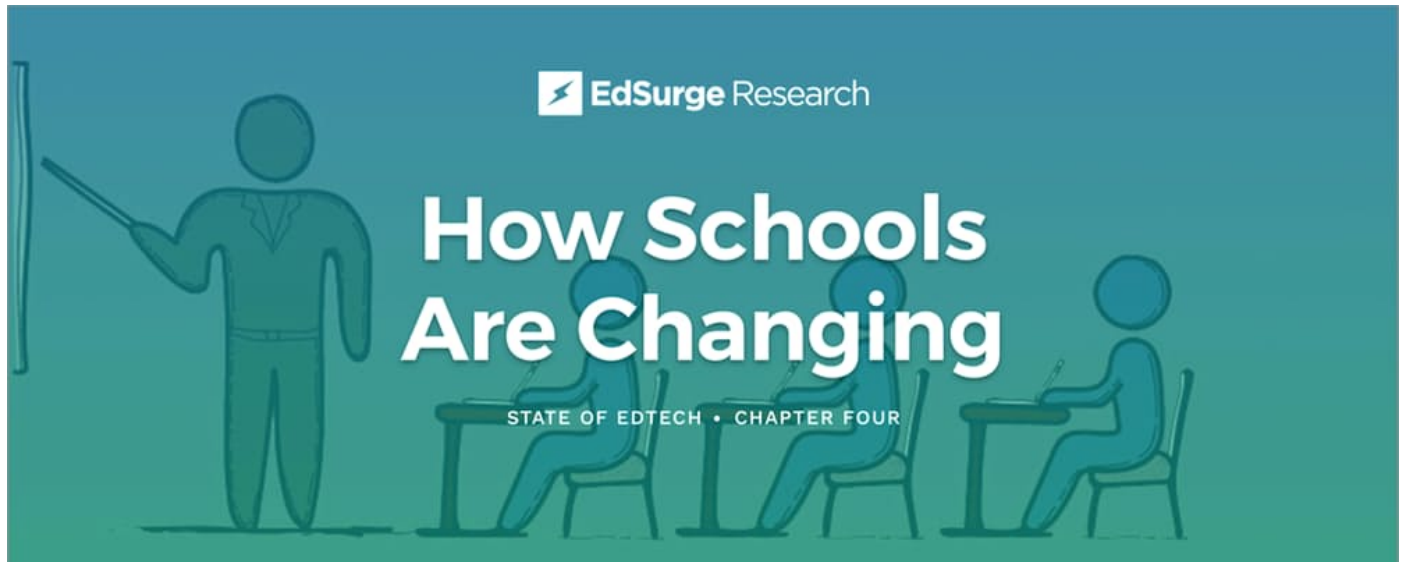
And that brought us to the most crucial change of all: **The varied models of school emerging** to prepare students for the next century. Our initial assessment of edtech suggested that "learning models"—how we teach—was unanimously seen as the cornerstone of education. **In our fourth installment of this report**, we dove into more than a dozen examples of how school are changing.

2016 was an eventful year—politically, culturally, educationally. As you reflect on 2016, we encourage you to review and explore why these edtech trends matter for you now, and into the future.

"The State of EdTech: Forces and Trends Shaping K12 Edtech" is **available here** (scroll to bottom).