



RICHFIELD
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Digital Learning Plan

Executive Summary

In Richfield Public Schools, we are committed to providing quality education to all students, regardless of their background, economic status or abilities.

We believe:

- in inspiring our students to grow, adapt and discover their place in the world
- all children have a right to a quality education, high standards, rigorous curriculum and powerful instruction
- in providing instruction that supports the different ways people learn
- that valuing our diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives fosters unity and empowers all
- the collective efforts of students, home, school and community form the foundation for excellence
- that core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility must be modeled, taught and nurtured
- it is everyone's responsibility to provide a safe, supportive and engaging environment

As we move further into the 21st century, digital technologies are increasingly becoming an integral part of our lives, and education is no exception. In order to provide our students with the best possible learning experience, we need to continue to invest in student and staff technology, teaching and learning applications, wireless infrastructure, security systems and career and college pathways. This digital learning plan is organized around the themes of achievement, equity, accessibility and security, and outlines our goals and strategies for achieving them. Furthermore, it suggests a framework under which we can build for the future while also prioritizing our District mission and strategic plan. Finally, it creates a framework for replacement cycles and maintenance in order to continue to meet the needs of our learning community.

What is a Digital Learning Plan and Why Do We Need One?

A digital learning plan is a comprehensive strategy that outlines how technology will be used to enhance learning outcomes and improve teaching practices. It includes specific goals, objectives and action plans that address various aspects of digital learning, such as infrastructure, hardware and software, professional development, curriculum development and student engagement.

In Richfield Public Schools, we need a digital learning plan to guide the development and implementation of high-quality, technology-driven education that prepares our students for success in the digital age. With the increasing importance of technology in every aspect of modern life, students must be equipped with the digital skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in a fast-paced, digitally-driven world.

A digital learning plan provides a road map for implementing technology in the classroom, ensuring that students have access to the latest digital tools and resources that support their learning. It also helps teachers integrate technology into their teaching practices, enabling them to create engaging and interactive lessons that meet the needs of every student.

Moreover, a digital learning plan can help us achieve greater efficiency, reduce costs and improve communication and collaboration between teachers, students and families. It can also provide our District with a competitive advantage by attracting and retaining top talent and increasing student enrollment.

In an era dominated by rapid technological advancements (that now includes access to tools that make use of artificial intelligence), preparing students for the digital transformation has become imperative. The integration of technology in education not only enhances learning experiences but also equips students with essential skills for future success. Our plan highlights the key reasons why it is crucial to adequately prepare our students for the digital transformation. We have created four areas of focus for our digital learning plan: Achievement & Workforce Readiness, Equity & Access, Security and Efficiency.

Delivering on our Promises: Investments Made 2013-23

In 2013, we asked the community to renew an existing technology levy with the following question:

The Board of Independent School District No. 280 (Richfield) has proposed a capital project levy authorization. This authorization would renew the school district's existing authorization which is scheduled to expire after taxes payable in 2013. The money raised by this authorization will provide funds for the acquisition and installation of improved technology and technology systems in various school district facilities and the purchase of instructional equipment. The proposed capital project levy authorization will raise approximately \$1,344,428 for taxes payable in 2014, the first year it is to be levied, and would be authorized for ten years. The estimated total cost of the projects to be funded over that time period is approximately \$13,424,280. The projects to be funded have received a positive review and comment from the Commissioner of Education.

We also realized that our buildings needed serious infrastructure upgrades and that our collection of technology devices for students and staff was fixed, and not mobile. We needed resources for mobile technology. Therefore, in 2013, we also asked the community to support additional funding for expanded 21st-century learning priorities with the following technology levy question:

The proposed capital project levy authorization will raise approximately \$915,500 for taxes payable in 2014, the first year it is to be levied, and would be authorized for ten years. The estimated total cost of the projects to be funded over that time period is approximately \$9,155,000. The projects to be funded have received a positive review and comment from the Commissioner of Education.

If School District Ballot Question 1 is approved, shall the capital project levy authorization proposed by the Board of ISD #280 also be approved?

Both questions were approved by voters. The first levy allowed us to purchase, upgrade and support a broad range of technology, preparing students for success in the 21st century. The revenue from the second levy allowed us to accomplish the goals highlighted in the following table.



2013-23 Digital Learning Plan Completed Goals and Outcomes

Student Learning

Goals	Outcomes
Provide students and staff access to a wide range of software and applications for teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We purchased supportive software for elementary math and literacy.• We secured high-quality learning management systems which house curriculum and instruction for elementary and secondary schools.• We selected formative assessment and student engagement software to measure, intervene and enhance student learning.• We offer a catalog of over 75 teaching and learning applications designed to enhance learning and improve outcomes.
Provide students and staff with high-quality technology designed to help them in their roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We implemented a “one device per student” Chromebook initiative where all students have a personal learning device assigned to them.• We purchased 180 4G LTE educationally-filtered hotspots to address systemic inequalities in high-speed internet access for our students. Students can check these out from their media centers for quality, safe, high-speed internet at home.• We provided laptops and desktops to nearly all staff, and we provided access to desktops on a shared basis for highly mobile staff like bus drivers and food service staff.

Support

Goals	Outcomes
Staff the District for a rapidly changing and transforming digital world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We hired new bilingual support staff and we developed new support and operational structures to best serve our District through the digital transformation.
Invest in new ways to support families with navigating the digital world, social media, devices and pandemic isolation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We hired a bilingual family support technician to support families with internet access and devices at home.• We staffed an IT Help Desk (virtual and phone) for families seeking technology support.• We secured the Go Guardian parent app for parents/guardians to use to monitor their child’s internet activity and school engagement level.• We worked in collaboration with our Student Support Services team to provide resources and support during the pandemic.
Deliver staff training to focus on teaching and learning in the 21st century.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We provided a small stipend to one teacher at each building to serve as a Technology Lead Teacher, tasked with site-level professional development.• We hired a Districtwide Technology Integration Coach charged with organizing and executing ongoing professional development for staff and students.

Infrastructure

Goals	Outcomes
Replace older, more expensive equipment with equipment that meets the same or future needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We downsized the number of computer lab rooms and prioritized mobile technology for students and staff. Computers are mobile and personalized in the 21st century and we are making our schools reflect that reality. • We replaced old security cameras and systems with more efficient hardware. • We Installed IOT (Internet of Things) wireless sensors on HVAC systems and powered systems to alert employees of costly leaks, breaks and outages.
Install quality high-speed internet at all buildings in RPS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2015, a comprehensive networking project was completed that modernized District buildings by way of installing broadband fiber optic connections to buildings and dozens of network closets throughout the District that connected rooms with wireless and wired access to speeds of up to 1 GB throughout the District. • In 2019, we started adding to and enhancing our wireless and wired networks to outfit the improved areas of our buildings that were updated as a result of a capital projects levy (ongoing). These flexible learning spaces are essential in our transition to a more standards-based, flexible learning environment. • In 2023, we upgraded to the newest generation of wireless access points which will provide even faster, more reliable high-speed internet in school buildings.
Have the ability to maintain infrastructure and equipment, and to implement a replacement cycle, which ensures reliability of tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We developed a replacement cycle for all District data closets and wired/ wireless internet hardware so as to avoid costly leases and accrued interest. • We developed a 4-5 year replacement cycle for staff and student devices. • We installed and set up replacement cycles for classroom technology such as SMART Board displays and teacher voice amplification systems.
Prioritize comprehensive physical and cybersecurity hardware and software.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We expanded physical security and door access technology. • We instituted a four-year replacement cycle of old analog security cameras and installed door access readers for more secure buildings. • We improved cybersecurity practices and monitoring software. • We authored a cybersecurity handbook for District staff. • We provide continuous staff training in order to maintain secure, safe learning environments.



Alignment with the 2021-26 Strategic Plan, Richfield Realized

This plan was written in alignment with our District's mission and strategic plan. At Richfield Public Schools, we believe in high levels of alignment in order to achieve our systemic goals. Our 2021-26 strategic plan, Richfield Realized, can be reviewed at: richfieldschools.org/strategic-plan

Achievement & Workforce Readiness

As technology continues to shape the job market, digital literacy and technological skills have become indispensable. Preparing students for the digital transformation means they will possess the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in the future workforce. According to the World Economic Forum in their "The Future of Jobs Report 2020," digital skills will be critical for 85% of jobs by 2025, emphasizing the importance of equipping students with digital competencies from an early age. Integrating technology into education opens up new and engaging learning opportunities. Digital tools, such as online resources, educational apps and interactive platforms, provide personalized and differentiated learning experiences for students. Research by the U.S. Department of Education in "Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning" suggests that educational technology can improve student outcomes, including increased achievement, engagement and motivation. Furthermore, with the advancement of augmented reality (AR) and artificial intelligence (AI) tools like Apple Vision Pro, Google Bard and ChatGPT, students need to not only learn about how to use AR and AI but also understand how they work and how to use them in productive ways. AR and AI will be important parts of future workplace technology, and fluency in AR and AI tools will be essential.

Equity & Access

Addressing the digital divide is a critical aspect of preparing students for the digital transformation because equitable access to technology and digital resources will prevent further educational disparities. In "Bridging the Digital Divide" by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, they state that "by providing all students with equal opportunities to develop digital skills, educational institutions can bridge the digital divide and promote inclusivity." According to the European Commission in "Opening up Education: A Support Framework for Higher Education Institutions," the digital era has revolutionized communication, enabling individuals to connect and collaborate across borders. By preparing students for the digital transformation, educational institutions foster global connectivity and collaboration. Students can engage in virtual exchanges, online projects and joint initiatives, broadening their perspectives and developing crucial inter-cultural competencies.





Security

Security is of paramount importance in schools today, as ensuring a safe learning environment is crucial for the well-being and academic success of students. Security must include both physical and cyber emphasis and must be well planned, future-facing and designed in a way that does not further marginalize members of our school community.

According to Common Sense Education, preparing students for the digital transformation involves teaching them about digital citizenship and online safety. As students navigate the digital landscape, it is crucial to educate them about responsible technology use, digital ethics, privacy and cyberbullying prevention. Empowering students to be responsible digital citizens promotes their well-being and safeguards their online experiences.

Efficiency

In the digital age, technology plays a crucial role in increasing efficiency in schools. By integrating technology into various aspects of education, schools can streamline processes, enhance communication and optimize learning experiences. Digital tools and platforms enable efficient management of administrative tasks such as attendance tracking, grading and scheduling, saving valuable time for teachers and administrators. Additionally, technology facilitates seamless communication between teachers, students and parents/guardians through platforms like learning management systems, email and online portals. This instant and convenient communication promotes effective collaboration and eliminates barriers of time and distance. Furthermore, educational technology offers personalized and adaptive learning experiences, catering to the diverse needs and learning styles of students. With access to online resources, interactive multimedia content and virtual simulations, students can engage in self-paced learning, practice targeted skills and receive immediate feedback, thus increasing their efficiency in acquiring knowledge. Overall, the integration of technology in schools enhances efficiency, productivity, and effectiveness in various educational processes.

2023-33 Digital Learning Plan Goals, Outcomes and Deliverables

Achievement & Workforce Readiness

Goals	Outcomes
Improve student achievement, engagement and health by leveraging digital technologies to enhance the teaching and learning experience and support physical and mental wellness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will enhance the curriculum with digital resources by continuing to provide teachers with access to a wide variety of resources and applications, including core digital curriculum materials as well as supplemental materials. These materials will support teachers in providing students with interactive and engaging learning experiences in order to improve academic outcomes.• We will provide all students with personal learning devices and greatly increase access to industry-standard digital tools to support technology-assisted career pathways including but not limited to; Computer Animated Design, Digital Photography, Coding, Cybersecurity and more.• We will embrace artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR) and their role in the digital transformation with training and support for staff on their use in curriculum and instruction, and provide students with opportunities to leverage AI and AR in coursework.• We will continue to provide teachers with ongoing training and support to effectively integrate technology into their teaching, increase efficiency in their work and use digital tools to engage and motivate students.• We will prioritize hardware and software applications that promote physical and mental activity and wellness.• We will provide software applications and support for social emotional learning, deprogramming screen addiction, and promoting physical and mental health.

Security

Goals	Outcomes
Invest in cybersecurity systems to protect the data and devices used by District staff and students, as well as physical security systems such as cameras and door access controls that protect students, staff and District assets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will protect student and staff data, including student and employee personal data, academic records and financial information, by investing in cybersecurity measures like firewalls, anti-malware software, data encryption and protocols and incident response plans for departmental improvement. We will safeguard our networks and protect sensitive data from unauthorized access or theft.• We will ensure a safe learning environment by working to prevent unauthorized access to school buildings or facilities, theft or damage of school property, or even violent incidents. By investing in physical security measures like security cameras, access control systems and emergency response plans, we can help prevent these incidents and mitigate their impact if they do occur.• We will provide door access controls, camera systems, 911 databases and alarm/bell systems to support physical security.• We will provide curriculum and support to teach students about their own cyber and physical security.

Equity & Access

Goals	Outcomes
Promote equity in education by providing equal access to digital resources and opportunities for all students, regardless of their background.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will ensure that all students have access to high-speed internet both at school and at home. We will work to provide low-income families with affordable access to lightly used, District deprovisioned devices for home use. We will ensure that all students have access to the same digital resources, regardless of their economic or social background. We will provide high-quality technology resources for extended school year and summer school programming. We will purchase hardware and software that can assist in carrying out the vision of our District's equity policy, where we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide a high-quality, competitive educational program accelerate achievement for ALL students engage family and community members as partners ensure an environment where ALL belong We will provide technology support to families remotely and on campus. We will consolidate family communication and academic reporting applications to make them easier to access for all families.
Provide accessibility for students with language barriers and disabilities, ensuring that they have equal access to digital resources and tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will provide students with language barriers and disabilities with access to assistive technology, such as real-time speech translation tools, text-to-speech and speech-to-text software, etc. that can help them overcome learning barriers. We will provide teachers with training and support to effectively integrate assistive technology into their teaching, and to ensure that all students have equal access to digital resources and tools. We will ensure that all digital resources and applications are designed to be accessible to students with disabilities and that they comply with accessibility standards and guidelines.

Efficiency

Goals	Outcomes
We will invest in technology for the sake of efficiency because it can streamline processes, increase productivity and reduce costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will provide a full catalog of well-vetted applications in order to optimize learning and prioritize expenditures. We will ensure highly efficient data interoperability between our digital applications in order to support a data-rich, data-informed school system. We will ensure that District hardware and software support student learning, teaching, the business of "school" and office/clerical staff in the ongoing digital transformation of schools. We will regularly back up District data under network administrator oversight at the district level. We will prioritize training and support on our HR and Finance applications to support HR and Finance staff in meeting the needs of our organization. We will ensure secure, easy-to-access, easy-to-use payment portals, point-of-sale hardware, and digital applications for families to use for payments.

Community Engagement

In creating this plan we engaged our community via several surveys to parents/guardians, students and staff over the course of three years. Parents and guardians were asked about internet access, the ability to support online learning at home, preferred communication methods from the District and more. Students were surveyed about school-issued device quality and performance, device usage policies and their ability to access learning from anywhere at any time. And finally, staff were surveyed on what they needed in order to provide high-quality learning opportunities for their students, the level of support that they receive from IT staff and what distractions were caused by or enhanced by student technology use. This survey data was essential to the development of this plan and we are greatly appreciative to those who took the time to complete the surveys.

Furthermore, over the course of the 2022-23 school year, we interviewed members of multiple internal and external committees. These meetings provided valuable user data that also helped inform this plan.

Committees and groups where members provided feedback:

District Technology Advisory Committee: Students, parents/guardians, teachers and community members who bring knowledge and have an interest in curriculum instruction and educational technology. This team has provided input on our technology infrastructure project, digital and media literacy standards, digital learning model and more.

District Staff Development Committee: Instructional coaches and directors who oversee professional development priorities in the District.

District Curriculum Advisory Committee: The District Curriculum Advisory Committee is a diverse committee of parents/guardians, administrators and school staff whose purpose is to advise and support the District in their implementation of the curriculum.

Some of the focus areas for feedback included:

- What are our non-negotiables and core philosophies?
- Do our digital tools support our goals?
- What are the best ways to provide families with technology support?
- What are best practices for staff training around technology?
- How can we incorporate student voice into technology decisions?
- What do we do to ensure equitable funding across sites and departments?

Conclusion

This digital learning plan outlines our goals and strategies for leveraging secure digital technologies to enhance the teaching and learning experience, promote equity in education and ensure accessibility for all students. By investing in student and staff technology, teaching and learning applications, wireless infrastructure, cybersecurity, security systems and career and college readiness, we can provide our students with the best possible learning experiences and prepare them for success in the global digital transformation.

The digital transformation has permeated all aspects of modern society, making it imperative to prepare students for this digital era. Equipping them with digital skills, fostering global connectivity, enhancing learning experiences, promoting digital citizenship and bridging the digital divide are crucial steps toward preparing students for future success. By embracing the digital transformation in education, we empower students to become active participants in the increasingly digital world.