

Southwestern Central School Instructional Technology Plan



July 2022 – June 2025

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Introduction

The Southwestern Central School District is located on the west end of the city of Jamestown, New York. Included in the district are the villages of Lakewood and Celoron, the Town of Busti, rural areas, and the suburban area of West Ellicott. The district is comprised of three buildings: elementary, middle, and high school. All three buildings are all located on the same campus. There is an off-campus bus garage.

District Mission Statement

The mission of the Southwestern School District is to develop students' potential for positive contributions to society as self-sustaining individuals.

To accomplish this mission, the administration and staff will be models in the pursuit of excellence and will appropriate learning environments which encourage respect for self, others, school and community.

The Southwestern Central School District recognizes that technology is a valuable tool, which can be used to aid instruction at all levels. The district further recognizes that properly used, technology will help students acquire skills necessary to succeed in a digital world. To that end, the district strives to promote a climate that enables staff and students to use technology with proficiency. Recognizing the importance of technology, the Board of Education has established a technology goal for strategic planning purposes. The Board has committed itself to promoting integration/utilization of technology district-wide by overseeing the integration and use of technology in all areas including the business office, transportation, buildings and grounds, and most importantly the classrooms. They have further committed to encouraging the identification and pursuit of training opportunities for district employees.

Acknowledgements/Stakeholders

The Information Technology Department along with members of the community, administrative, educational, non-educational staff, and students have worked together to develop this plan and the district goals for the future. Several students, parents and community members shared ideas through a Thought Exchange. The results were analyzed and considered while developing this plan.

Barbara Carlson	Business and Special Education Teacher
Scot Cooper	High School Principal
Michelle Cresanti	High School English Teacher; Parent
Maureen Donahue	Superintendent
Carol Jablonski	English Language Learner Teacher
Matthew Kindberg	Assistant Principal
Braley Lachner	Student
Matthew Langworthy	Elementary Principal
Amy McCloskey	Director of Pupil Services
Molly Moore	Director of Instructional Services
Annette Rhebergen	Business Administrator
Aaron Rounds	Technology Integrator
Richard Rybicki	Middle School Principal
Michael Seastedt	Personal Computer Specialist
Wendy Storms	Administrative Aide
Cody Whitton	Elementary School Librarian
Board of Education	

Vision and Goals

Technology Vision Statement

The Southwestern Central School District is committed to promoting integration/utilization of technology district-wide by overseeing the integration and use of technology in all areas including the business office, transportation, buildings and grounds, and the classrooms.

Southwestern Central School realizes that in order to better prepare our students for the future, the integration of technology is essential to support the development, implementation, and delivery of curriculum at all levels (K-12) of the educational program. Technology means more than computers and software; it is a process that allows students and staff to be able to find, extract, and apply needed information in an organized manner.

Technology Goals

The Southwestern Central School District Mission Statement, Educational Goals, and Graduate Outcomes, as approved by the Board of Education, were used as the basis for the development of the above vision statement, the overall technology plan, and the goals that follow. Additionally, the goals contained within this technology plan address objectives developed by the Board of Education, who established district goals for the purposes of strategic planning. Our broad district technology goals include:

- To integrate technology into teaching/learning in order to meet school improvement goals which align to state standards
- To use technology to support district mission statement
- To provide quality, ongoing staff development in the area of technology
- To strive to keep technology current

Strategic Technology Planning

The Southwestern Instructional Technology Committee was strategic in the development of this plan. The administrative team met to discuss the Instructional Technology Plan and make recommendations for committee members in order to include a well-rounded committee. The following stakeholder groups are represented: Administration, Teaching Staff, Technology Staff, Related Service Providers, Students, Parents. Planning meetings included the following dates in 2021: 9/14, 9/30, 10/13, 10/20, 10/27.

In addition to the committee, the district utilized *ThoughtExchange* to gather information from Community Members, Staff, and Students grades 6- 12. 180 participants provided feedback that was reviewed and discussed in the Instructional Technology Plan Committee meetings. Committee members used *Microsoft Teams* to communicate and share documents. In-person meetings were scheduled on a weekly basis. The Instructional Technology Committee determined three leaders to break out and review *Thoughtexchange* data and seek feedback from stakeholders after determining general areas to focus our goals. The committee then reconvened, shared input and discussed the goals. The draft of the technology plan was updated and provided to the committee for on-going review and editing. Our goal was to have the first draft completed to be submitted to our Regional Information Center support by the second week of November 2021. Now that the plan is state approved, we will reconvene in July 2022 to begin work on goal achievement.

The three goals identified in the previous Tech plan included the following: instructional staff would demonstrate proficiency in current technology through appropriate professional development, a k-12 technology skills scope and sequence would be identified, and technology would be used to strengthen relationships between the school, students, and community. One goal that will continue to need to be

addressed is the k-12 technology skills scope and sequence. While the skills have been identified, we now must work to plan explicitly how each skill is addressed at each grade level. We will also continue to offer personalized professional development needs in regard to technology. Finally, we made significant gains in using technology to strengthen relationships between the school and community. For example, during the pandemic the district purchased *Remind* and offers professional development for any teacher that needs support. We also incorporated activities such as Makerspace events for families in the evenings and *STEAMwar* events.

Response to COVID Pandemic

One positive aspect of the COVID pandemic was our need to develop educationally sound asynchronous and hybrid learning styles. Southwestern already had 1:1 laptops deployed, and students grades 5-12 were taking devices home daily for two years. When the school shut down in March 2020, the staff spent two days working on updating *Microsoft Teams* and learned how to use *Zoom* to allow for virtual classrooms. We provided professional development in *Nearpod*, *Teams*, and participated in a training offered through Erie 2 BOCES called *Best Practices in Online Learning*. Feedback from parents and students indicated *Teams* was a significant improvement and should continue when school re-opened to help students and teachers stay organized. Teachers grades 3-12 now consistently use *Teams* as a method to organize materials and coursework. We will continue to offer professional development on an as-needed basis annually. We will also continue to provide students with orientation sessions at the middle and high school annually on the use of *Office 365* programs.

In June 2021, Southwestern participated in the *Modern Classrooms Summer Institute* offered through BOCES (<https://www.modernclassrooms.org>) which utilizes digital platforms and video instruction for students. *Modern Classrooms* offers personalized, differentiated learning for students. We currently have 24 teachers in our district that were trained and are using the approaches of *Modern Classrooms* this school year. We plan to continue to provide support for these teachers and are encouraging them to share results with colleagues. One positive aspect of the *Modern Classrooms* model is that students who are quarantined can keep up with instruction, because that instruction is provided through the teacher-made video.

In addition, we purchased and provided professional development on the use of *Remind* as an online method of communication to our families. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and is something we will continue post-pandemic.

In surveying our families, we were fortunate to verify about 95-97% of our families have reliable internet. We offered mobile hotspots for families, although we only had one family borrow one for a short period of time. We also installed hotspots in our school parking lots so families could come and update school devices and utilize the district's Wi-Fi if need be.

Professional Development Plan

Southwestern provides personalized professional development opportunities for all staff. Several options for professional development in the area of instructional technology are provided. The district currently employs two Teachers on Special Assignment as Technology Integrators. These TOSAs support teachers by providing professional development and collaborating with staff on instructional technology needs.

In addition, Southwestern participates in many professional development opportunities provided by Erie 1 and Erie 2 BOCES. For example, members participate in BOCES Technology Consortium meetings, attend Computer Science Forums, and attend NYSCATE conferences and workshops. Teachers are

incorporating differentiated instruction utilizing technology. Surveys are distributed on a bi-annual basis to seek input from teachers regarding technology professional development needs. Last year, teachers asked for trainings using *Nearpod* and methods for recording videos. Those trainings were provided in small group and in individualized sessions. Southwestern utilizes Title IIa funds to provide support for instructional technology trainings based on teacher request and need.

Instructional Technology Goals

Southwestern’s instructional technology goals will align with state and national standards for using advanced technology to improve student achievement and are as follows:

1. Southwestern will provide quality professional development in instructional technology in the areas of *Teams*, *Remind*, *SmartBoard*, and Synchronous/Asynchronous learning. Professional development will be provided or available to all teachers, students, teacher aides, administrators, and school community
2. Southwestern will teach k-12 computer science and digital fluency standards, utilizing the developed curriculum map that was completed in July 2021. The curriculum map includes the five concept areas (Impacts of Computing, Computational Thinking, Networks and Systems Design, Cybersecurity, and Digital Literacy).
3. Southwestern will create and support Makerspace/STEAM Labs in each of the district's libraries that foster an inclusive 21st century learning environment. Students will be challenged to create and learn through hands-on experiences building flexibility, collaboration, adaptability, information literacy, technology literacy, productivity, social skills, leadership, and initiative skills

Strategies, Action Plans, and Timeline for Implementing Goals

Goal #1				
Southwestern will provide quality professional development in instructional technology in the areas of <i>Teams</i> , <i>Remind</i> , <i>SmartBoard</i> , and Synchronous/Asynchronous learning. Professional development will be provided or available to all teachers, students, teacher aides, administrators and school community.				
Action Steps	Description	Person(s) Responsible	Anticipated Completion Date	Anticipated Cost
Planning	A survey will be conducted to see what areas of Professional Development need to be developed.	Director of Instructional Services	July 27, 2022	\$0
Collaboration	Based on data from staff, professional development topics will be determined and appropriate instructors will be selected	Teachers on Special Assignment	September 7, 2022	\$1000
Professional Development	Professional Development opportunities will be offered and continually monitored for success	Director of Instructional Services	June 27, 2025	\$20,000
Evaluation	Results of professional development will be continuously evaluated and adjusted as needed.	Director of Instructional Services; Teachers on Special Assignment	July 1, 2025	\$6000
Goal #2				
Southwestern will teach k-12 computer science and digital fluency standards, utilizing the developed curriculum map that was completed in July 2021. The curriculum map includes the five concept areas (Impacts of Computing, Computational Thinking, Networks and Systems Design, Cybersecurity, and Digital Literacy).				
Action Steps	Description	Person(s) Responsible	Anticipated Completion Date	Anticipated Cost
Planning	A grade level standards guide will be created	Teacher on Special Assignment	July 29, 2022	\$2000

Collaboration	Teachers will determine how and when the guide will be completed at each grade level	Director of Instructional Services; Grade level and department chairpersons	August 31, 2022	\$2000
Implementation	Every 10 weeks, the standards guide will be reviewed by grade level chairpersons to evaluate pacing	Teachers on Special Assignment	July 1, 2023	\$1000
Evaluation	Annually, the curriculum guide will be reviewed over the summer to determine if there needs to be amendments to the curriculum guides.	Director of Instructional Services; principals, teachers	August 31, 2023	\$1000

Goal #3

Southwestern will create and support Makerspace/STEAM Labs in each of the district's libraries that foster an inclusive 21st century learning environment. Students will be challenged to create and learn through hands-on experiences building flexibility, collaboration, adaptability, information literacy, technology literacy, productivity, social skills, leadership, and initiative skills.

Action Steps	Description	Person(s) Responsible	Anticipated Completion Date	Anticipated Cost
Purchasing	Library media specialists will develop curriculum relevant to Makerspace	Library Media Specialists/ Technology Integrators	August 30, 2022	\$5000
Budgeting	The district will evaluate available machines and purchase any additional equipment or supplies needed	Director of Technology; Business Official	September 30, 2022	\$9000
Learning Spaces	The Makerspace will be set up and teachers and students will be trained on proper use of equipment	Technology Integrators; Library Media Specialists	October 28, 2022	\$3000
Staffing	Usage of Makerspace areas will be available for all content courses in each building	Building Principals	June 26, 2025	\$18,5034

Goal Measuring and Evaluation

Goal #1 will be evaluated by conducting an evaluation during each training, using the platform that is being taught (e.g., use *Nearpod* for the assessment for a training about *Nearpod*). 100% of all participants completing the training will be able to complete the platform-specific evaluation. At the end of each school year, a survey will be administered to see how the technology is being used and if the training was successful. The survey will include a Likert scale from 1-4, with 1 being the participant did not successfully utilize the technology and 4 equals the participant has fully implemented the platform in their learning and teaching. We will consider the goal successfully met when 80% of participants rate the survey as a “3” or “4”.

Goal #2 will be evaluated by creating a curriculum guide for each grade level band. The guide will include the standards taught, how they were taught, and if the standard was effectively covered. Teachers will collaborate to complete the guide at each grade level. At the end of each school year, the instructional technology committee will review the guides for each grade level and make recommendations for the following school year. A report will be created and shared with administrative and teaching staff.

Goal #3 will be evaluated by creating a survey for staff, students, and families to complete to evaluate the Makerspace/STEAM programming. Data will be reviewed by the library media specialists, technology integrators and administration to help determine what changes need to be made. We will consider the goal met when 80% of survey participants rate the programming as a "3" or "4" out of a four-point Likert scale on satisfaction rate.

NYSED Initiatives Alignment

1. **Instructional technology will serve as a part of a comprehensive and sustained effort to support rigorous academic standards attainment and performance improvement for students:** Southwestern students have been issued 1:1 student laptops for the past several years. Students are also given and taught how to use Office 365. Southwestern has employed two Teachers on Special Assignment to serve as Technology Integrators. They are available to help students and teachers incorporate technology into their learning and teaching. For example, our technology integrators are available to work with core teachers in our Makerspaces to enhance or deepen the learning. Last school year, an English teacher incorporated a 3-D printer project to design and create a symbol that represents themselves to emphasize a part of their English curriculum. In fifth grade science, the students created a "Shark Tank" idea and presented their product to a panel to address water conservation in our area. Our teachers understand the importance of using technology to deepen learning, not just to use it as a gimmick or organizational method.

All teachers are offered technology professional development tailored to their needs. We also offer 1:1 time with our technology integrators to help teachers build upon their repertoire. All teachers have been trained in Office 365 and are expected to use *Teams*. Students use technology daily to demonstrate their understanding of skills and concepts. Students use *Teams* to complete assignments and participate in learning experiences (e.g., *Nearpod*). Our teachers are increasingly offering students choices to demonstrate understanding. For example, a social studies teacher allowed students to create a video in lieu of an in-person speech. Many students have the choice to complete work on paper or on their devices, with offering audio files as an option instead of a written format.

2. **Explain the strategies the district plans to implement to address the need to provide equitable learning “everywhere, all the time” (National Technology Plan). Include both short and long-term solutions, such as device access, internet access, human capacity, infrastructure, partnerships, etc.:** Southwestern provides 1:1 laptops to all students grades 1-12, and students in pre-k and kindergarten have 1:1 iPads in the classroom. All devices are ready to be deployed to go home within one day; grades 4-12 currently take their devices home daily. Results from past digital equity surveys showed about 95% of our families report consistent reliable internet access. The district has purchased mobile hotspot devices that can be loaned to families as needed.

Southwestern updates and maintains our internet infrastructure through eRate funds and other resources to keep our broadband robust enough for all of our 1:1 devices. We also employ two Teacher's on Special Assignments as technology integrators. These positions have been maintained for several years and the long-term plan keeps the technology integrators indefinitely. We also employ technology specialists through our local BOCES and hire student interns to assist the technology department over the summer.

3. **Describe how instruction using technology is differentiated to support the individual learning needs of students with disabilities:** Technology is a means for all students to achieve equitable access to instruction, materials, and assessments. Collaboration between the technology department and Pupil Personnel Services is paramount in making sure that our students with disabilities in the district receive the appropriate technology to enable them to have access to instruction, materials and assessments. The Director of Pupil Personnel Services, as

well as other administrators in the district, have been involved in the decision-making process regarding appropriate equipment and technology resources for students with disabilities.

Southwestern's technology plan and programming offer differentiation. First, we provide necessary assistive technology for students with disabilities. A multi-department approach is used to evaluate what device and applications are required based on the student's strengths and needs. For example, a student with dysgraphia needed specialized applications for both writing and math tasks. These applications were added to his school-issued 1:1 device to provide equal access to the curriculum.

Specialized software programs are used in our special education programming based on the recommendations from the special education provider. Some examples of the recommended software programs being used include *Proloquo2go* and *Touchchat* for communication needs. Other examples include *Wonderworks* and *Reading A-Z*; reading intervention programs used in our self-contained special education classrooms.

In our special education classrooms, teachers utilize *Smartboards* and specialized applications to engage students in interactive lessons. The use of the *Smartboard* promotes social and academic interactions with students' peers and increases engagement for our students with Autism. Our special education classrooms are also equipped with sound-field systems with teacher microphones to assist students with auditory processing or attentional needs. Teachers utilize the *Teams* and *OneNote* technology platform to provide accommodations such as reading out loud (text-to-speech or teacher made videos) and speech-to-text.

Another way to increase differentiation at Southwestern is the use of our Makerspace equipment and spaces in each building. Our STEAM equipment provides opportunities for hands-on learning and kinesthetic opportunities. Our technology integrators work collaboratively with general education, special education, and service providers to assist students in their projects and learning.

Finally, the district uses technology to assist students with testing and programming accommodations. For example, some students need access to a calculator while taking an assessment. In addition to the physical calculator, the school also provides a licensed online calculator for students with that accommodation. Other examples of technology used for testing accommodations include typing assessments or using text-to-speech or speech-to-text.

Parent Communications and Community Relations

The Southwestern Central School District recognizes that parental communication and community relations are an integral part of the technology plan. The following strategies will be used to promote parental involvement and community relations to increase communication:

1. The technology plan will be placed on the school district's website. A hard copy will be provided upon request. Per CIPA initiative, Internet Safety Policy will be reviewed and addressed at an organizational school board meeting and is included in school board policy.
2. Parent and community stakeholders were included as participants in the development and implementation of this current technology plan.
3. A school district website will be maintained to keep the community apprised of upcoming events, district news, and information relevant to the individual buildings. Board policies, NSYED

required plans and notifications, and important district notifications will also be included on this site.

4. Teachers will be encouraged to establish and maintain a communication platform that parents can access for individual classroom information (e.g., *Remind*).
5. Staff will have e-mail capabilities that will enable communication with parents.
6. The district also offers parents the ability to view grades and attendance through our Parent Portal via our student information system, PowerSchool for students grades 6-12.
7. Our district also utilizes a parent messaging system, School Messenger, which allows rapid distribution of information throughout the district in an effort to keep parents informed.
8. A district newsletter, *The Spotlight*, is mailed out to district residents twice per year and also placed on the district website twice per year in order to communicate with the community and highlight student and district accomplishments.
9. Parent-teacher conferences will be held on a regular basis throughout the school year in order for parents to receive information on their child's progress as well as information on curricular expectations.
10. The district will use social media (Twitter and Facebook) and electronic newsletters in order to communicate with stakeholders.

Technical Support

In addition to the Director of Instructional Services, of which Instructional Technology is a significant portion of job duties, the District employs a Personnel Computer Specialist and an Administrative Aide. The District also participates in the Erie 1 BOCES Field Technical Services and has 0.4 FTE (2 Days) Net Manager and the equivalent of 1.0 FTE (5 Days) Microcomputer Technical Support. The District maintains two Technology Integrator (Teacher's on Special Assignment) on a full-time basis. Student interns and summer student employees are also utilized whenever possible.

The District uses School Dude IT Direct Help Desk Management system to allow users to report technical problems. This system reports the status of reported problems back to the user so they can track the progress of each item submitted.