Sycamore Community
School District 427

Strategic Technology Plan
2024-27

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EMPOWERING ALL LEARNERS TO SUCCEED IN *THEIR* WORLD

Sycamore Community School District 427's mission statement, Empowering All Learners to Succeed in Their World, was the result of conversations with community members, staff and students during the district's first strategic design in 2001. All of these stakeholders were proud of our past and our promising future. In particular, students wanted their voices heard, which is why the word "their" is emphasized in the statement. The word "learners" appears in the statement because learning is the district's main focus.

OUR CORE VALUES

HONESTY

Honest people are truthful and sincere.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthy people keep promises, fulfill commitments, and abide by agreements.

INTEGRITY

People with integrity adhere to ethical principles and soundness of character.

EQUALITY

Equitable people believe in inclusiveness and embrace diversity.

EMPATHY

Empathetic people strive to compassionately understand and share in the experiences of others.

RESPECT

Respectful people acknowledge, understand, and support the rights of others to express their beliefs.

CITIZENSHIP

Citizens are lifelong learners who contribute to the community (local/global) in active, positive, and creative ways, and encourage the participation of others.

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Digital citizens embrace our core values regarding all technology uses. They reflect before engaging.
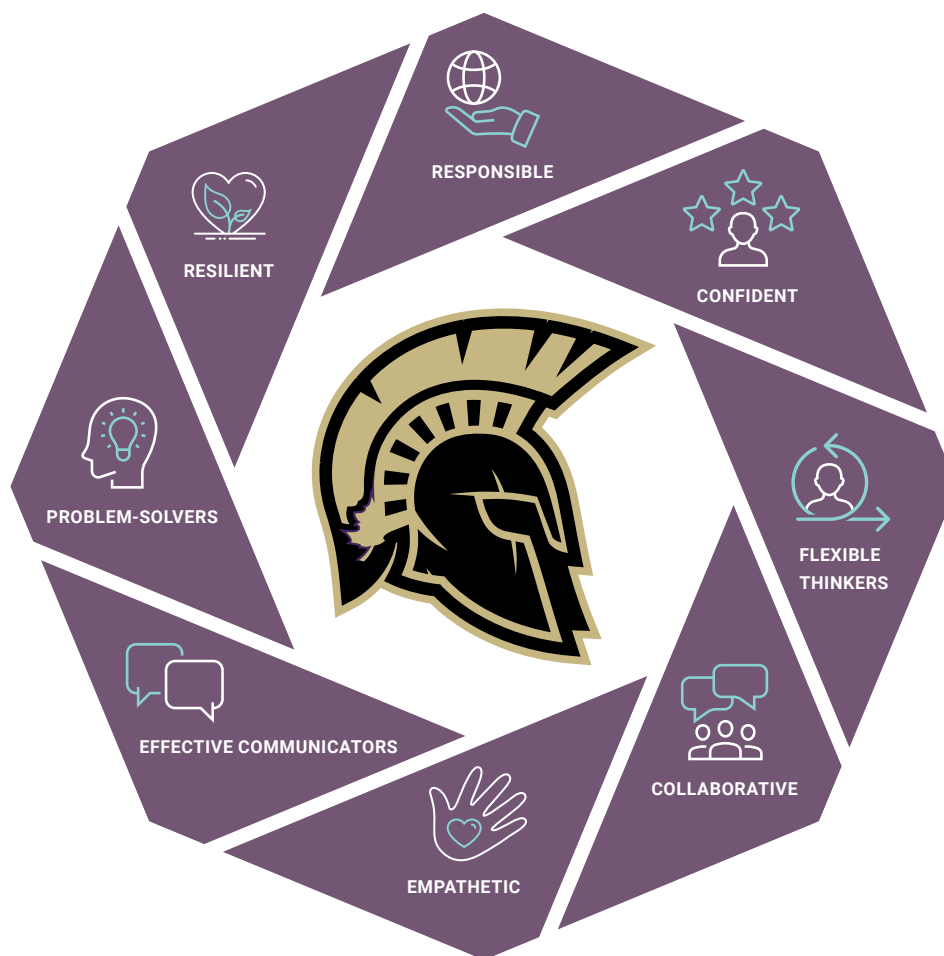
RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible people anticipate and accept the consequences of their actions.

COLLABORATION

Collaborative people create constructive relationships, and actively participate with others in sharing information and ideas toward a common goal.

PORTRAIT OF A *SPARTAN*

PROBLEM-SOLVERS
Evaluating information, utilizing available resources, identifying potential strategies and independently taking steps toward solving problems

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS
Communicating effectively through a variety of modes while understanding that good listening is essential

EMPATHETIC
Seeking to understand the experiences, perspectives, and needs of others and navigating relationships with generosity and patience

FLEXIBLE THINKERS
Reflecting on previous learning to adjust to new conditions, unpredictable situations, and different roles to overcome challenges

COLLABORATIVE
Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills to work with others and reach common goals while understanding that learning is a social process

CONFIDENT
Having confidence in the ability to communicate, learn, and build relationships, especially when faced with new or difficult challenges

RESILIENT
Overcoming obstacles and understanding that learning from mistakes is an essential part of the growth process

RESPONSIBLE
Exhibiting Sycamore's core values in decision making and interactions with others

SYCAMORE CUSD 427 TECHNOLOGY GOALS & ACTION STEPS

TECHNOLOGY GOAL

Cultivate an environment where technology is utilized to enhance student learning and facilitate future success.

TECHNOLOGY OBJECTIVES

- Ensure Sycamore students are prepared for their future as both consumers and creators of technology.
- Maintain a safe environment where technology and innovation promote learning, accessibility, and equity.
- Provide ongoing training and support that leverages technology to create a learner-centered environment.

TECHNOLOGY ACTION STEPS (2024 - 2027)

- Increase online, self-paced training options for staff on various technology tools
- Improve the onboarding process as it relates to technology for new faculty and staff
- Create a Family Technology Training program
- Develop a Technology Adoption Framework

INTRODUCTION

Sycamore Community School District 427 realizes the importance of technology skills and access so students are prepared to thrive in the digital age. Technology is rapidly evolving; therefore, the goals, purposes, and functions of the technology we use in our district are our focus, as specific devices and tools may change.

The goal of technology use in our schools is to support existing learning objectives. Technology tools supplement and enhance existing learning opportunities while also helping reach technology-specific objectives to create digitally literate graduates.

This Strategic Technology Plan is a framework intended to increase transparency regarding technology planning, use, and purpose within our district. It will serve as a working document to be updated and reviewed by the Director of Instructional Technology and the District Technology Advisory Committee. Progress toward objectives will be evaluated annually by these individuals and communicated to community members.

CURRICULUM

Curricular resources are increasingly becoming web-based or otherwise technology-reliant. Students require skills to access and navigate these resources effectively. Furthermore, infrastructure and hardware must be capable of running all programs necessary for student learning.

The district will continue to support any technology-based curricular programs. These types of programs frequently create opportunities for individualized and personalized learning for students. In some cases, textbooks and similar resources are now housed online. In other cases, web-based programs are used for remediation, enrichment, and customization.

The district will utilize a Learning Management System (LMS) to prepare students for future endeavors involving an LMS as well as to house learning and teaching materials, tools, and resources. This type of system helps students organize and navigate online resources required for their courses.

All curricular programs that require technology also rely on staff and students' ability to utilize them. Professional development is vital to the successful implementation of these programs and is discussed in further detail below.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sycamore CUSD 427 staff are an integral part of any initiative or objective within our organization. Therefore, ongoing training and support are vital components of a successful technology plan.

We believe in learner-centered practices not only for our students but also for our staff. Each member of our staff comes to us with different skills and areas of expertise related to technology. Therefore, individualized approaches will be prioritized within the professional development structure.

Technology training will include:
- In-Person Professional Development Sessions
- Live Virtual Professional Development Sessions
- Online, Self-Paced Training
- Instructional Coaching and Technology Coaching

DEVICES

All students will be provided with a one-to-one device that is accessible to their individual needs. This may include specialized devices for students with disabilities. The district will ensure equity and access through its device selection process.

STUDENT TECHNOLOGY TRAINING

Students need technology skills to successfully navigate both their current education and future opportunities, whether that be college or career, in an age where technology saturates our environment. Sycamore CUSD 427 realizes the importance of helping our students gain technology skills appropriate to their age and abilities. Many of our resources and learning activities include the use of technology; therefore, technology skills are woven throughout our content area curricula. In addition, the district offers experiences at each grade band to provide targeted support for specific technology skills while also considering appropriate use and time spent based on age, physical abilities, and other contributing factors. All of these experiences integrate to follow the Computer Literacy Knowledge and Skill Continuum.

Specific technology training is provided in technology courses, computer science courses, and through content-area curriculum at all grade levels throughout the district. The curriculum encompasses foundational computer skills, online applications, computer science, problem-solving skills, and digital citizenship. Foundational computer skills include navigating physical devices, troubleshooting, and keyboarding. Online applications include word processing, data collection and analysis, digital art and design, and multimedia presentations. Computer science and problem-solving skills are explored through the engineering design process and computer coding.

Content-area courses also provide frequent opportunities for students to learn how to use specific hardware and software. At the middle and high school levels, many elective courses provide students with opportunities to learn and use discipline-specific applications that are utilized in the workforce. This training helps prepare students for future careers in these fields.

Standards used to guide technology training in the curriculum include: Illinois Computer Science, Next Generation Science, International Society for Technology in Education, and Common Core State Standards. The curriculum also aligns with the Illinois State Board of Education's Computer Literacy Knowledge and Skill Development Continuum.

FAMILY TECHNOLOGY TRAINING

Sycamore CUSD 427 greatly values the role of families in students' learning. The district utilizes several programs and platforms that can serve as helpful tools and resources for families; however, some family members may require training to successfully navigate these digital systems and fully benefit from the wide range of features they offer.

One of the objectives laid out in this plan is to create a Family Technology Training program. The goal of this program is to provide training and resources to families to support our district's various technology platforms so that they can more fully participate in their student's education and be better informed about their student's educational progress and needs.

SAFETY & SECURITY

Student safety is of utmost importance. Digital resources and internet usage present risks for students and their data. Therefore, the district will work to create safe environments for students to learn to navigate technology as well as training in Digital Citizenship. The district protects student data through many means including closely following state and federal guidance and laws including but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule (COPPA), and the Student Online Personal Protection Act (SOPPA).

WEB FILTERING

The district employs web filtering tools for both students and staff in order to maintain safety and security for our users and network. The first method of web filtering is a network firewall and content filter while on campus. The second method is a web monitoring program used to detect any safety or wellness concerns and keep students on-task while they utilize district technological devices or district-provided accounts.

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Digital citizenship, one of our district's core values, encompasses responsible and ethical use of technology. It is crucial for students to understand their own digital footprint as well as the consequences of their online actions especially as they move into a digital world. Each school in the district educates its students on digital citizenship through technology courses, content-area courses, whole-school presentations, and more.

ACCEPTABLE USE

All device and internet users in Sycamore CUSD 427 are required to comply with staff or student acceptable use policies. These documents are designed to inform users of how devices should be used and which behaviors are not tolerable. Updated acceptable use policies and a student Chromebook Handbook can be accessed on the district website: syc427.org.

EQUITY

Sycamore CUSD 427 is committed to providing inclusive and equitable access to technology for all students, including those who do not have access to a device at home. The one-to-one program ensures every student has a district-issued device to use during the school day. Middle and high school students frequently require a device at home to complete assignments and other tasks for school; therefore, they are able to take their devices home daily. Additionally, policies are in place to allow younger students to take home devices in circumstances where this would increase or provide equitable access. The district provides hotspots to be borrowed for home use to families without internet access.

FUTURE FOCUS

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial intelligence (AI) is gaining momentum and has become increasingly available to internet users. The district continues to uphold a high standard of academic integrity which includes strong policies against plagiarism. Policies and handbooks have been updated to remind our school community that passing off any work that you did not write or create as your own is plagiarism, including when that work was written or created by AI. The district will continue to adjust policies and provide training as needed to keep up with emerging technologies, including AI.

DEVICE PLANNING

Digital citizenship, one of our district's core values, encompasses responsible and ethical use of technology. It is crucial for students to understand their own digital footprint as well as the consequences of their online actions especially as they move into a digital world. Each school in the district educates its students on digital citizenship through technology courses, content-area courses, whole-school presentations, and more.

ACQUIRING AND EVALUATING PROGRAMS AND TOOLS

The landscape for technology tools and programs is constantly growing. Sycamore CUSD 427 is committed to spending our funds wisely. Therefore, it is vital to create a framework that aids in evaluating both new and existing programs to determine their effectiveness and potential as they fit within our goals and values.

One of the objectives laid out in this plan is to develop a Technology Adoption Framework to guide decisions related to acquiring, keeping, and discontinuing the use of technology tools and programs.

TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Sycamore CUSD 427 has formed a Technology Advisory Committee that is comprised of volunteers from across the district including support staff, teachers, administrators, and parents. The purpose of the committee is advisory. Members will share their unique perspectives from their own positions and experiences, which serve to help create future plans, find areas for growth, and develop technology goals for the district.