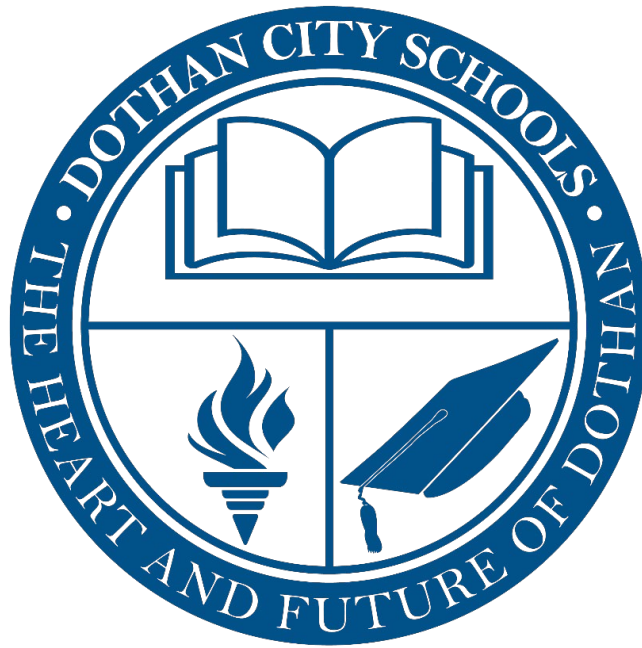


# **Dothan City Schools**

## **District Technology Plan**

**2024-2025**



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### **2024-2025**

Updated: October 11, 2024

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# 1) Executive Summary

## a) Description of the School District/School

Located in Southeast Alabama, DCS serves more than 8,400 Pre-Kindergarten through 12th-grade students throughout Dothan, Alabama. 19 schools comprise the district, including 2 Pre-Kindergarten centers, 11 elementary schools including one special admission math and science school, one school that exclusively serves 6th grade, one middle school that serves grades 7-8, one 9th grade academy, one virtual school for grades 7-12, and one high school that serves grades 10-12, and two program sites dedicated to specialty education: one for students receiving alternative education and a career-technical education facility for grades 10-12. Each program seeks to develop engaging and meaningful opportunities for students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Kelly Springs Elementary, Beverlye Intermediate, Highlands Elementary, Heard Elementary, Selma Street Elementary, Girard Elementary, and Morris Slingsluff Elementary serve our students in K through 5th grade using a variety of hands-on lessons to engage students in work that is challenging, adventurous, and meaningful. Jerry Lee Faine Elementary serves students in Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade while Hidden Lake Primary serves our K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade students.

Carver School for Math, Science, and Technology is the system's Math, Science, and Technology School and heavily emphasizes investigation and discovery and seeks to prepare students for STEM-related college and career pathways. It retains a competitive admission policy, where students are accepted based on test scores. Carver MST serves Grades 3-6.

Dothan 6th grade Center is our newest school that now exclusively houses our 6th Grade students from across the district. Their focus is on fostering a nurturing and collaborative atmosphere where students thrive. With a dedication to integrating real-life connections, offering enriching learning experiences that equip our students with the essential skills for success.

Our Secondary Schools develop a diverse pipeline of students prepared for rigorous high school coursework and promote Advanced Placement courses so that more Alabama graduates will be prepared for college, the workforce, and life. Dothan Preparatory Academy serves our grades 7th through 8th, Carver 9th Grade Academy serves our 9th grade and Dothan High School serves our 10th through 12th grade. Dothan Tech serves as the career and technical school for students attending Dothan High, offering students opportunities in Automotive Repair, Health Sciences, and more.

Dothan City Virtual School provides a flexible and engaging virtual learning experience for motivated, independent learners in grades 7-12. Students may also participate in specialized courses at Dothan Tech or other DCS schools.

First Class Pre-Kindergarten is offered through Dothan City Early Education Center for children zoned for DCS. Dothan City Head Start Center provides services to DCS as well as Houston County Schools.

## b) Demographics

The percent of students receiving free and reduced lunches at each school is as follows: Beverly Intermediate School =87%, Carver 9th Grade Academy=72%, Carver School of Math, Science, and Technology=56%, Dothan City Virtual School=62%, Dothan High School=62%, Dothan Preparatory Academy=72%, Dothan City Early Education Center=51%, Faine Elementary School=98%, Dothan 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Center=80%, Girard Elementary School=92%, Head Start/Pre-K=84%, Heard Elementary School=68%, Hidden Lake Elementary School=84%, Highlands Elementary School=39%, Kelly Springs Elementary School=73%, Selma Elementary School=87%, and Slingluff Elementary School=87%.

There are 403 students in the district that are identified as English Language Learners. 17.6% of the district's students are identified as needing special education services. Dothan City Schools has a Pre-School/Head Start Program that serves approximately 507 children. There are 15 classes at the Head Start Center, one class in Rehobeth, one class in Webb, one class in Cottonwood, and one class in Ashford. The enrollment for Dothan City Schools has increased over the last five years. The enrollment for the 2020-2021 year was 7,891 students compared to the enrollment of 8,423 students in 2024-2025. The average daily attendance for the school system is over 95%. The Dothan City Schools system employs 1,192 people. There are 640 certified employees and 552 support staff employees.

Located in the southeastern part of Alabama, Houston County is in the heart of the state's Wiregrass region, which produces one-fourth of the nation's peanuts, rightly earning it the title of Peanut Capital of the World. Houston County was created by an act of the Alabama State Legislature on February 9, 1903, making it the newest of Alabama's 67 counties. Dothan is the largest city in Houston County and has served as the county seat since 1903. Dothan is a growing city, with a 2022 population of 71,235, showing an increase from 70,149 in 2020. It is the 7th largest city in Alabama. Spanning over 90 square miles, Dothan has a population density of 782 people per square mile. The average household income in Dothan is \$70,479, with a poverty rate of 18.81%. The median rental cost in recent years is \$751 per month, and the median house value is \$150,700. The racial composition of Dothan is 59.66% White, 34.52% Black or African American, 1.30% Asian, and 3.26% multiracial, while 3.57% of residents are Hispanic or Latino. The median age in Dothan is 39.6 years, 37.2 years for males, and 41.5 years for females. Educationally, 87.4% of residents aged 25 and older have a high school diploma, and 25.48% hold a bachelor's degree or higher, slightly above the Alabama state averages.

Dothan City Schools is ranked as one of the top employers in Houston County, ranking second just behind Southeast Health. Dothan offers a number of recreational opportunities to visitors. Citizens of Dothan and its visitors enjoy nationally recognized sports facilities such as Westgate Park, Westgate Softball Complex, Westgate Tennis Center, and Rotary Miracle Field. Dothan is home to the Future Masters' Golf Tournament and to the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trails' Highlands Oaks as well as the annual host to the Southern Regional Karate Championships. Landmark Park is a 100-acre living history farmstead circa 1890s that was typical to this area. Each Fall Dothan hosts the National Peanut Festival, paying tribute to the

area's contribution to the peanut industry. There are a number of other attractions in downtown Dothan. The Wiregrass Museum of Art features rotating exhibits of regional and national artists as well as a classroom/studio and a children's hands-on gallery. The downtown area offers motorists a pictorial history of the town through a number of colorful murals on various city buildings. The Dothan Opera House is an impressive Neoclassical Revival structure that dates from 1915. The Mule Marker in Poplar Head Park pays tribute to the animal that played a major role in the Wiregrass region's early development. Dothan City Schools has partnered with Wiregrass Foundation, a grassroots community group, to develop a co-owned strategic plan for excellence in education. Education is a shared responsibility among students, parents, schools, and the community. This reform effort seeks to unite all stakeholders in the common goal of transforming Dothan City Schools into institutions that prepare our youth for education after high school and for the world of work in the 21st century.

### **c) Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement**

Student achievement for students enrolled in Dothan City Schools has consistently been comparable to Alabama state average proficiency in Reading, Math, and Science as evidenced in the two-state assessments, ACAP (Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program). While enrollment has fluctuated within the three years, our students have maintained proficiency levels comparable to state averages and have adapted to remote/virtual learning utilizing various online platforms to support teaching and learning. Disaggregated data among the reporting subgroups reflect that there are significant gaps that are consistent within the three-year period. However, these gaps have narrowed over the past three-year period. As our instructional teams review the data and conduct needs assessments, we note that to truly reflect student knowledge, more training for students in the use of technology, particularly at the lower grade levels, needs to be addressed. Therefore, moving forward, the team members initiated a phased approach to addressing the following needs:

- to focus attention and implementation on equal access to devices and the internet; every classroom (interdisciplinary) addressing technical vocabulary; high-quality instruction and professional development in the form of a blended approach instructional model i.e., asynchronous and synchronous; ongoing communication plan with parents and stakeholders in utilizing digital resources.
- to monitor and manage ongoing online tutorial sessions created as professional development for educators.

## **d) District Vision and Mission Statement**

### **i) Mission Statement**

(1) C.A.R.E.S. "Communicate, Achieve, Relate, Engage, Succeed"

### **ii) Vision Statement**

(1) EMPOWER EVERYONE EVERYDAY

## **e) Additional Information**

Our Exceptional Student Services Department, as well as our Mental Health community leaders, have developed a school-based mental health program that provides on-site mental health service including preventative and crisis intervention. The Alabama Department of Mental Health and the Alabama Department of Education have identified the need for a greater integration of mental health services in public schools. There is an increasing concern about the growing number of children and adolescents who experience difficulties associated with the adverse effects of social and emotional disturbance. In school-age children and adolescents, unmet mental health needs can cause negative and oftentimes tragic long-term consequences. Those may include dropping out of school, substance abuse, a lack of vocational success, and an inability to live and function independently. Individual student records are confidential and information is not shared with school staff without parental consent. All services will be provided in a quiet, private, and confidential space in each school. Neither students nor parents will be billed for care.



## 2) Stakeholder Involvement

Our stakeholders were key administrative staff at the district level. Input was gathered electronically from the Curriculum Department, Health Services, Auxiliary Services, Special Education, ELL, Testing, Career Tech, Federal Programs, and Technology. The principals selected their respective representatives. These representatives communicated and worked collectively as needed on school technology plans. They referred to the district plan to help formulate their school plans.

The stakeholders included Jeremy Green (Director of Technology Services), Blair Peterman (Health Services), Sarahann Odom (ELL), Alicia Hales (Director of Special Education), Maria Johnson (Assistant Superintendent-Division of Instructional Services), Ryan Richards (Dothan High School Assistant Principal), Patrick Mallory (Chief Operations Officer), and Lee Jacobs (Assistant Superintendent-Division of Accountability/Federal Programs) to assemble the district technology plan. Each stakeholder was given the authority and responsibility to collaborate and provide input on a plan that we could attain and sustain.

The final District technology improvement plan will be assembled for reference by the individual school plans. The finalization of the school plans will take place after stakeholders refer to the district plan to ensure compliance and completeness. The final District plan will be emailed and posted electronically for review by all stakeholders.

## 4) Data Sources & Funding Sources

### a) Data Sources

- Compliance Monitoring Reports
- Continuous Improvement Plan
- Discipline and Attendance Reports
- Graduation Rates
- Inventory & Infrastructure Report - Fast and Easy Access to Network, and Availability of Technology
- Technology Program Audit, Etc.
- Alabama Educator Technology Survey

### b) Funding Sources

- Capital Improvement Fund
- Career Technical Funds
- General Fund
- Perkins
- Title I, Schoolwide
- Title III
- USAC Technology
- IDEA Funding (Federal)

## 5) Needs Assessment

### a) Technology Infrastructure - WAN, LAN, wireless access points, network switches, etc.

#### i) Needs

- Our district requires additional internet bandwidth to meet the increasing demands of a technology-driven educational environment. As education becomes more reliant on digital tools and resources, ensuring sufficient bandwidth is essential to support learning and administrative operations.
- We need to implement a comprehensive network equipment management system to ensure proactive monitoring, timely response, and effective recovery from equipment failures or operational errors.
- We need to implement a unified 'single pane of glass' administration system for our wireless access points and managed switches. This system will enable centralized monitoring, configuration backups, and streamlined approval processes for any configuration changes, ensuring enhanced control and efficiency across our network infrastructure.

#### ii) Strengths

- We have successfully implemented EDR (Endpoint Detection and Response), SIEM (Security Information and Event Management), and Syslog platforms across our network, providing both proactive and reactive responses to security threats and vulnerabilities on servers and workstations. In addition, we have deployed Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) for all user email accounts and added an extra layer of MFA for computer logins for administrators and selected users with higher-than-normal access privileges, further strengthening our security framework.
- We have established a robust and diverse backup and disaster recovery system, utilizing multi-site backups through Grandfather-Father-Child and 3-2-1 backup strategies. This ensures data redundancy, protection, and availability across multiple locations, significantly enhancing our ability to recover quickly and effectively in the event of data loss or disaster.
- We have deployed Next-Generation Firewalls at all campus locations, the data center, and the core network. These firewalls protect key infrastructure subnets while offering dynamic content filtering based on user, security group, and/or device. This implementation strengthens our network security by allowing granular control over access and content while safeguarding critical systems.

These strengths and needs were identified by school walk-through, feedback from users and administration, security audits, and inventory reports

## **b) Technology Inventory - fast and easy access to technology**

### **i) Inventory Strengths**

- All student Chromebooks have been refreshed within the last 12 months, ensuring that every student in the district has a reliable and functional device. This initiative supports seamless classroom instruction with minimal disruptions, allowing students and teachers to focus on education without technical obstacles.
- All Windows and Chrome devices in our district are monitored to ensure that they receive the most recent security updates, application updates, malicious activity, and performance through Microsoft SCCM, Google Workspace Admin Console, and Sophos Central Security.

### **ii) Inventory Needs**

- We need to integrate our desktop and laptop inventory into the technology department's existing system. Currently, we maintain a separate inventory for these capital fixed assets, but by consolidating all devices—including Chromebooks—we can store comprehensive information on each device. This will enable granular reporting and improve our planning processes.
- Our district is in need of an automated reporting system to support the 5-year device refresh lifecycle. This system will assist district and school administrators in planning by identifying which devices need to be upgraded each year, ensuring that all devices remain current and fully functional. This proactive approach will improve the management of technology assets and prevent disruptions in the learning environment due to outdated equipment.
- All wireless access points across the district will need to be replaced within the next 1-2 years, as they will soon no longer receive support or updates from the manufacturer. This lack of support will make it difficult to repair or replace faulty devices. Since the majority of student devices connect via Wi-Fi, maintaining a fully operational and secure wireless network is critical to the success of our educational environment.

These strengths and needs were identified by school walk-throughs, surveys, and inventory reports.

**c) Student Learning - subject area processes and content; 21st C. skills and dispositions to ensure school, career, and life success**

**i) Needs**

- In-house or State developed technology training for grades K-8 with the corresponding rubric
- More concept-oriented technology training instead of keystroke-oriented teaching to prepare for changes in technology, along with hands-on, small-group instruction
- More technology application and integration into the core curriculum

**ii) Strengths**

- Students are consistently challenged and encouraged to utilize technology to complete assignments within course standards. Students are assigned online learning paths based on their benchmark assessment results.
- Our technology training addresses life skills and CCRS standards.
- Edgenuity and ACCESS online curriculum as well as other district-wide applications are being used across all grade levels for remediation, acceleration, and to create individual learning paths for students to use attending class in the traditional brick-and-mortar setting or virtually.

These strengths and needs were identified by surveys and tech program audits.

## **d) Professional Learning Program - Teachers, Staff, Leaders, Community**

### **i) Needs**

- Technology Instructional coaches for sustained relevant technology PD in the elementary and secondary levels.
- More technology PD for administrators so they can make wiser purchasing decisions and better evaluate technology usage.
- We need to fill the position of Technology Integration Specialist to provide dynamic professional development for faculty and staff. This role will focus on district-approved technology and address specific needs or weaknesses identified by faculty and staff. By doing so, we can enhance educators' skills and improve the effective integration of technology into the learning environment.

### **ii) Strengths**

- District funds are used for professional development to develop the use of Studies Weekly and other similar platforms to meet standards-based instruction.
- We have used a collaboration product for delivery of PD throughout the District.
- Principals are being encouraged to use the train-the-trainer model for their staff.

These strengths and needs were identified by surveys.

**e) Teacher - Teaching - how teachers use technology to teach as well as require students to use technology to learn**

**i) Needs**

- More collaboration between classrooms that extend beyond building borders to emulate the business world.
- More use of State & locally provided resources such as ALEX, ACCESS, IXL, AVL, and APT+.
- More LMS-based classes designed and maintained by teachers within our District for students to access anytime, anywhere

**ii) Strengths**

- Teachers receive training and encouragement to teach using a blended environment.
- Interactive flat panels installed in almost every classroom in the district.
- Teachers and students are encouraged to use Web 2.0 collaboration tools like Google Docs, sheets, etc.

These strengths and needs were identified by surveys.

**f) Teacher - Productivity - how teachers use technology for increased productivity**

**i) Needs**

- Need teachers to embrace and nurture an environment that supports innovative uses of technology.
- Teachers meet local, State, and national technology standards.
- Teachers appropriately and regularly assign learning activities that integrate the use of technology tools.

**ii) Strengths**

- Teachers use technology to gather and analyze data for improving student achievement.
- Educators will foster and nurture an environment that supports innovative uses of technology.
- Teachers are actively supporting technology PD to enhance their productivity.

These strengths and needs were identified by surveys.

## **g) School Leaders - Productivity - administrators use of technology for increased productivity**

### **i) Needs**

- Administrators meet local, state, and national standards for technology integration.
- More technology PD for administrative staff.
- Administrators use a variety of evaluation data to make decisions related to technology.

### **ii) Strengths**

- Administrators use technology regularly to gather and analyze data to assess instructional effectiveness
- Administrators use technology to communicate with stakeholders at the local, District, and State levels.
- Administrators are mandating the use of technology tools within their authority

These strengths and needs were identified by surveys.

## **6) Professional Learning**

We encourage the "train-the-trainer" approach in our District for professional development. We try to use face-to-face onsite training, when possible, with a variety of trainers including in-house staff, vendors, and third-party trainers when necessary. Administrators are encouraged to participate in technology training to help them evaluate the effectiveness of teachers using technology. Teachers are encouraged to aid in technology integration with a focus on classroom use of Chromebooks in grades K-12.

## **7) Inventory**

### **a) 2024-2025 District Technology Inventory.**

- i) I certify that I have attached the Technology LEA Inventory.**



## 8) Infrastructure

### a) WAN Infrastructure.

All networked devices are managed and password-protected. We provide 1Gbps fiber connection from the Central Office to all schools. We have a 10Gbps link incoming to the Central Office to handle school traffic.

### b) LAN Infrastructure.

We use Ruckus switches throughout our District including all remote locations both instructional and non-instructional facilities. We provide a 1Gbps connectivity to all computers through copper and/or fiber connections within the schools. We have over 35 virtual servers at the Central Office providing centralized access to the Internet, email, student information systems, and common classroom and clerical applications.

### c) Connectivity and Bandwidth.

The Central Office is connected to all schools by a 10Gbps fiber-optics backbone with a 1Gbps fiber link to each school. All non-instructional facilities are also connected by 1Gbps lines to a central communications cloud that connects to the Central Office by fiber-optic cable to handle the combined loads. We have upgraded to Ruckus switches throughout the district. We have about 35 virtual servers at the Central Office providing Internet proxy access, student information systems, common classroom apps, and clerical applications.

### d) Internet Access

DCS uses the Alabama Super Computer Authority as our Internet Service Provider and is connected to them by way of a 1.5Gig line from our Central Office which was upgraded from our previous 1Gbps connection.

## **e) Information Security & Safety**

We utilize a Palo Alto firewall to connect to our Internet Service Provider, Alabama Supercomputer Authority, through a 1.5Gbps fiber link. In addition to providing internet services, Alabama Supercomputer Authority also serves as our Security Operations Center (SOC), monitoring all inbound and outbound traffic for malicious threats and intrusions. To further secure our network, we use a Sophos inline security appliance/firewall, which monitors various protocols, blocks inappropriate internet activity, and provides granular control over web and application filters for both students and staff.

Our network infrastructure consists of managed, password-protected switches. We deploy Sophos Intercept X Advanced on servers and endpoints to protect against malware, viruses, and ransomware, with centralized management and monitoring for system protection. This solution also provides visibility into any unprotected devices on the network. Lastly, we do not have any desktops or servers that are publicly accessible via the internet.

## **f) Digital Content**

DCS has successfully achieved more than a 1:1 student-to-computer ratio, deploying over 9,000 Chromebooks across the district. Classrooms, labs, and media centers are equipped with computers offering access to a range of applications, including word processing, spreadsheets, databases, presentation tools, and internet access. The Alabama Virtual Library (AVL) is also available from these locations.

Networked educational tools such as Think Central, OdysseyWare, Advanced Learning System, Imagine Learning Platform, and Pearson Learning are widely used. The Imagine Learning Platform and Advanced Learning System are specifically utilized for remediation and credit recovery in secondary schools. The district is focused on adopting browser-based applications, including Book Systems Atrium for library management and Renaissance Place, which features Accelerated Reader. Some elementary and middle school students also have access to online keyboarding and technology application training. All secondary students are provided with secure logins, passwords, and network storage accessible from any district computer.

Our ongoing goal is to centralize applications, ensuring students can access resources from any device, anywhere. This approach accommodates students who transfer within the district, home-bound students, and those relocated for disciplinary reasons, ensuring equal access to resources for all.

## **9) Data Compliance**

### **a) Data Governance Policy**

I certify that I have attached a copy of the policy.

### **b) Acceptable Use Policy**

I certify that I have attached a copy of the policy.

### **c) Data Governance Procedure**

I certify that I have attached a copy of the procedures.

## **10) Alabama Technology Plan Goals and Activities**

### **a) Alabama Technology Plan Goals and Activities**

I certify that I have attached the Alabama Technology Plan Goals and Activities sheet.

## 11) Attachments

| Attachment Name                             | Description                   | Associated Item(s) |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| DCS Technology Needs Assessment.pdf         | Technology Needs Assessment   | 5. a-g             |
| DCS District Technology Inventory 24-25.pdf | District Technology Inventory | 7. a               |
| DCS Data Governance Policy.pdf              | Data Governance Policy        | 9. a               |
| DCS Acceptable Use Policy.pdf               | Acceptable Use Policy         | 9. b               |
| DCS Data Governance Procedures.pdf          | Data Governance Procedure     | 9. c               |
| DCS Strategic Plan 22-26.pdf                | Goals and Objectives          | 10. a              |