

Watertown City School District

Instructional Technology Plan

2026–2029

July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2029



"Technology is a tool — and student learning is the goal."

Watertown City School District

District Mission

Watertown City School District is committed to building a caring culture that fosters lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

Fulfilling this mission requires that we prepare students to function in a world where technology plays an increasingly vital role in post-secondary education, the workplace, and everyday life. Technology literacy is not a secondary skill — it complements and strengthens the ability to read, write, think critically, and communicate effectively.

Education that integrates technology must provide students with the knowledge and skills to access and process information from multiple sources and apply that information to real problems. Technology is a tool to complement, enhance, and supplement instruction — never to replace the teacher, the relationship, or the learning.

Technology Vision

At Watertown City School District, technology is a tool — and student learning is the goal. We are committed to the thoughtful, purposeful use of technology to strengthen instruction, deepen learning, and ensure that every student has equitable access to the opportunities they deserve.

In WCSD, technology choices are driven by what is best for learners. We ask not what technology can do, but what it can do for students. Our goal is a district where excellent teaching is supported — not replaced — by technology, and where all students develop the knowledge, skills, and judgment to thrive in a digital world as learners, citizens, and contributors.

Technology Goals: 2026–2029

The following three goals guide the district’s work in instructional technology for the 2026–2029 plan period. Each goal reflects our core belief that technology must serve people and support learning. These goals were developed with input from teachers, administrators, technology staff, and district leadership, and are aligned with NYSED’s Instructional Technology Plan requirements and the Statewide Learning Technology Plan.

Goal 1: Judicious Use of Technology to Support Learning

WCSD will ensure the judicious use of technology to support instruction and related services, implement grade-level device-use guidelines, evaluate existing instructional programs for evidence of student learning impact, and apply a vetting process to all new programs to ensure alignment with district philosophy and learning goals.

Not all technology is created equal — and not all technology use is equally valuable. WCSD is committed to being intentional about how, when, and why technology is used in our classrooms and related services. This means moving away from technology for its own sake and toward technology that demonstrably supports student learning.

As part of this goal, the district will develop and adopt grade-level guidelines for device use that are appropriate to the developmental needs of students at each level. Younger students, in particular, benefit from more limited and purposeful screen time, and our guidelines will reflect current research and best practices in this area.

WCSD will also undertake a systematic review of the instructional programs and applications currently in use across the district. Programs that cannot demonstrate a positive impact on student learning will be phased out. New programs will be subject to a structured vetting process before adoption, ensuring that every tool we bring into our classrooms earns its place.

This goal also recognizes the important role technology plays in supporting students who receive related services such as occupational therapy and speech. We are committed to ensuring that these students have access to the assistive and instructional technologies that best support their individual needs.

Key Action Steps

- Develop and adopt grade-level device-use guidelines, including screen time parameters appropriate to developmental stage.
- Audit all currently used instructional programs and software against student learning outcomes and district philosophy.
- Establish a formal vetting process for new technology programs, requiring evidence of instructional value prior to adoption.
- Collaborate with special education and related service providers to identify and expand technology tools that support students with disabilities.
- Phase out programs that do not meet evidence-of-learning standards and replace with district-approved alternatives.
- Conduct ongoing reviews of program effectiveness and alignment with district technology philosophy.

Goal 2: Professional Learning and Digital Literacy

WCSD will provide professional learning for staff and digital literacy instruction for students in the areas of artificial intelligence (AI), acceptable use, and cybersecurity, ensuring all members of the district community are prepared to engage with technology safely, ethically, and effectively.

Technology is only as good as the people using it. WCSD is committed to ensuring that every staff member and every student has the knowledge and skills to engage with technology in ways that are safe, ethical, and purposeful.

For staff, this means ongoing professional learning that goes beyond basic tool training. We will provide structured learning opportunities aligned to the New York State Computer Science and Digital Fluency standards, with particular focus on artificial intelligence, acceptable use policies, and cybersecurity awareness. As AI tools become increasingly present in educational settings, it is essential that our staff understand how to use them responsibly, recognize their limitations, and make informed decisions about their role in the classroom.

For students, digital literacy is not a separate subject — it is woven into the fabric of learning at every grade level. From the earliest grades, students will receive age-appropriate instruction in how to use technology responsibly, how to evaluate information critically, how to protect their privacy online, and how to be positive contributors in digital spaces.

Cybersecurity is a shared responsibility, and WCSD takes it seriously. All staff will participate in annual cybersecurity awareness training, and students will develop cybersecurity habits as part of their digital literacy education. Together, these efforts create a district community that is informed, vigilant, and prepared.

Key Action Steps

- Design and deliver staff professional learning aligned to NYSED Computer Science and Digital Fluency standards, including modules on AI, acceptable use, and cybersecurity.
- Embed digital literacy and acceptable use instruction into the student curriculum at all grade levels, with age-appropriate scope and sequence.
- Develop AI literacy programming for students and staff, including responsible use, bias awareness, and educational applications of AI tools.
- Implement cybersecurity awareness training for all staff, aligned with district data privacy policies and NYSED requirements.
- Integrate copyright, intellectual property, and citation instruction into classroom practice across content areas.
- Assess staff and student digital literacy competencies and adjust professional learning offerings accordingly.

Goal 3: Infrastructure and Device Access

WCSD will maintain and upgrade technology infrastructure, including a systematic device refresh cycle and network improvements, to ensure all students and staff have reliable access to the tools necessary for effective teaching and learning.

The best instructional technology plans are only effective when the underlying infrastructure is reliable, modern, and accessible to all. WCSD is committed to maintaining the physical and technical foundation that makes learning with technology possible.

The district currently provides a dedicated device to every student in every grade — a commitment we will sustain throughout the 2026–2029 plan period. To do this responsibly, we will continue to implement and refine our multi-year device refresh schedule, ensuring that student and staff devices remain functional, secure, and capable of running the software required for learning.

Network infrastructure is equally important. We will assess and upgrade our network across all buildings to ensure that bandwidth and connectivity keep pace with the growing demands of a 1:1 learning environment. Reliable connectivity is not a luxury — it is a prerequisite for equitable access.

Equity of access extends beyond the school building. The district actively works to identify and address home connectivity gaps to ensure students can access learning outside of school. We will continue to monitor this need and pursue solutions that support our most vulnerable learners.

Key Action Steps

- Continue to implement and refine the multi-year device refresh schedule to ensure all student and staff devices remain functional, secure, and capable of running required software.
- Procure replacement devices for aging student and staff Chromebooks and laptops in accordance with the refresh schedule.
- Assess and upgrade network infrastructure across all buildings to support current and future bandwidth needs.
- Identify and secure funding sources to sustain device and infrastructure investments across the three-year plan.
- Conduct ongoing device and infrastructure audits to identify emerging needs and adjust procurement and maintenance plans accordingly.

Our Commitment to Equitable Access

WCSD believes that every student deserves equitable access to the technology they need to learn — regardless of where they live, what resources their family has, or what challenges they face. Equity is not an add-on to our technology plan; it is a core principle that runs through every goal.

The district provides a dedicated mobile device to every student from K through grade 12. These devices are capable of supporting both in-school and remote learning, ensuring continuity of instruction in any circumstance. Our device refresh plan ensures that no student is disadvantaged by outdated or unreliable equipment.

We also recognize that access to a device is not enough if students lack reliable internet at home. The district actively works to identify and address connectivity gaps, and we remain committed to pursuing solutions that support our students' ability to learn anywhere, at any time.

Our special education and related services teams are active partners in technology planning, ensuring that students with disabilities have access to the assistive technologies and digital tools that best support their learning. Technology, used well, can be a powerful equalizer.

How This Plan Was Developed

This Instructional Technology Plan was developed through a collaborative process involving teachers, administrators, technology staff, and district leadership. Input was gathered through committee work, needs assessment, and reflection on the accomplishments and lessons of the 2022–2025 plan.

The plan is aligned with the following frameworks and standards:

- New York State Computer Science and Digital Fluency Learning Standards
- ISTE Standards for Educators and Students
- NYSED Statewide Learning Technology Plan
- Commissioner's Regulation Part 100.12

The plan covers July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2029, and has been submitted to NYSED through the SED Monitoring and Vendor Reporting System. It will be reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis, with annual progress reports to the Board of Education.

A copy of this plan is available on the WCSD district website. Questions about the plan may be directed to the Director of Technology, Cybersecurity, and Innovation, Jeff Wood at jefwood@watertowncsd.org