LEADING THE WAY

Intentional AI Implementation

CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS

Dr. Candace Salmon-Hosey, Chief Technology Officer
Rebecca Lehtinen, Executive Director, Educational Technology

Introducing Dr. Candace Salmon-Hosey



Experienced IT and educational technology leader with 25+ years in education, currently serving as Chief Technology Officer for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, overseeing AI initiatives, digital platforms, devices, and network infrastructure.

Recognized for innovative leadership with the CIO of the Year® ORBIE® Award in Education; brings a results-oriented approach to integrating technology for student achievement.

“In a district of our size, responsible AI implementation requires bringing the right voices to the same table. When instruction, technology, legal, and cybersecurity leaders work together from the start, you can move forward with both innovation and strong safeguards for students.”

Endless possibilities start with

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OUR MISSION

To create an innovative, inclusive, student-centered environment that supports the development of independent learners.

OUR VISION

To lead the community in educational excellence, inspiring intellectual curiosity, creativity, and achievement so that all students reach their full potential.

2024 – 2029 DISTRICT GOALS

- Improve Early Literacy in Grades K – 2
- Improve Literacy Skills in Grades 3 – 8
- Strengthen Math Performance in Math 1
- Post-Grad Readiness

CORE BELIEFS

Public education is essential to democracy and necessary for economic opportunity, mobility and the broader public good.

We are responsible for building and maintaining a high performing school district.

Each student is uniquely capable and deserves an engaging, relevant, and challenging educational experience.

Our principals and teachers make the critical difference in student achievement and building a positive school community.

The school system, families, and communities are necessary partners in ensuring the academic, social, emotional and behavioral success of students.

GUARDRAILS

- Equity over Equality: Reducing Achievement Gaps
- Safety & Security
- Attending to the Whole Child: Wellbeing & Engagement
- Staffing: High Quality Teachers

FOUR PILLARS OF EXCELLENCE

- Academic Excellence
- People Excellence
- Operational Excellence
- Engagement Excellence

OUR COMMITMENT TO DELIVER EXCELLENCE WITHOUT EXCEPTION

OUR THREE PRIORITIES



STUDENT VOICE

“On graduation day, I hope every CMS student walks across the stage knowing not just how to use AI, but how it works.”

- Zahara Mushinge



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

“Over the past several months, we’ve been on an intentional listening journey to better understand how our CMS community wants us to approach artificial intelligence in our district.”

- Dr. Candace Salmon-Hosey



DATA PRIVACY

“Lessons from the Pentagon: What Education Leaders Need to Know About AI and Cybersecurity.”

- Dr. Michael Sulmeyer



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



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COMMUNITY VOICES SHAPED OUR STRATEGY

Insights based on 10,000+ survey responses, focus groups, and interviews.

STUDENTS

“Don’t just give us tools, teach us how they work.”

ACTION

K-12 Digital Citizenship & AI Literacy Curriculum

COMMUNITY

“Excited, but cautious.”

ACTION

AI Champions piloting real use cases

STAFF

“Asked for guidance and training.”

ACTION

AI Literacy & Data Privacy Training

Generative AI Guidance



VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES



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Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is proactively shaping how artificial intelligence supports learning, teaching, and operations.

Our vision is clear:

AI enhances the work of our staff, strengthens student learning, and builds stronger connections across our schools and community.



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



PEOPLE EXCELLENCE



OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE



ENGAGEMENT EXCELLENCE



GOVERNANCE & GUARDRAILS



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STRUCTURE BEFORE SPEED

AI STEERING COMMITTEE

- Strategic Direction
- Alignment
- Decisions

GOVERNANCE

- CMS Generative AI Guidance
- Adoption of Board Policy

AI REVIEW COMMITTEE

- Academics
- Technology
- Cybersecurity
- Finance

Introducing Rebecca Lehtinen



Experienced educational technology leader with 20+ years in education, currently serving as Executive Director of Educational Technology for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, leading AI initiatives, professional learning, and student programs in digital citizenship and AI literacy.

Recognized for building high-performing teams and scalable systems, streamlining district technology services, and creating student-centered, innovative learning environments.

“We made a deliberate decision not to start with tools. We started with the real challenges our educators and staff face every day and focused on how AI could help solve them. When you begin with the problem, the technology becomes far more meaningful.”



BUILDING CAPACITY



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Generative AI is not the goal. It’s a catalyst.

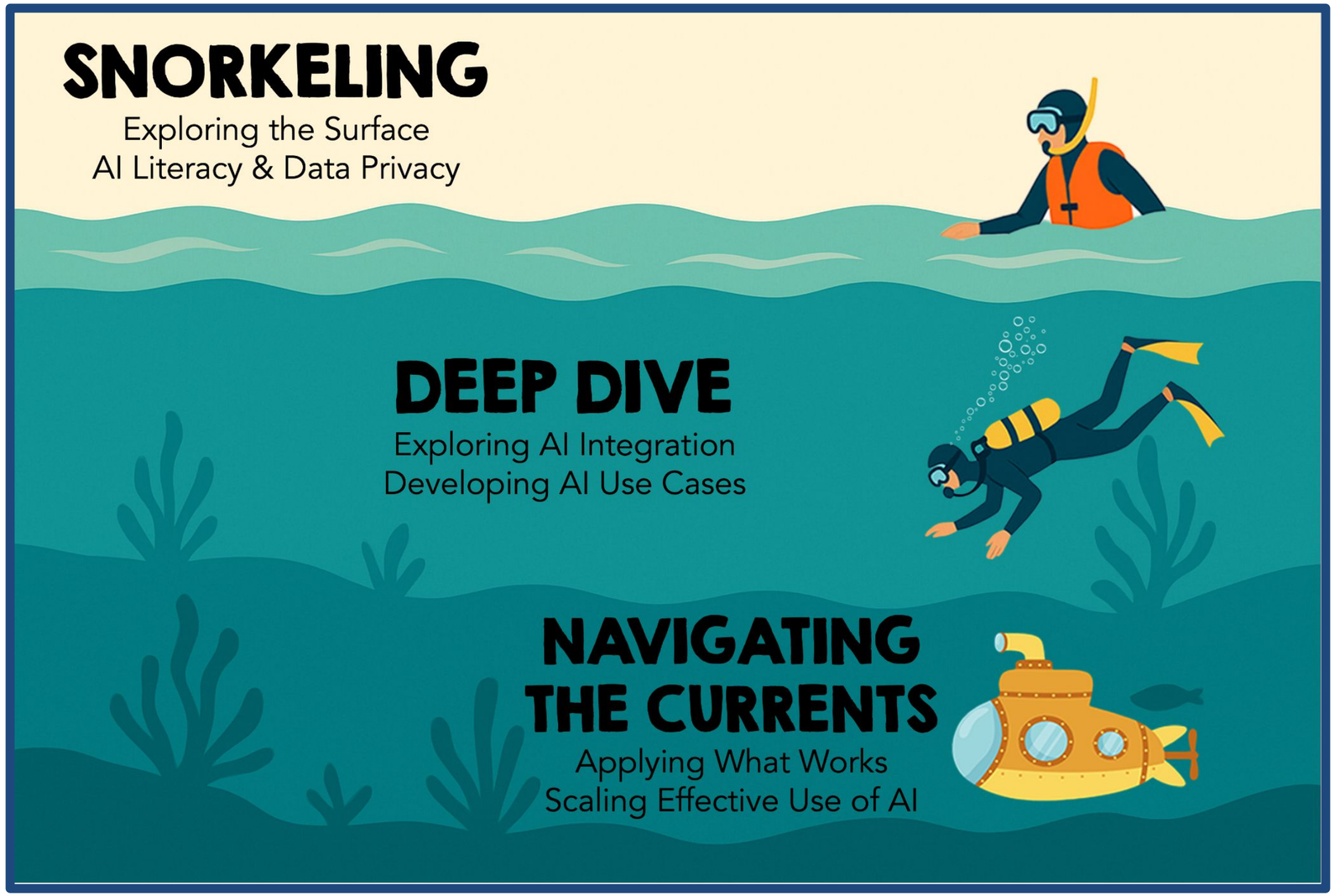
UNSTRUCTURED ADOPTION ACROSS 19,000+ EMPLOYEES CREATED RISK TO:

- Student & staff data privacy
- Academic integrity
- Aligned district wide implementation

OUR CHALLENGE

- Build a systematic, measurable process to safely weave AI into daily practice and prove it solves real problems tied to our strategic priorities before scaling.

TIERED TRAINING PLAN





PILOT BEFORE SCALE



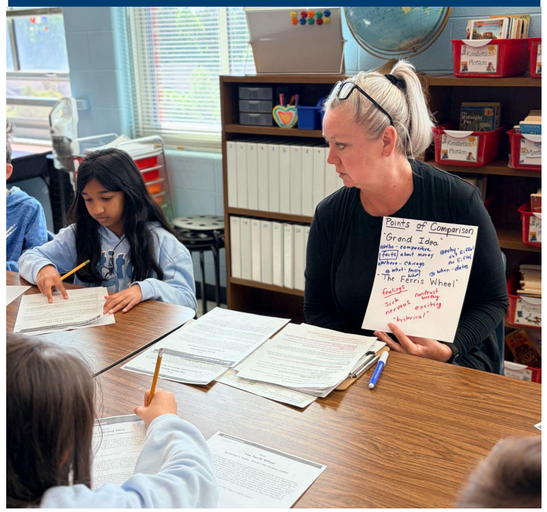
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AI CHAMPIONS

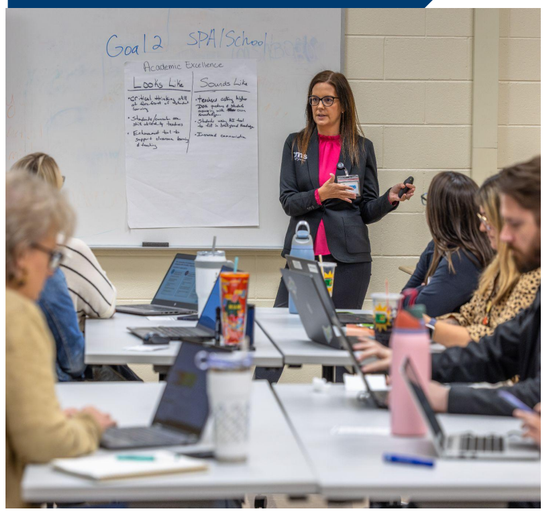
Serve as proof points for internal AI implementation



Identify challenges and help refine districtwide strategies



Support professional learning from the user level up



Test use cases for operations, decision-making, and instruction



USE-CASE THEMES ACROSS LEVELS

Elementary

- Multi-Language support
- Communication from school
- Rubric development
- PLC planning
- Differentiation

Middle

- Math support
- Rubric development
- Assessment data analysis
- Small group support
- Lesson planning support

High School

- Staff communication
- AP lesson planning
- Student recognition
- Lesson differentiation
- Math practice enhancement
- PLC planning

CENTRAL OFFICE USE CASE THEMES



Enhancing Instructional Design

- Academics



Advancing Data & Synthesis

- Finance
- Strategy & Innovation



Improving Operational Efficiency

- Operations
- Retention, Recruitment & Talent Development



Streamlining Organizational Communications

- Technology
- Communications
- Human Resources

14,000+

Staff Members Impacted

139,000+

Students Impacted

30 AI Champion Schools =

2,000+ School Staff Trained

60 Central Office AI Champions =

1,700+ Central Office Staff & School Admin

Data Privacy & AI Literacy Staff Course =

14,000+ Staff Trained

Digital Citizenship & AI Literacy Student Curriculum =

139,000+ Students

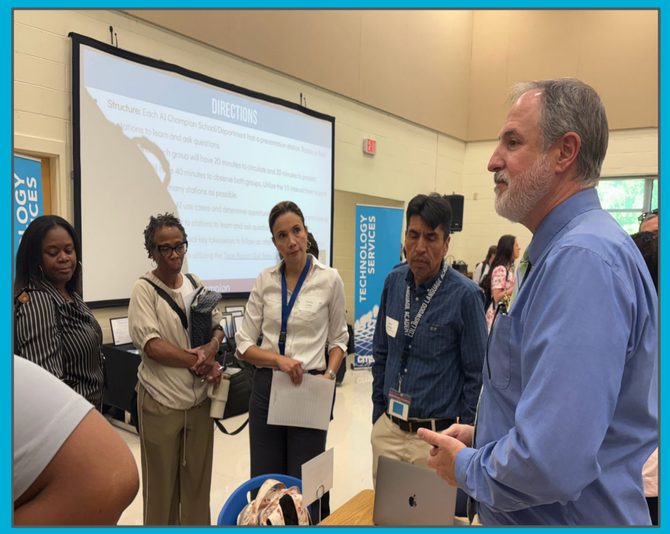


MEASURE BEFORE SCALING



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USE CASE + METRICS



SHARING USE CASES



LOCATING INTERSECTIONS



MEASURING OUTCOMES

Maintaining use case metrics ensures that AI tools are implemented thoughtfully, problems are addressed intentionally, and results are visible.

STEPS TAKEN

1. Extensive Community Engagement = AI VIsion + Guiding Principles
2. AI Data Privacy Summit
3. AI Steering Committee
4. Adopted Board Policy
   CMS Generative AI Guidance
5. Established Foundational Training
6. Updated Digital Citizenship + AI Literacy Curriculum
7. Launched AI Champions
8. Superintendent's Advisory Council



WHAT'S NEXT

Continue targeted professional development with AI Champions

Actively measure impact of emerging tools and scale high-impact use cases

Leverage the AI Advisory Council to implement a secure, integrated AI strategy

TARGETED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



"This training has me excited to explore additional AI resources and learn how I can incorporate them to make daily tasks more efficient."



AI enhancing curriculum **engagement & efficiency.**

While ensuring **curriculum experts** are at the forefront.



Specialists received PD that directly supports schools needs.

MEASURING IMPACT

Phase 1: Identify & Plan



Phase 2: Implement & Test



Phase 3: Review & Share

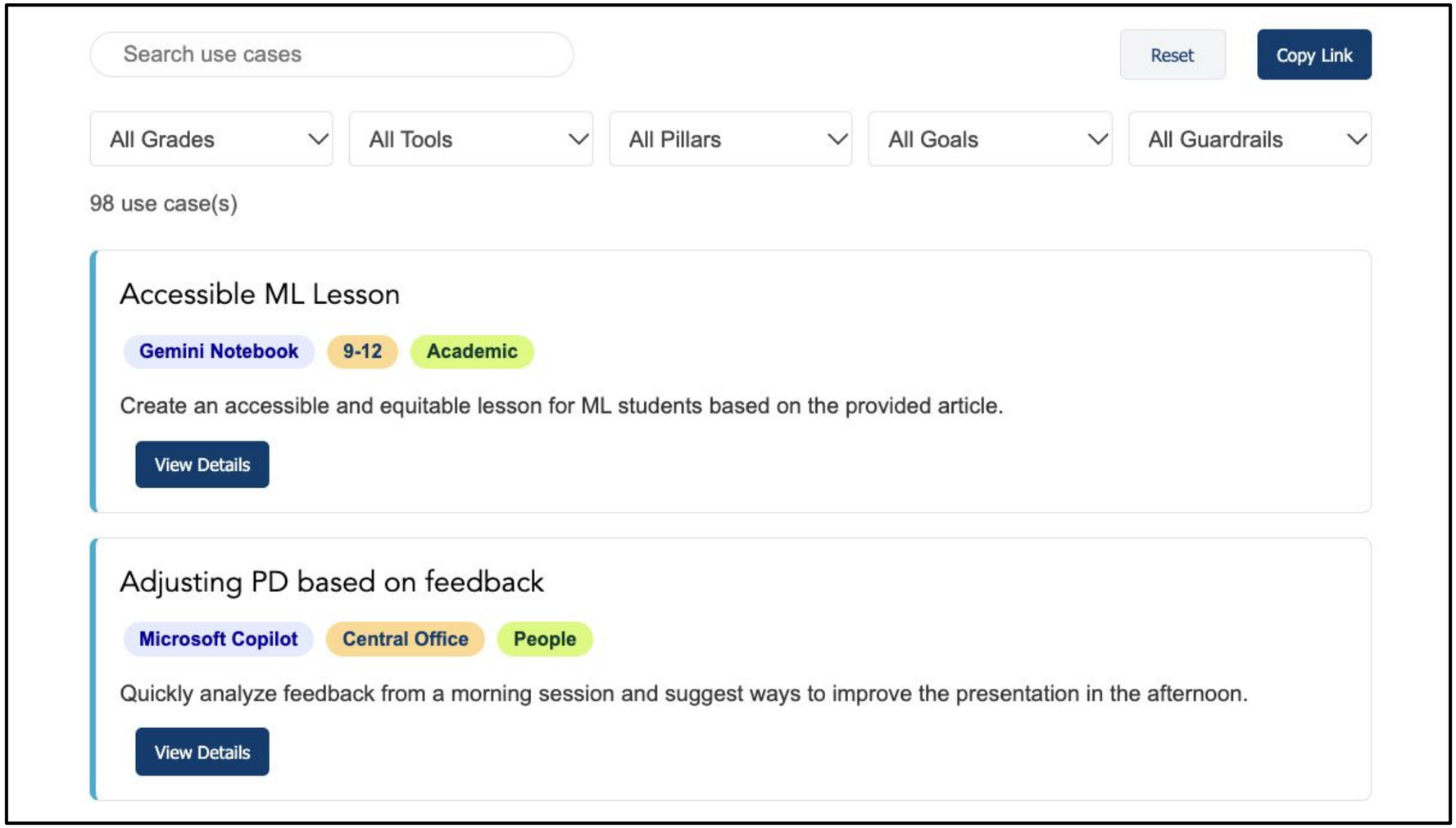


TIMELINE



Champion AI use case collection shaped the Playbook emphasizing effective and exemplar use cases

AI USE CASE PLAYBOOK



USE CASE APPROVAL PROCESS

1



Use case submitted in Task Inventory

2



ED Tech Team reviews and refines use cases

3



AI Review Committee reviews (Academics Input)

4



New approved use cases uploaded quartley

CROSS-SECTOR LEADERSHIP

HIGHER EDUCATION

CPCC

JCSU

UNCC

Align K-12 learning with college and credential pathways

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

CMS Foundation

ILO Group

Provide national expertise and strategic guidance

BUSINESS & WORKFORCE

Ally Financial
Atrium
Bank of America
Novant
Truist

Provide insight into future workforce skills and industry needs

COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

Students

Parents

Teachers

Principals

City/County Government

Ensure strategy reflects the needs and experiences of our school community

CMS AI DATA PRIVACY SUMMIT







"CMS managed to prepare me in terms of AI technology. I was able to even implement that knowledge after high school and now into college."

- Zahara Mushinge

LEADING THE WAY IN RESPONSIBLE AI USE

Framework + Guidance = Safe, Ethical AI

Tiered Training = Districtwide Impact

AI Champions = Proof in Action

Students Empowered for the Future