



PATHWAYS TO THE FUTURE

Fact Sheet

We are planning and implementing a series of innovative, fundamental changes throughout the Avonworth School District designed to better provide our students with the skills, dispositions and experiences they need to succeed in the future.

We call this *Pathways to the Future*, and the plan will focus on building upon three important concepts:

- 1. Personalized learning:** Through 1:1 digital device implementation via the curriculum and opportunities through the Personal Pathways Program, students will be encouraged to explore their interests and connect to real-world careers and experiences.
- 2. Interdisciplinary learning:** Cross-disciplinary courses with project-based approaches will provide students with deeper dives into subjects, allowing for a more resonant application of knowledge that builds meaning, empathy and tolerance.
- 3. Use of space and time:** Learning spaces will be transformed to allow for collaborative and creative learning activities, and student schedules will be designed for more productive, fulfilling learning opportunities.

How This Will Benefit Students

Just as our world has evolved with the rise of technology and global innovation, classrooms have evolved beyond chalkboards, pencils and desks lined up in rows. Research clearly shows the benefits that occur when schools prioritize learning that is personalized, project-based and interdisciplinary.

We also looked at the most in-demand occupational sectors in our region, which include information technology; business and finance; engineering, science and production; healthcare; and construction. The top candidates for jobs in each of these fields often possess interdisciplinary skills like leadership, creativity, digital literacy and collaboration.

Our main goal is to best prepare each of our students for whatever future awaits them by offering personalized opportunities to be engaged, thoughtful learners. Our extensive research has shown that traditional educational practices will no longer suffice. Because of this, the Avonworth School District has decided that it is time for a transformation that will break from tradition and do what will most benefit our students.

How This Will Affect Teachers and Staff

This is a unique professional development opportunity that will put Avonworth teachers and staff at the forefront when it comes to the development and implementation of highly innovative educational practices.

Teachers and administrators will be given 1:1 device training to ensure they are supported and prepared to implement these devices into the classroom. In addition, regular planning and professional development time for teachers will be built into their schedules.

For elementary teachers, professional development opportunities will be made available via the Children's Innovation Project to support interdisciplinary learning, as well as continued literacy support through the Reading Achievement Center.

Middle school teachers will be given support through the New Tech Network for the integration of project-based learning.

At the high school level, teachers will be trained on methods for teaching and mentoring in the flexible block environment. National Math/Science Initiative (NMSI) AP training will also be offered.

Specific Changes to be Implemented

Districtwide:

- All K-12 students will be provided District-issued digital devices, which will support personalized learning, promote digital citizenship and better prepare students for the future. Grades K-3 will be issued iPads, and grades 4-12 will be issued Chromebooks.
- The K-12 curriculum will take on a more interdisciplinary focus. This will involve the addition of cross-disciplinary, co-taught courses that take deeper dives into subjects instead of simply “covering” lessons. This approach will rely heavily on project-based learning that is service-oriented, which has been shown to build meaning, empathy and tolerance among students.
- Learning spaces will be transformed into large, flexible spaces that support collaboration and creative learning activities.
- Counselor responsibilities on the secondary level will shift to better match the academic, social/emotional and college/career needs of our students.

Avonworth Primary Center and Avonworth Elementary School:

- A foundation of literacy and numeracy will build skills and understanding in reading and mathematics.
- We will build and support an innovative spirit through learning activities that provide opportunities for exploration, creation and experimentation.

Avonworth Middle School:

- The New Tech Network, the design partner for the school’s transformation, will integrate interdisciplinary and project-based learning into the school culture for grades 7-9. New Tech has worked with nearly 200 schools nationwide, and numerous research studies support positive results.

Avonworth High School:

- Based on recommendations from research studies published by the *Journal for School Health* and The Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, the high school start time will be moved to 8:00 a.m.
- All high school students will participate in the Personal Pathways Program in order to explore their individual interests and aptitudes and understand how to connect what they learn in school to their future careers.
- In 2018, the high school master schedule will step away from the traditional eight-period schedule and transform into flexible blocks that facilitate personalization and support interdisciplinary courses, job shadowing/internships and mentoring opportunities.

Timeline for Implementing These Changes

Most changes will be implemented during the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years.

2017-2018:

- 1:1 digital devices to all students
- Movement of 6th grade to elementary school
- Movement of high school start time to 8:00 a.m.
- High school interdisciplinary courses pilot
- New Tech program begins in grade 7
- New electives schedule for the elementary school and primary center
- Reinvent elementary school library
- 9th grade Academy
- Google Classroom for all
- Redefine counselor roles
- Survey students, parents and faculty for feedback and future direction

2018-2019:

- New Tech program expands to grade 8
- New high school master schedule
- Personal Pathways Program for all high school students in grades 10-12
- Survey students, parents and faculty for feedback and future direction

2019-2020:

- New Tech program expands to grade 9
- Survey students, parents and faculty for feedback and future direction