



Learning 2025
**LEARNER-CENTERED
FUTURE-DRIVEN
EDUCATION**



LEARNING 2025 LIGHTHOUSE DEMONSTRATION SYSTEM

AASA Learning 2025

Lighthouse Demonstration System Vignette

South Allegheny School District (Pa.)

Recognized Fall 2024

Focus Area: Future-Ready Learners

Located in Western Pennsylvania, the preparation of students to become future-ready highlights the far-thinking culture of South Allegheny School District. The central goal of the school district is to individualize and personalize students' education. A major commitment is to teaching the whole child, reinforcing that every student can succeed in spite of economically challenging circumstances.



Commitment
to Whole
Child

There is a creative approach to all facets of students' education, including using COVID funds to help catch up and deliver quality 21st century education for every learner. As a result instructional, assessment, and structural changes have been made. These include the addition of "Flex Time" to the school's schedule, allowing for students to explore focus areas of interest.



Integration of
"Flex Time"
to Explore
Individual
Interests

Students pick a 42-minute period where they can do what they want to do, including taking advantage of a major new athletic facility. Many organizations and clubs are now available as well as a comprehensive new reading program (CKLA) at the elementary school level to bring all learners up to grade-level reading proficiency.

Preparing Future-Ready Learners

A major development at the district is its well-articulated Career Pathways program, which now offers concentrations in four key areas:

1

Aviation

Hands-on experience in flight simulation, aeronautical science, and aviation technology—preparing learners for careers in the aerospace industry or further education in aviation.



2

Cybersecurity

Foundational knowledge in network security, ethical hacking, and data protection; offering industry recognized certifications like CompTIA to prepare learners for entry-level positions or further education in the field.



3

Sports Media Production

Skills in live event broadcasting, video production, and digital media editing; preparing learners for careers in sports media or further studies in media production.



4

Podcasting Broadcasting

Explore broadcasting; develop effective communication storytelling and audio production skills; preparing learners for careers in media, journalism, or further studies in broadcasting and communication.



In addition, the entire system is in the process of being redesigned to prepare future-ready learners. For example, the district now offers a unique Innovation Lab that encourages inquiry, problem solving, and investigation.

Supporting a Future-Driven Mindset

A wide variety of innovation initiatives are available to students. These include a K-12 STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) that reinforces students' understanding of identified areas and their alignment/integration. Similarly, an Innovation Initiative (Design and Fabrication Lab) offers three-D printing, laser and vinyl applications, and women in STEM building projects).

As a result of this commitment, the district has hired a Workforce and Career Development Coordinator who helps students explore career paths, gain essential job skills, and connect with opportunities for internships, apprenticeships, and employment. This process prepares students for success in the workplace.

Clubs and Organizations as a Complement to Academics

The district offers a wide range of clubs and other organizations to complement students' career development experiences. For example, the district has a Kindness Campaign that helps students to acknowledge staff and peers—and reinforces the power of kindness in school and other organizations. The kindness campaign emphasizes several key tenets, including that no learner is marginalized.

A powerful example is a new “Eradicate Hate” club. Students committed to actualizing anti-hate processes. Its core values center on spreading love to everyone. The result is a range of civil rights study groups, the first Hispanic Heritage month school-wide celebration, and a variety of other initiatives.

A Commitment to Personalized Learning

The school district demonstrates a clear commitment to personalized learning as part of its preparation of students for future readiness. A range of services are now available, including clubs, labs, genius time, social emotional interventions and supports, student advisories, and a range of help and assistance.

The range of quality programs available within the district has resulted in its designation as a member of the League of Innovative Schools (“Reimagining the Future of Teaching and Learning”).

As part of this initiative, the district identifies four key ways that it is remaking learning:

1. Teachers are learning how to personalize instruction in ways that best support students' strengths and interests.
2. School libraries have been redesigned as a modern media center where students produce video and audio projects.
3. High school students can enroll in a unique aviation curriculum and see their career opportunities take flight.
4. The district offers computers for every student and hotspots for families without internet service at home.

An age-appropriate advisory program also exists in all elementary schools, reinforcing students' sense of connection to their school. Multiple efforts are made to build relationships, help students feel safe and strong, and reinforce future possibilities.

Finally, a major commitment among staff is building bridges and reinforcing communication/collaboration across school sites.

The improvements evident in schools are reinforced by a deep commitment to experiential learning, including taking advantage of the natural resources available within the community.