Preparing Future Ready Students on Many Devices, with Many Skills

Madison County Schools
MADISON COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

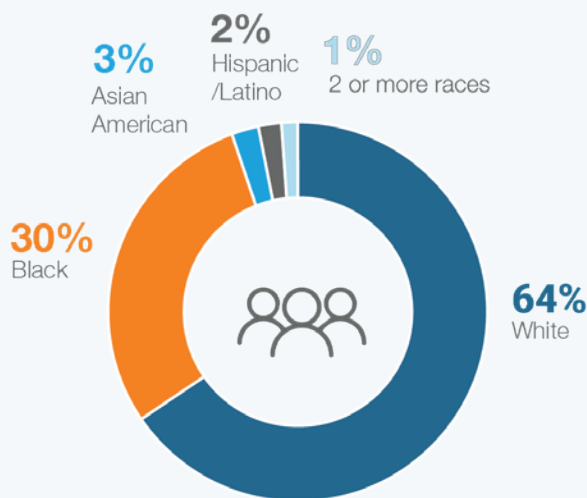**13.3k** students | **1** preschool | **11** elem schools | **4** middle schools | **5** high schools | **2** special campuses | **8.3%** f&r lunch

LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD

Madison County Schools, just outside of Jackson, Mississippi, serves students from both rural areas and affluent suburbs. In 2014, the district introduced its 1:M Digital Initiative designed to expose every student to many different types of devices throughout their education: iPads in K-1, Chromebooks in grades 2-8, MacBooks in high school and PCs in computer labs at all levels.

3% Asian American
2% Hispanic/Latino
1% 2 or more races
30% Black
64% White

With robust technology in place, the challenge became ensuring students had the digital skills to use it, and providing equitable learning opportunities all across the district. Some students were arriving at middle school without the keyboarding skills and computer fundamentals they needed to build upon to meet middle school Information and Communication Technology (ICT) standards.

"Our district goal was to close the digital citizenship gap from elementary to middle schools and level the playing field for all students by providing with technology access to all students," says Nashandra James, Instructional Technology Coordinator.

> " **Simply being able to use technology is no longer enough. We strive to develop our students' digital skills to analyze, learn, communicate and create with technology in ways that prepare them to work, live and contribute to their communities. Learning.com helps us do that.**

— *Gavin Guynes, Technology Director*
Madison County Schools

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PREPARING FOR DIGITAL FUTURES

A former technology teacher herself, James led a committee of instructional experts and administrators to determine grade by grade technology standards for all MCS students. The biggest challenge became finding or creating the curriculum to teach those skills in each grade. James knew she had found a solution when she discovered that Learning.com's EasyTech, with a library of 1,000 lessons, could be customized to align with the district's standards. In 2017, with the help of the team at Learning.com, James watched as MCS's technology standards came to life in classrooms and computer labs.

"Our vision for students was transformed into an interactive, animated, game-based system that could be put into classrooms. Now all of our students learn the same standards using technology, and we can track their progress," says James. "I'm truly thankful for that."

Jatoria Kirksey, who runs the K-2 computer lab at Madison Station Elementary, also welcomed the new curriculum. "I don't have to go look for anything," she says. "All the things I want to teach are right there before me with Learning.com."

Not only do Kirksey's young students learn how to use a mouse, understand the internet, and locate the home row keys on their keyboard, they are also introduced to coding basics. In fact, in response to students who just couldn't get enough coding, the district expanded its offerings from Learning.com to include EasyCode Foundations in 2021.

Today, all 5th grade MCS students take an assessment through Learning.com to measure their mastery of keyboarding and computer fundamentals, and ensure they are set up for success in middle school and beyond.

"To see the technological growth from when I started in the district 15 years ago to today, is extremely motivating," says James. "The sky is the limit right now."

> " **The generation of students we serve are digital natives, they have so much access already. However, they need to know how to use technology properly, whether they are going on to career trade, technical, post-secondary or university.**
>
> — *Nashandra James,*
> *Instructional Technology Coordinator*
> *Madison County Schools*

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