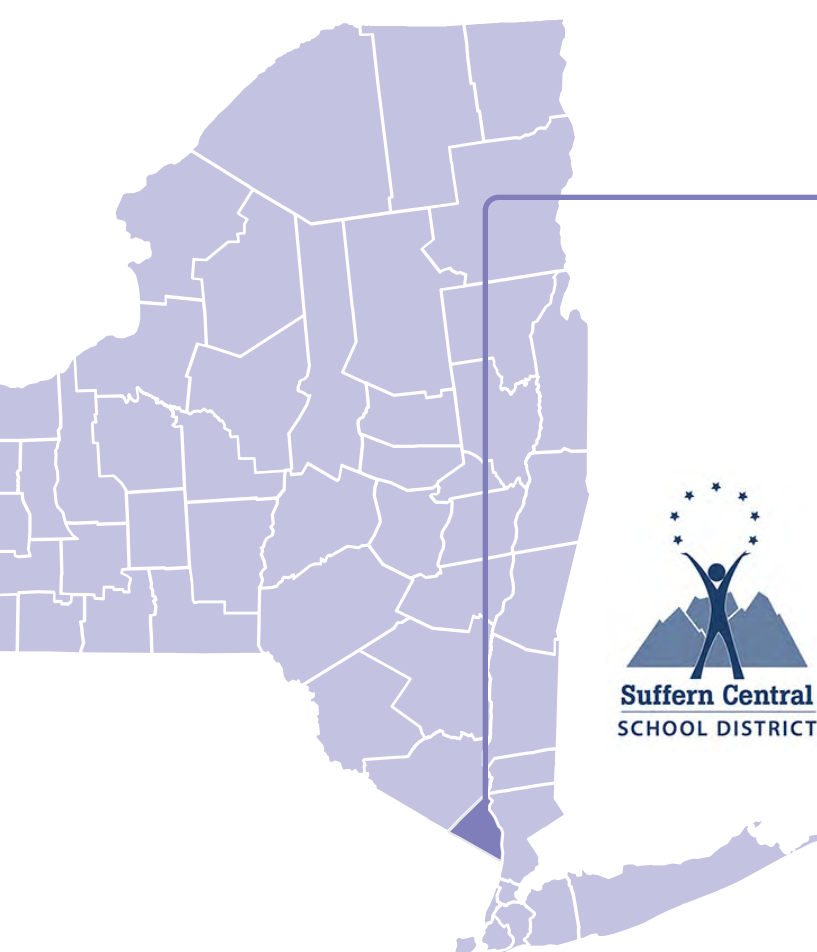
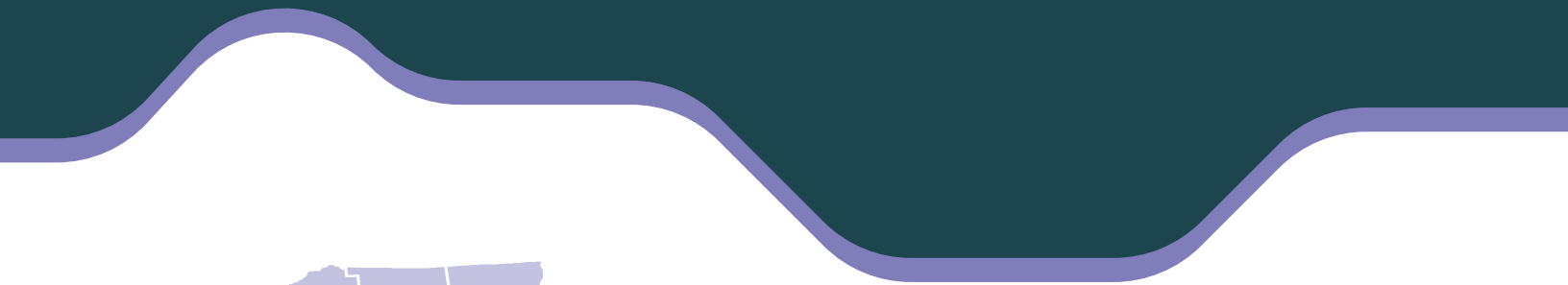


Suffern Central School District
Cybersecurity Snapshot:

Using Student Feedback to Improve Practice



4,000 students

**61 students enrolled
in Cybersecurity Course 1**



Suffern Central School District

Suffern Central School District is located in Rockland County, New York. The district consists of seven schools, serving 4,000 students. The district is diverse with a growing number of English learners. In the 2023–24 school year, Suffern Central created three sections of Cybersecurity Course 1 and enrolled a total of 61 students. Learn more about their work on the [cybersecurity pathway here](#).



Building a Community Core Team to Co-Design the Cybersecurity Program

To ensure a diverse group of students had the opportunity to participate in the cybersecurity program, the district intentionally recruited a district-community core team committed to creating a robust program for all students.

The team included the district technology department, local business leaders, students, school principals, and parents. The team focused on ensuring that students have access to language support, classroom visits by industry and instructional leaders, and engaging events for students, families, and community members. The launch event for the cybersecurity program included elected officials, industry partners, and post-secondary leaders.

Co-Designing Implementation for the Cybersecurity Course


The focus of the cybersecurity program was ensuring that all students had access to real-world learning opportunities, mentorships, and exposure to different careers in the industry. Learning opportunities included guest speakers, participation in competitions, and gaining badges through IBM SkillsBuild. The team also wanted to build bridges to middle school and elementary school students by creating opportunities for student-leadership so that students can speak to other students about the opportunities in the technology field and cybersecurity specifically. Finally, Suffern Central focused on ensuring that all families were knowledgeable about the cybersecurity program by sharing accessible information in home languages and hosting informational tables at district events. In 2023–24, Suffern Central launched three sections of Cybersecurity 1 and enrolled 61 students.



Using Student Feedback to Improve Programming

The Suffern Central team was committed to ensuring that participating students felt successful in the cybersecurity program. The district team prioritized student voice in the design and implementation of the program by collecting data through focus groups, individual interviews, and anonymous surveys and using that feedback to monitor student progress and continuously improve the program. School and district administrators also implemented learning walks and check-ins with students to hear about their concerns and successes. These data collection and analysis efforts led to a number of positive outcomes, including the following:

- Shifts in the curriculum to ensure hands-on learning opportunities to better engage students in the coursework
- Increased opportunities for collaboration, guest speakers, and varied means of participation for students
- Significant investment by Suffern Central in teacher professional learning and development to increase efficacy in the subject material

 "I'm going to continue for three years, because it is worth it. **For someone who hasn't done this, [cybersecurity] is pretty cool.**"

– Suffern Central student

Successes of the Cybersecurity Program

Suffern Central's intentional roll-out of the program and partnership with community partners enabled the students and educators to reach the following milestones:

The creation of a **student Cybersecurity Club** built excitement and interest.

Ms. Ariel Sanzo, Cybersecurity teacher, won the **Transforming Education through Leadership and Learning Award** from the Technology Leadership Institute.

60% of students are interested in further cybersecurity courses.

Future of the Program

In the next school year, the Suffern Central team aims to complete the following:

Include Cybersecurity 2 as a **dual enrollment opportunity** for students.

Provide mentors for students enrolled in Cybersecurity 2.

Increase **exposure to real-world learning** opportunities for students.