

Proposal: New Grade 7 Trimester Course

Flight Path 2030 / AICE Readiness Investment

Proposed Launch: 2026–27 School Year

Course Length: One Required Trimester

District Commitment: This course will run through the 2030-2031 school year. Minor revisions may be needed if G7 moves to the high school during that time and/or as a result of the scope and sequence mapping included in Y3 of the initiative.

Purpose

Red Wing Public Schools proposes a new required Grade 7 trimester course “Digital Literacy, Information, and AI Foundations” as a foundational Flight Path 2030 investment.

The course is designed to ensure that every student enters Grade 8 and high school with the practical digital, information, data, collaboration, and responsible AI-use skills needed to succeed in increasingly technology-enabled academic environments. It will also create clear alignment to the new Grade 8 elective, **Exploring Data, Computing, and AI**, and ultimately to the AICE high school pathway.

This course is designed as a targeted, pathway-aligned readiness experience that gives all students—not only those who already have access, confidence, or prior exposure—the baseline competencies necessary to participate meaningfully in AICE learning opportunities across core academic classes and future elective pathways.

Need and Rationale

As Flight Path 2030 expands access to computational thinking, data fluency, and responsible AI use across the district, students need a common foundation before they are asked to engage in more advanced coursework and experiences.

Students enter middle school with uneven levels of familiarity with digital tools, file management, collaborative workflows, source evaluation, spreadsheet functions, and responsible AI use. Without a shared foundation, students may be excluded from or less prepared for the Grade 8 AICE elective, high school pathway courses, and technology-enabled learning in English, science, social studies, mathematics, and career-connected experiences. A shared background allows students to hit-the-ground-running with the Grade 8 AICE elective, accelerating the progress through more advanced CS and AI topics.

The Grade 7 course addresses that readiness gap by ensuring that all students can use digital tools effectively, evaluate information critically, collaborate responsibly, interpret basic data, and communicate their learning through digital formats.

This investment supports equitable access to Flight Path 2030 by making foundational readiness universal rather than dependent on prior experience, family access, or informal exposure to technology.

This new course was not originally planned as a Y2 deliverable. It is proposed at this time to address a new gap in scheduling at the middle school. The superintendent has indicated that if not for approving this class, the students will be placed in a study hall. This allows us to implement an offering that otherwise might not exist.

Course Description

Digital Literacy, Information, and AI Foundations

Grade 7 Required Trimester

The skills gained in this course will lay a foundation in digital literacy that will aid students as they progress through future coursework, AICE learning experiences, and careers. Students will leave with the knowledge and confidence to use standard digital tools, including computers, Chromebooks, and commonly used software, while applying responsible judgment in digital environments.

How can Sheets, Numbers, Calc, or Excel be used to find the average value of a dataset calculated in a physics class? How can “track changes” or “suggestions” be used to support two writers collaborating on a shared document? How can search engines and library tools be used to locate information efficiently and evaluate whether it is reliable? How do students save, organize, and share files appropriately inside and outside their institution?

This course will focus on the hands-on use of standard digital tools through a project-oriented curriculum that provides students with real experience applicable to future courses and professions.

Through engaging projects, students will:

- Learn to use digital tools to collaboratively plan, draft, revise, and complete writing assignments.
- Process and interpret basic data using built-in functions in common spreadsheet applications.
- Create interactive presentations and digital products to communicate ideas and findings.
- Use search engines and library resources to locate information on a topic of their choice.
- Assess the accuracy, credibility, and relevance of online information, including AI-generated content.
- Practice responsible AI use, including verification, attribution, privacy awareness, and appropriate human judgment.
- Organize, save, share, and manage files and folders with classmates and teachers.
- Build a portfolio demonstrating digital literacy skills across target software and skill sets.

The course emphasizes transferable skills that will support students regardless of physical or digital environment. At the end of the course, students will have a portfolio of work demonstrating a foundational competency in digital collaboration, information fluency, basic data use, communication, and responsible technology practices.

Why Flight Path 2030 Funding Is Appropriate

The proposed investment is not intended to shift routine district operating costs to Flight Path 2030. The Flight Path 2030 role is to support the development and launch of a new, pathway-aligned readiness model that expands access to AICE competencies across the district. This offering is aligned in the following ways:

- Provides an opportunity to engage MS admin and instructional staff in the FP2030 initiative
- Establishes equitable foundational readiness for all students
- Supports AICE learning in core academic classes
- Creates a clear on ramp to new Grade 8 Exploring Data, Computing and AI course
- Strengthens high school AICE Pathway

The Flight Path 2030 investment would support the design, implementation, and evaluation of the course as an intentional AICE on-ramp. In addition, Flight Path 2030 could consider supporting up to 0.3 FTE for a defined period if all of the following conditions are met:

- The district commits to sustain the course throughout the grant period
- The course would not be impacted by moving grade 7 to the high school in the future
- The funded work is differentiated from routine teaching
- The course outcomes are above and beyond what the district is required to teach
- The district commits to assume ongoing instructional costs following the grant period (similar to the commitment made for the AICE Specialist position).

Expected Outcomes

By the end of the first year, the district expects to achieve:

- A common Grade 7 foundation in digital literacy, information fluency, basic data use, collaboration, and responsible AI practices.
- A fully implemented Grade 7-to-Grade 8 transition model.
- Increased awareness of and participation in the Grade 8 Exploring Data, Computing, and AI elective.
- Stronger student readiness for AICE-informed work in core academic courses beginning in 8th grade.
- A student portfolio model that demonstrates foundational competencies.
- Baseline data to inform future AICE pathway design, equity strategies, and instructional improvement.
- A sustainable course model that can be maintained by the district after the launch period.