securly

# School District of Sheboygan Falls, A Study in EdTech Success




**At a glance**

| 1,614 | 126 | 3 | Student-to-teacher ratio: **12.73:1** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students | teachers | schools | State school report card: **District Exceeds Expectations** |

## Challenge

A commitment to the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework meant opening up accessibility, eliminating barriers, and creating personalized pathways.

## Solution

Securly Classroom and Securly Filter empowered the district to employ forward-thinking learning initiatives while retaining control and ensuring student safety.

## Putting the right tools in place to develop world-ready students

The Sheboygan Falls School District motto is "Expect the Exceptional," and it shows. The district has redefined graduation requirements so that students prove they are ready for college or a career. There's an award-winning Innovation Design Center in the high school, and the state-of-the-art middle school houses flexible learning spaces and small learning communities.

But perhaps the most meaningful example of Sheboygan Falls' efforts to produce extraordinary students is its commitment to the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) teaching framework—the belief that every student has unique strengths, interests, and goals. The district offers choices to create personalized pathways and designs the curriculum to eliminate barriers.

*"Our goal is to create expert learners that have all kinds of resources on hand and know how to choose and use those resources correctly,"* says Michael Nikson, instructional technology coordinator. *"We work on ways to get students to reach high standards not because of technology but through the help of technology."*

## Helping teachers deliver instruction more masterfully

Currently, Pre-K and kindergarten students use iPads; grades 1 through 12 use Chromebooks and the Canvas learning management system. *"We embed a Google Slides-based slide show with each day's learning activities mapped out for students to access. Everything runs through that slide show; it's pretty slick,"* says Nikson.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the district has offered face-to-face and virtual classes. Because there was already a strong system in place, when the high school and middle schools had to go 100-percent virtual, the transition was seamless. In addition, a staff member at each school is in charge of communicating with virtual families to maintain the important human connection.

Nikson says Securly Classroom, which lets teachers monitor student devices regardless of the student's location, has been invaluable during remote learning. *"Being able to log onto Securly Classroom, which integrates with Canvas, lets teachers do what they need, whether it's to push out a URL, lock a screen, or make an announcement. It's especially helpful for teachers who have in-person and virtual students at the same time."* Securly Classroom allows teachers to regain the sense of control that may have been easier to come by prior to COVID.

## A cloud-based filter with easy upkeep

With students using devices both on and off school grounds, Sheboygan Falls needed to be sure that students are protected. For years, the district had used an on-premise device for filtering and was locked into a five-year license. *"The device was expensive, difficult to upkeep, and required constant calls to customer service,"* says Nikson. *"We needed a change."*

Luckily, they discovered the cloud-based solution of Securly Filter through a statewide purchasing option. They tested Securly Filter, along with a couple of other virtual filters, and the choice was clear. Securly Filter was easy to use and cost-effective, so they purchased it for the 2019-2020 school year. *"Filter worked great, and the cost made it an obvious winner. Set up was simple and we haven't had any problems."*

Teachers appreciate Securly Filter as much as administrators, particularly because of the product's ease of use and flexibility. At a recent training, Nikson says a special education teacher was thrilled when she saw how easy it was to create custom block lists to monitor students with attention challenges.

## Securly products provide peace of mind

*"We have a constant line of communication with the Securly team and they are invested in helping us use their products effectively. I can reach out to anyone and will get a response very quickly,"* says Nikson. He also appreciates that he was able to develop teacher training materials from Securly documents. Best of all, the Securly products have unparalleled uptime, freeing the technology team to focus on other responsibilities.

> *"Having a solution that maintains up time gives you peace of mind, especially when students have devices at home. Not only are we following our legal responsibilities and protecting the students, but we are also opening up access and educational opportunities."*

## What comes next?

The district is currently evaluating what's taking place in virtual classes to determine what they will keep doing when the pandemic ends. They will continue to use Securly Classroom and are very interested in Securly On-Call, Securly's round-the-clock monitoring solution that uses highly trained specialists who analyze flagged student activity.

> *"Overall, Securly Classroom in the pandemic has allowed our teachers to push our UDL initiatives forward and keep a connection with our students."*