Skill Struck ®

Santa Fe Public Schools Exceeds the National Computer Science HS Enrollment Average by 52.2%

Santa Fe Public Schools (SFPS) is on a mission to provide all their students with opportunities to succeed. To further that goal they started to look for a computer science solution that could better engage their students in learning to code and support their teachers and administrators.

Why Skill Struck?

SFPS had been slowly rolling out free computer science (CS) resources district-wide. While they were able to introduce coding to their teachers and students, they got to a point where they required a more robust CS Curriculum. So they began a search for a CS solution that:

1. Could provide administrators with usage data.
2. Had accessibility features.
3. Introduced coding languages in elementary school.
4. Would be an active and ongoing partnership.

As they evaluated the different solutions they found that Skill Struck hit the mark on all of these points listed above. The Skill Struck and SFPS partnership officially began in July of 2022. Justine Chavez-Crespin, SFPS Digital Learning Innovation Coordinator, explained:

> "Skill Struck was just a good fit. I now have data that says this is where our students began, these are the lessons they are interested in, helps us identify gaps. We can now compare apples to apples. It's been so important to know the narrative and true story of what is happening within our schools and how we can better support students. All of this has been supported by the Skill Struck team."

A Successful District-Wide Adoption

SFPS leaders knew that simply offering CS to all their students wouldn't be enough to make this adoption as equitable as possible. Closely working together, SFPS and Skill Struck have creatively encouraged student engagement and trained teachers to become confident and passionate CS advocates in their classrooms.

Here's a snapshot at the incredible growth we've seen year over year:

Santa Fe Public Schools Skill Struck Usage

2022-2023 School Year		*2023-2024 School Year*	
4,897	**299**	**6,821**	**425**
Active Student Users	Active Teacher Users	Active Student Users ***39% increase** since 22-23*	Active Teacher Users ***42% increase** since 22-23*

According to code.org, the national high school student *CS enrollment average was 5.8% in 2023*. SFPS blows that out of the water with **58% of their K -12 students learning CS at school**.

How do they do it? Below are the keys to their success and growth over their almost two years of partnering with Skill Struck.

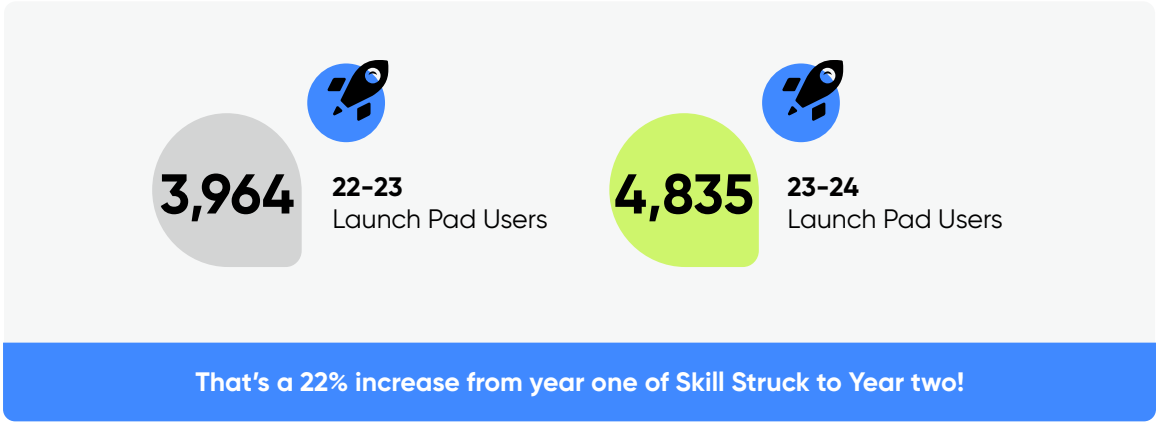
Providing Computer Science Education to K-5 Students

SFPS found that the most effective way to implement CS equitably was to begin teaching the foundations of CS to their elementary students. By implementing Skill Struck into K-5 classrooms, SFPS is igniting the interest of students before any ideas of who can and cannot excel in coding are formed. It also gives all students a chance to discover if coding and CS is interesting to them since the curriculum is regularly scheduled into their routines.

> "Students in grades 2-6 have been using Skill Struck on a weekly basis while attending their Computer Literacy elective. Skill Struck challenges students to look at problems (and solutions) in a different way and I have observed these skills transfer into the rest of their school life, including problem solving on the playground, preparing for the science fair (or other classroom projects) and the perseverance to continue after it doesn't come out "right" the first, second, or third time. I have also discussed, with several 6th graders, the benefit of continuing their computer science learning while moving into middle and high school and many want to continue," said Corinna Saiz, a Digital Learning Coach at Santa Fe Public Schools.

SFPS's K-5 students have experienced big growth since the implementation of Skill Struck's Launch Pad, a computer science platform dedicated to helping elementary students learn the foundations of computer science.

Here's a snapshot of their K-5 student usage growth year over year:



Launch Pad is a recommended Computer Science curriculum by the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED).

Giving Teachers Confidence through CS Professional Development

SFPS understands a confident teacher is vital for students to have a positive experience with CS. But for many educators, CS is a new and uncomfortable concept to teach. SFPS has amazing Digital Learning Coaches who train and support teachers in integrating Skill Struck into their classrooms. To support their Digital Learning Coaches and teachers, SFPS coordinated with their Skill Struck Customer Success Manager to host several professional development sessions.

Because of this professional development, **51% of their teachers chose to use Skill Struck** in their classrooms during this 23-24 school year. Justine Chaves-Crespin SFPS explained:

> "None of our use with Skill Struck is forced or assigned. We very much pride ourselves in an organic creation of CS programs. Every teacher that is using it has made that choice. This isn't a district-mandated rollout. All of this has been done through organic efforts of engagement and PD."

That is the power of Skill Struck's teacher-friendly platforms, supportive Digital Learning Coaches, and intentional professional development. Justine continues:

> "Once you get teachers engaged and excited it just grows from there. We now have forces within our district that can champion how important Skill Struck is, the skills that students are gaining, and how good it has been for their school. Not just computer teachers, but homeroom teachers are utilizing it and saying their students' math skills are growing, and have more problem-solving and computational thinking skills because of their work within Skill Struck which has been really amazing."

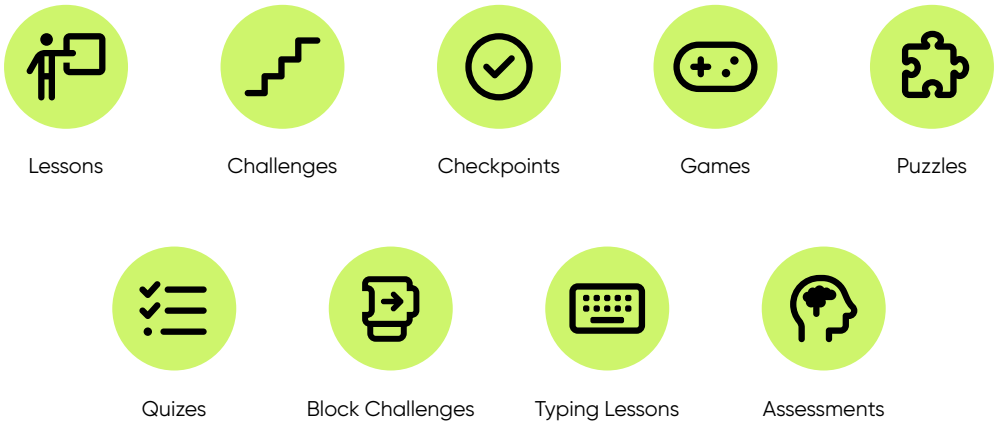
Thinking Outside the Computer Science Box

To encourage student and teacher engagement with Skill Struck, SFPS looked at the unique details of each school, analyzed what programs were already in place, and found the best entry point for Skill Struck that aligned with their strengths. They have introduced Skill Struck into after-school programs, technology classes, and regular classes.

Once integrated, SFPS started thinking through ways to incentivize teachers and students to engage in the platforms. SFPS and Skill Struck have been collaborating to host coding competitions that award teachers and students for using the platforms. They've held several of these. Last year they held a micro:bit competition. In March of 2024 hosted a March Madness coding competition where students with the most hours on Skill Struck received prizes. Justine said:

> "These competitions serve as effective tools for increasing engagement and buy-in from both teachers and students. They foster skill development, recognition, peer learning, and real-world applications of coding and computer science concepts. By tapping into the competitive and collaborative spirit of these events, educators can inspire greater interest and investment in coding education among their students."

SFPS's creative and out-of-the-box thinking has been successful and their students are engaging on the platform. The first year with Skill Struck (22-23) their students completed **102,028**:



From the fall of 2023 to February 2024, SFPS students have already engaged in **82,034** of these activities, projecting much higher engagement by the end of the school year.

The partnership between Santa Fe Public Schools and Skill Struck has proven to be a successful model for providing equitable and engaging computer science education to students and teachers district wide. By focusing on early exposure to coding in elementary schools, providing effective professional development for teachers, and implementing creative initiatives to encourage student and teacher participation, SFPS has achieved remarkable engagement and growth.

Learn more about how Skill Struck can support your school district in providing similar opportunities to students by contacting us at ***skillstruck.com/get-demo***.

Let's start your journey of empowering the next generation of coders.

Funds: Santa Fe Public Schools ETN (Educational Technology Note)

FTE: 11,769

School Type: Local School District

District Name: Santa Fe Public Schools

Location: Santa Fe, New Mexico