

**Keith Roberts, Director of Technology**

Center Cass School District 66

699 Plainfield Road

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Keith Roberts - Director of Technology  
March 2025 Board Report

It's with great pleasure that I announce the hiring of Sharon Dadepogu as our new helpdesk technician! Sharon comes to us with experience in both technical and classroom environments. She has a great passion for both working with kids and exploring the use of technology.

In early January, PowerSchool reported a cybersecurity incident that affected thousands of school districts around the world. We thoroughly investigated the logs, confirming that our data was not part of the breach. However, we were dismayed to learn that an offline backup of our data had been accessed and was included in the breach.

Our transition to Skyward began in 2023, and we officially went live in June 2024. At that time, we informed PowerSchool of our departure, believing our data would be securely deprecated as planned.

We later learned that as much as 12 years of student, basic demographic data had been part of the breach. Along with student data, staff data, including name, work email address and work. Phone numbers were also exposed. Well, this breach was no fault of ours. It is very troubling that a company that is trusted and used worldwide would leave this type of access open to their support.

In response to the breach, we personally addressed all parent emails and advised families to follow the steps outlined in Pearson's notification. We want to reassure our community that we have never collected or stored student or staff Social Security numbers in our PowerSchool database.

This was a deeply concerning cybersecurity incident, and we take it very seriously. While we implement strong security measures to protect stored data on premises, it's hard to know what steps are taken by vendors.

We are planning for the installation of our Illinois Century network Internet connection this summer. As you'll remember, this is provided free of charge through the state and the DO.IT consortium of schools and libraries. This will be a resilient connection along with our primary Internet provider. As almost all of our services and curriculum rely on Internet connectivity, we must have reliable and resilient connections.

The use of artificial intelligence in large language models and conversation-based AI has rapidly expanded in education. Many of our staff members have inquired about integrating AI into student projects. While AI can be a powerful tool, it's important to approach it with careful consideration.

With that in mind, we are developing a local AI system that utilizes the same large language models but operates independently of global data sources. This will allow our staff and students to explore AI while ensuring data confidentiality and protecting student information. Designed for use exclusively within the district, this project will provide a secure environment for a wide range of educational applications. I'm hoping to have this up and running in May.