

District Technology Report January-March 2015

Goals in Progress:

- Empower District Technology Committee
- Expand the work of the LCTC Interns by creating a Repair Depot
- Expand wireless access
- Update the 3-year Technology Plan
- Provide opportunities for training
- Maintaining current equipment
- Prepare technology list for new buildings

We are currently working towards enabling members of our District Technology Committee and other positions, such as the Technology Coaches, to have a piece of the "Management Pie". Many Technology Committee members now have full administrative access to our Google Apps for Education console allowing them to manage users and devices in the buildings. We hope to continue expanding this practice, therefore lessening the workload on our department and empowering them to have more immediate access to resources.

We have also been working to expand wireless access to support the growing number of mobile devices within the district.

Another goal is to make the best use of our Internship program with LCTC and CAI to help these students gain real-world experience while utilizing them as a valuable resource to maintain a quick turn-around for computer repair. We are beginning a "Repair Depot" during the hours these students are with us. Staff may bring devices in for immediate repair. This will allow the

interns experience not only in repair work, but in the area of customer service.

The construction of our new buildings brings an opportunity to enhance technology for our students in these outlying schools. We are working with Dr. Hadfield to purchase all new equipment for these new buildings, and plan to refurbish any existing equipment to start an exchange program via the Repair Depot. This plan will allow for the direct exchange of equipment in the event of hardware failure, or if the device needs to be sent off for repair.

With all the changes made over the last year toward improving wireless access, replacing outdated network equipment and hundreds of additional mobile devices added, we will begin updating our 3-year plan thus helping identify upcoming costs. From networking and discussions with other district Technology Coordinators, we have determined the need to begin identifying costs in order to maintain devices like Chromebooks. Other districts are seeing a 3-year life expectancy with Chromebooks which is much shorter than our traditional computing equipment.

Budgeting:

- Increase in hardware budget over last 2 years
- eRate reimbursement for Category 2 equipment possible for 2015-16
- Increase number of mobile devices for students and staff
- Use existing equipment in OBE and HD as surplus for other buildings

Budgets are always a challenge. Dr. Hadfield has increased our hardware budget over the last two years. We have also been

working with recent changes in eRate to secure funding for connections between buildings, and within buildings and equipment. If successful, we hope to see up to 72% reimbursement for networking equipment in both new buildings and several projects on campus.

We have been able to successfully extend the life of many computers using virtual technology, and were able to increase the number of computers available to students using this technology. Computers that should have been replaced years ago have given us additional years of service. Unfortunately, this life cannot be extended forever. Much of the technology that keeps the older machines moving now is ending future support. This has become troublesome for some applications, and we no longer have a surplus of parts to keep them running.

Even after budget increases, for which we are grateful, the preliminary budget still falls short of providing the best solutions for every problem. With the support of the School Board and Administration we hope to see new equipment in both new buildings to allow our department and interns to build back a surplus of equipment, refurbish what we can and repurpose devices to put forth our best efforts in keeping our technology useful.

Staffing:

- Staff-to-device ratio remains low
- Training still an essential need; results in frustrated teachers
- Establish line of communication with new coaching positions
- Routine maintenance and data security lack attention
- Unification of efforts and identification of needs across all levels of the district is a challenge

Staffing still remains stretched, and training is still an essential need within our district. Many of our work orders are related to basic problems. We still see staff that cannot set margins in Microsoft Word. We also see staff taking the long way around, not knowing how to create shortcuts. We end up with frustrated teachers because they don't know how to bookmark a page. They refer back to an email with a link and when that email gets accidentally moved to another folder or deleted, they can't get back into the resource.

Plus, routine maintenance and data security still lack much needed attention.

Currently, we do not have a very efficient or effective line of communication across all levels in the district. For example, adding the Technology Coaches to our Technology Committee and permitting time for our department to access them to understand their focus and needs would help align infrastructure and resource planning to better support each building's technology. It is important to have this solid foundation and open lines of communication to unify the efforts and identify the needs of all administrators, educators, directors, instructional coaches, our Technology Committee and our Technology Department in order to identify and overcome challenges one may create for the other.

Proposed Upcoming Changes:

- Move from Outlook to Gmail as our email program
- Continue to encourage Google Drive and Classroom
- Add Cellular Instant Remote Access Points to buses

Some changes soon to happen include taking advantage of Gmail to alleviate the growing email storage needs. We're also continuing to encourage the use of Google's other resources like Drive and Classroom to also reduce the growing demands on storage while providing fluid and user-friendly access to information easily exchanged between staff and students.

We've recently added our first Cellular Instant Remote Access Point. This allows a very mobile solution to be transported from bus to bus giving all riders access to our network while on the road. Initial tests appear to have been successful. We received comments from our test runs, such as:

"It was the quietest bus trip ever,"

"We were able to continue research on our way to competition."