

Amy Spalt, Curriculum Committee Chair
Tech R Us School District
2013 Media Blvd.
Technology, NJ 01234

September 19, 2011

RE: Technology Plan Memo- Assignment 1

Dr. Thomas Mann:

It is with great enthusiasm that I led the curriculum committee, a sub-committee of the Technology Planning Committee, through the evaluation and development of the curricula and instructional needs our district technology plan. It is our mission to lead a technologically enhanced learning environment equipped with the hardware, the software, and the connectivity to networks that afford all teachers and students the technologies required to analyze and solve real world problems, create multimedia presentations, communicate within and outside our class rooms, journey on digital field trips, and optimize the links that connect the world to their computers.

We are confident that the district technology plan has been designed as an instructional plan to be fully integrated into all current and future curriculums of the school system. The major component of the plan is to provide students with the opportunities and information necessary to use technology ethically in all present and future educational experiences, as well as in work and life practices.

In meeting several of the Technology Facilitator standards, the technology plan has been a way to plan and design methods and strategies to transform teaching pedagogy from conventional instruction to that which will utilize technology to maximize student learning. It will further allow for modeling of effective learning environments and technology supported staff development opportunities that will increase their effectiveness as educators.

Per your request, attached please find a copy of the Curriculum Committee's findings. Should questions or concerns arise, I welcome further communication in the matter.

Best Regards,

Amy Spalt

/as

Encl.

Curriculum Committee Findings for the 2011-2013 Technology Planning Committee

III Technology Overview

C. Needs Assessment

1. Complete a needs assessment for educational technology in your school district or charter school. Begin by determining current status. Afterwards, determine the educational needs, prioritize the identified needs and plan for necessary changes through goals and objectives.

a. Evaluate educators' current practices in integrating technology across the curriculum.

The educators at Tech R Us School utilize the staff computers in their classrooms to aid in teaching across the curriculum. Educational websites are accessed and utilized for informational purposes, to differentiate instruction through visual image and audio clips, and software is used to create spreadsheets, graphs, charts, tables, learning center manipulatives, classroom activities, and to supply supplemental learning materials. Those educators who have access to interactive smart boards within the class room implement activities that foster learning through student centered activities.

Several members of our staff also specifically teach technology courses. These educators coordinate their lessons with those of the classroom teacher to infuse technology with classroom instruction across the curriculum.

III Technology Overview

C. Needs Assessment

1. Complete a needs assessment for educational technology in your school district or charter school. Begin by determining current status. Afterwards, determine the educational needs, prioritize the identified needs and plan for necessary changes through goals and objectives.

c. Determine the current educational environment and barriers by describing how educators are assured access to technology to facilitate technology integration across the curriculum.

Currently our staff has limited access to our stationary computer labs, as they are available only when they are not in use by scheduled computer classes. Mobile labs and

computers for students within class rooms are not currently available. Basic Skills Instructors shall utilize laptop computers to drive instruction for a portion of the lesson with each child. Further, each educator has access to one computer within his/her class room that is dedicated to teacher needs.

All administrators are required to seek innovative ways to utilize technology in the classroom and within the School Library Media Center. Hence, district administrators are well versed in ways to integrate technology into the classroom. First, students' needs are evaluated by the teachers and the network administrator, as reflected in the current curriculum at Tech R US School and aligned with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and the vision, mission, and goals of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills Organization. Meanwhile, building principals conduct regular teacher observations and discover staff needs through routine assessment surveys to evaluate the technology needs of district educators. Additionally, the administrators chart and analyze results of state standardized tests, portfolios, and student risk factor indicators such as demographic statistics, cultural diversity, language barriers, and the children's attendance. With this data, technology planning is done by committee assessment.

Professional Development has been established in the past to demonstrate various ways to permeate technology into lessons, especially for those who have access to interactive white boards. Beginning and intermediate proficiency leveled training has been provided to those staff members who have access to Promethean Boards. As a district, we also require the professional use of OnCourse Systems, an online lesson planning program, and RealTime, an online program to track, calculate, and communicate grades to the school community. This program is also utilized to maintain student records; hence, teachers use this tool for attendance, scheduling, and grading. It is also a portal for the Child Study Team to transmit student files and schedule meetings with the staff. Tech R Us School also employs Outlook, the e-mail program within Microsoft Office Suite, and a district website to enhance communications globally. Additionally, teachers are required to operate the teacher website portal through OnCourse Systems to maintain parent/teacher communications and to post student assignments weekly. It is our notion that the more our staff is trained and participating in digital technology, the more prepared Tech R Us School will be to educate our students to function successfully with the challenges of a digital society. We are dedicated to providing continued professional development as new technology emerges to further support the effective use of technology within the class room and school library media center.

2. Based on the answers given above, indicate the needs of the district to improve academic achievement for all students through the integration of technology.

Many initiatives are required to address NJCCCS 8.1 and 8.2 currently. Based on the findings of administrator observations and staff assessment surveys, continued professional development is required to assure all members are proficient users and creators of 21st century media and technology. Teachers need to reform their instructional approach. Additional white boards for all classrooms will ensure interactive learning activities are taking place district-wide. Moreover, student computers are necessary to allow equipment to be readily available for daily student usage. Digital cameras and digital video cams are important to develop individual and collaborative multimedia group projects; hence, allowing students to create mash-ups, digital stories, digital art, and other multimedia projects. Student response systems are also required to

enhance student / teacher communication within the class room. A SRS in every classroom would allow deeper questioning and discussions, as many come equipped with number, text, and full sentence capability. This technology is designed to produce a class room where every student is actively engaged and participating. Video conferencing equipment such as webcams would also add educational value as they provide visual and audio capabilities, including video calling through online communications such as Skype, which would provide students the opportunity to communicate both locally and globally.

IV. Funding Plan

B. Indicate the federal, state, local, and other sources of funds used to help ensure that students have access to technology and ensure that educators are prepared to integrate technology effectively into curricula and instruction.

At this time, the district plans to utilize a combination of both federal and state aid, as well as federal and state grant monies awarded to efficaciously prepare our students to successfully participate in a comprehensive digital world. The annual local budget and donations, along with various public and private grants will also fund the district technology initiative and professional development program to supply students with the Web 2.0 tools necessary to achieve success in the challenges of our dynamic work place and to prepare our teachers with the skills to foster student learning within a digital culture and to effectuate expansion of their required core competencies. To help secure required funds, the district currently employs a full time grant writer.

VII. Professional Development

C. Based on educator's proficiency and the intended needs for professional development, describe only the ongoing, sustained, highly-quality professional development opportunities planned for 2010-2011 as it relates to the infusion of technology into the curricular process.

For the purposes of this sub-committee, it is assumed that the academic year stated above is intended to read 2011-2012 (current school year). With that premise, the school district contracts XYZ Company to maintain the infrastructure of our school's technology, but also to provide assistance and training to our staff as necessary. Employees of XYZ Company are present daily and for all professional development activities to deliver training in any identified technological areas of need.

The district will also provide professional development offered by staff members such as the School Library Media Specialist, who can offer training on topics such as effective print and non-print information retrieval, and from other district colleagues who currently teach technology or who are obtaining an MA in Educational Technology on web 2.0 tools and related resources during staff in-service or during regularly scheduled contractual staff meetings. Professional development can be offered on campus on such topics as the creation and implementation of digital multimedia such as wikis, blogs, hosting software for classroom

discussion boards, file sharing, and uploading digital assignments, websites, digital stories, mash-ups, podcasts, webquests, online custom graphic generators, screencasting software, 3-D modeling software, wolframalfa computing software, using Skype in the classroom, educational social networking sites, as well as copyright law and fair use.

Moreover, the district administrators will continue to provide clear descriptions of the types of learning experiences that should be planned. Thus, sample lesson plans, scenarios, videos, and indicators of engaged learners will be shared regularly to assist staff in the technological transformation of their pedagogical practices. District leaders will also make a concerted effort to link technology standards to other curricula and instructional initiatives within the school in order to decrease the teacher's perception of multiple change initiatives. Throughout all instructional professional development, administration will ensure that all trainers engage teachers in the types of interactive, inquiry based learning experiences that they are expected to integrate into their class rooms.

Finally, a professor in residence, from a local university, will join our staff to provide training and on-going support in areas of collaborative reflection and professional communities. Not only will the professor give face to face instruction, observation and feedback, but will also train the staff to collaborate through the use of technology throughout the year.

VIII. Describe the evaluation process and accountability measures that monitor progress and mid-course corrections that are used to regularly evaluate the extent to which goals, objectives, activities, resources and services are effective in integrating technology into curricula and instruction to promote 21st century skills and global collaboration and outreach.

To ensure the equitable implementation of the district technology plan, the technology committee will meet at scheduled times for collaborative reflection. The purpose of the committee is to monitor the progress of the plan, to establish budgetary priorities, revise the plan when needed, and update the acceptable use policies as necessary. The committee shall also provide the Superintendent of Schools with an annual progress report.