

Glenbrook District 225
Technology Committee Minutes – January 30, 2014

Members Present: Bretag, Doughty, Hanley, Pryma, Ptak, Riggle, Thimm, Wegley, Williamson

Members Absent: Shein

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 a.m.

The Technology Committee's purpose is to share information and review items that will be brought to the Board as information and to review items prior to bringing them to the Board for review and a decision. This meeting will focus on updates and items which will be brought to the February 10 Board meeting.

Student Information System Update

PowerSchool

Mr. Bretag provided an update on PowerSchool. We're one semester into PowerSchool implementation and from a teacher's perspective there has been nothing but exceptional feedback. First semester grading went well. We've gone through 4 updates and it has been an efficient experience. We especially like the time it has freed up for our programmers.

Mr. Doughty commented that PowerSchool is great from a parent perspective.

eSped

There have been a couple of glitches with eSped (special educational module), but they have moved us forward quickly. The program has integrated very nicely with PowerSchool and is being used to run reports and by case managers.

InfoSnap

Preparation for registering incoming freshman has already begun. Paper registration forms have already been sent out to parents of incoming freshman students. We won't be able to go digital for incoming freshmen until 2015. A small group of parents may be used as a trial group to work through the process and obtain their feedback. The schools are currently in the process of building out the process for booksale.

Mr. Doughty asked if Mr. Bretag is getting needed support on the initiatives. Mr. Bretag stated that he is working with Dr. Williamson, Mr. Thimm and the programmers. The team works well together and is moving forward sufficiently. The systems trainer is learning the system, will obtain updates and train staff. There will be consistency at both schools and the message will be the same.

We are going into schedule building for next year. Schedule building was difficult with School Logic and required many work-arounds. We are confident that will no longer be the case and feel good about where we are.

School Messenger

We consistently receive feedback after we send a message through the automated parent notification system that telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are incorrect. The transition to InfoSnap will help ensure accuracy of information and delivery of messages through School Messenger.

Skyward Update

Dr. Riggle stated that Skyward is functioning well for both the business and human resources systems. It has been a good transition. Human resources recently activated the emergency contact information screen. Staff received an e-mail message asking them to enter their emergency contacts. More human resources screens will be added through the summer. Staff were given the option to access their W-2's through Skyward which eliminated the need to mail them out.

Dr. Ptak reported that the business data transferred fairly seamlessly. The audit did take longer, but everything passed just fine.

Mr. Doughty asked if Skyward will cover all human resource and business functions.

Dr. Riggle stated that there might be more robust systems, but people are needed to run them. The District had a long history of writing software so we were able to keep JSchool alive, even though the company died 8 years ago. JSchool did not have a student information side. As time went on, what existed became out of date and people started moving away from JSchool. We needed to select something that would work with our feeder districts. We will probably not be able to use all that Skyward has to offer. The move to Skyward has been good.

AppliTrack Update

The District has used AppliTrack for employment applications for many years. We've recently added the interview questionnaire component. The questions are customized based on job category and analyzes a candidate's strengths and weaknesses. Based on the answers to the questions, AppliTrack provides a score which can be used to rank candidates. Answers provided also allow supervisors to generate interview questions.

Mr. Doughty asked if we are able to see the raw data. Dr. Riggle stated that we can see individual answers to the questions which allows us to follow-up during the interview process. We're not going to allow the system to choose our employees, but it is a helpful screening tool when there are a lot of applicants for a position.

Mr. Doughty asked if we are comfortable with security. Dr. Riggle stated we do not share information. Many districts use AppliTrack. Dr. Williamson stated applicants who apply to other districts using AppliTrack are given the option to transfer their information when they apply to another district utilizing AppliTrack. Candidates have the option to answer yes or no to information sharing.

External and internal job candidates are asked to enter their information in AppliTrack to level the playing field. Messages were sent to candidates who were in the system for a while to ask if they wanted to remain in the system.

Northfield Township Technology Consortium

Approximately 10 years ago the Village of Northbrook created a fiber ring which connects all governmental entities. The connection runs down Landwehr Road and a decision was made to run the connection to the Glenbrook District Office. Mr. Thimm is working on the project to build a hub and share services with other entities including the feeder districts. We are working with Districts 30 and 28. This partnership would result in a 20% cost savings for District 28. Mr. Thimm reviewed the benefits of E-Rate and stated that the savings could be between 40-60%. There is a E-Rate contract in place. Dr. Riggle stated we will work with our attorney on an MOU which will be brought to the second Board meeting in February.

A committee member commented that it seems like a lot of work and asked if we are saving District 225 money. Dr. Riggle stated that Marcus Thimm has invested a lot of time in the development of this project. If everything goes well we can bring substantial benefits to our community, even though we have separate Boards of Education, we can come together and all realize cost savings. It has been very positive and has opened the lines of communication. There are also possibilities for the Village of Glenview to get more for less money. Dr. Riggle stated that he doesn't know anyone that is not excited about the possibilities.

The Village of Northbrook is struggling with technology staffing issues, but it is only a matter of time before all government entities can be connected to the fiber ring if they have a desire to do so.

Chromebook Presentation

A presentation is planned for the February 10 Board meeting to review the Chromebook initiative and educational impact on student engagement. Dr. Williamson distributed the materials which will be shared with the Board. A committee member commented that it would be good to remind people of the definition of student engagement. Dr. Williamson said that would be included. Dr. Williamson stated that they don't have all the engagement data because the focus group feedback was to be reviewed on the day school was cancelled.

Mr. Bretag reviewed the charts for the Board presentation which show the significant increase in the documents created in Google Apps over the past six months, the types of documents created, average number of users sharing a document and documents viewed daily by type. The increase in usage, consistent usage and collaboration has been impressive. Heavy professional development has increased the use of applications. Teachers are comfortable with the tools. We have a large number of teachers who are eager to learn more and would like to attend the Google Summit. The top 3 teaching focuses are engagement, critical thinking and creation and creativity. The top three innovation focuses are digital portfolios, create their own textbooks and connecting to the world.

An area we will need to address is distraction. Students need to know how to be good digital citizens so they know the right and wrong time to use technology.

Dr. Riggle stated that Hapara and Google formed an alliance. Hapara offers a Teacher Dashboard which shows Student activity dashboard across all Google Apps for \$4 per student per year. We believe this is a good investment.

Dr. Riggle stated that a variety of teachers and students will be present at the Board meeting to provide their perspective. The analytics will be reviewed. Dr. Riggle asked if there was anything else the board committee members would like addressed in the presentation.

Mrs. Hanley requested information about how departments such as Fine Arts use Google Apps.

Mr. Doughty requested that a range of experiences be presented. He would like to hear about challenges and not just positive experiences. He would also like to hear about how students manage distractions.

Chromebook Pricing Model

Chromebook pricing will be presented at the February 24 Board meeting. We are currently in the process of obtaining pricing. When we first discussed a buy-out we heard feedback from students and parents who questioned why they could not keep the devices when they paid money for them. We would like the board to allow the students to keep their devices. We believe the students would take better care of the Chromebooks if they know they are going to keep them.

We have been looking at a new device for next year's incoming freshmen. One device being considered is the Google Lenovo which sells for \$349 with a touch screen. It is durable enough to be carried in a backpack and could be a 3 to 4 year device. The committee viewed an Acer device with a touch screen which sells for \$299. It has some features of an iPad device, flip keyboard and graphing calculator.

Online textbook rental terms have increased from 180 to 360 days which has opened up the possibility of the use of online textbooks and cost savings. Students could use Google Play on their Chromebooks to access their online textbooks. This is a wonderful option which will be explored further.

The cost of Chromebooks will increase from \$25 to \$118 in year two. We will need to discuss the \$1 buy-out option at the end of year two and if we continue to purchase insurance, self-insure, or buy the insurance from the manufacturer. The most common damage experienced with the Chromebooks is damage to the screen. Beck's has expressed an interest in replacing the Chromebook screens themselves. The cost is \$42 per screen and we currently charge a \$25 deductible. Beck's could handle the screen replacement. The only question is will parts be available because Samsung will not provide parts after next year.

Copying Update

Dr. Ptak provided an update on copy usage. We have entered into a new 5 year contract with Xerox. Copy use has decreased 10% from last year to this year. The number of copiers has been reduced and the price of the machines has decreased. Copying expenses will continue to decrease due to electronic sharing of documents among staff and students. We will see savings in the building budgets and with our lease. This topic will be brought to the Board at the end of February or early March.

A committee member asked if tests can be taken electronically. We are seeing more teachers doing things electronically. We could save a lot of money by moving from Scantron tests which cost 2-3 cents per sheet.

Other

A committee member asked about data storage issues. Dr. Riggle said that this is an important topic which will be brought up during the February 26 Technology Committee meeting when the technology budget is discussed. Although it is a district initiative, there has been no significant movement forward due to personnel issues.

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 a.m.

The next scheduled meeting is February 26, 2014 at 7:30 a.m. in the Principal's Conference Room at Glenbrook South.