

Glenbrook District 225 Technology Committee Minutes – November 22, 2011

Members Present: Bretag, Hammer, Jakes, Regalbutto, Ptak, Riggle, Shein, Thimm

Members Absent: none

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 a.m.

Technology Enabled Classrooms

Apple TV Demonstration

The Technology Committee meeting began with a demonstration of Apple TV provided by Mr. Bretag. Mr. Bretag stated that the current technology enabled classroom consists of a projector, SMART Board and teacher computer of either PC or Apple. The district is consistently looking for new technologies that will enhance teaching and learning in the classroom.

Apple recently changed the iPad operating system which would allow teachers to connect to an Apple TV box at a cost of about \$100.00 per TV, plus the cost of HDMI cables. The technology for Apple TV involves a small box and a small remote. The HDMI cables can plug into a projector or LCD TV through a HDMI port and connect to Wi-Fi. Apple TV would allow teachers to access content in their cabinet through their laptop and the Internet. They would also have access to eBooks, PDF files, presentations uploaded to YouTube, videos, PowerPoint and Flickr presentations. A SMART Board can be simulated using an iPad and TV through Airplay. Apple TV includes access to podcasts and access to all cable providers teachers and students use in the classroom. Mr. Bretag stated that social studies teachers requested to purchase the PBS War series which would be available at no additional cost.

A committee member stated that the district has already made a significant investment in SMART Boards and asked if the goal was to replace them with LCD TV's. Mr. Bretag stated that some of the SMART Boards put into use eight years ago are now starting to go bad. SMART Boards could be placed in storage to replace those that go bad. Another option would be to explore selling the SMART Boards because they still have a value. Mr. Bretag stated that we are in an exploration phase and are trying to get people thinking about the next level of teaching and learning.

It was noted that Google has a similar product, but the cost is considerably higher.

District Goals Update

Long-Range Financial Planning

Mr. Thimm distributed a draft technology master financial plan developed by Dr. Ptak and Mr. Thimm which will make technology expenditures more predictable. The plan categorizes the equipment, shows if the equipment is leased or purchased, lists the useful life of the equipment at each building, and the anticipated costs. The next step is to inventory all technology equipment and place it on a cycle. This master financial plan will enable us to track equipment better for purposes of service and support. The plan should be complete by the end of February.

Disaster/Crisis Recovery Plan

Mr. Thimm distributed a disaster recovery plan update memo which describes the disaster recovery process, a progress update, and timeline of planned activities for the 2011/2012, 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 school years. The district recently experienced problems with the SAN system causing us to have to restore data and services. Mr. Thimm stated that we are at the point where we need to replace existing servers and look at what we need to do to eliminate outages.

We need to lay out and identify a system that accommodates our storage needs, then look at processes and what procedures we would follow in various situations during system failures. Dr. Riggle stated that we have to be reasonable and determine how much money we are willing to invest. We would like to provide the storage capacity and redundancy in servers and services. We are examining collaboration with peer districts and municipalities in regards to sharing infrastructures and disaster recovery resources.

Equipment will need to be evaluated and an RFP developed. A status report and RFP will be provided to the Board at the second Board meeting in January.

Gmail Conversion

We have gone through testing to transition from Exchange to Google. A steering committee has been established to oversee the e-mail migration project and communicate necessary information at the building level. We plan to move the entire staff and student e-mail without changing domains. The steering committee and technology trainers will work with the technology team to complete the migration to Gmail by the end of the school year for staff and students.

Website Update

Pat Giorgas is in the midst of finishing department website templates, including student activities and athletics. The templates should be completed in December. Pat will train the technology trainers and Karen Geddeis and Jen Zimmerman who will do the day-to-day monitoring of the website from the front end.

Focus groups will meet from mid-January through mid-February to provide feedback on the templates. Training will be provided to each department so they can move content and go live internally in a test environment in mid-January. Templates will be shared with the Technology Committee for their thoughts on website navigation. Content will be moved and old pages eliminated. We will make sure it is up-to-date. We will move from SharePoint and launch the new website during spring break. We are moving a little slower than we hoped, but we are moving in a more effective manner that will have people up and running.

SchoolLogic Update

Dr. Riggle provided an update on SchoolLogic. Dr. Riggle stated that MIG's performance is less than we were hoping for, but we have continued to work with MIG to find solutions. MIG has brought a physical server to our site to avoid a problem with TeacherLogic, but we are experiencing problems with the server. TeacherLogic is older and MIG wanted us to move to TeacherLogic.net. MIG came to us with a large build in October which we haven't deployed because we have concerns. Another big build is due in December. MIG's fixes often result in other things breaking. They have had consistent errors for which they have no explanation. We are functioning day-to-day.

We were told that our historical data would be converted, but each year is a separate database, which is not acceptable.

We need to find out about their ability to schedule our schools successfully. They were successful with GBS, but they have concerns about balancing male/female students. They did not successfully schedule GBN with the block and used SASI to produce the schedule.

We own the special education module and will receive royalties from this module.

We are exploring our options and looking at our contract in the event that we have to transition to another system. We are building the transition into our budget in case we want to go in this direction.

There are a couple of new products that did not exist when we selected School Logic. eSchool Sungard is one used by several local school districts. Infinite Campus was our second choice and has made great strides in the last three years.

The financial system software must be explored and a decision made because JSchool cannot accommodate a two tier system report required by TRS. Mr. Thimm and Mrs. Siena looked at some systems at the Triple I conference.

A lot of work and decision-making will be required at this point.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 a.m.

Future Meeting

The next scheduled meeting is February 16, 2012 at 7:00 a.m. in Room 128 at GBS.