

Waterbury/Duxbury Technology Plan, 2009-2012

Washington West Supervisory Union

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The implementation of technology tools into administration, instruction and student work in our schools has gradually increased since our 2007 plan. Our schools continue to update equipment resources regularly such that students and teachers in all classes have equitable access to up-to-date computer resources. The establishment of a three-year replacement cycle in 2003 and budgets to accommodate regular replacement has assured that adequate resources are available for any technology tasks or projects teachers and students wish to perform.

Each year the use of technology tools has expanded for administrative tasks and communication both internally and with our parent community. eMail has become the primary method of communication by Administrators and between staff, and email lists have also been established to facilitate communication between staff and parents. An electronic attendance system (PowerSchool) is being used in both schools as well as electronic lunch counts and report cards at the middle school. The elementary school will be implementing electronic report cards in the coming year. The recent opening of the PowerSchool "Parent Portal" now gives parents and students up-to-the-moment information about assessments and grades at the middle school. The library has purchased a web-based catalog which now makes the collection accessible to all families, staff and community members from any computer with internet access. In addition we are increasing our subscription to electronic resources including DiscoveryEducation (video streaming), World Book (online encyclopedia), SurveyMonkey and Google Applications for Education.

In each school a handful of "teacher leaders" begin to move forward with the use of Web 2.0 tools: class blogs and wikis for communication and collaboration as well as use of Google Documents for sharing and distribution of info to middle school classes. Many of these teachers have also invested in LCD projectors, document cameras and interactive technology for their classrooms, and we are working on strategies to make these tools available to all teachers. One of our goals in 2007 was to "formalize" the role of our technology leaders by reestablishing Technology Committees (we currently have none) and finding other means to recognize the role of this group as mentors and leaders for fellow staff. That goal is reiterated in the current plan with suggestions on how to move forward. The use of technology tools in the instructional process, using ISTE NETS for Teachers/Administrators and Partnership for 21st Century Learning guidelines as a framework for this will continue.

One of the challenges we face is consistency of student experience. Although resources and training are available equally to all teachers, some students receive significantly more technology training and experience than others. Students stay with their teacher or team for two years in all grade levels except Kindergarten. For this reason, students who have not had "tech savvy" teachers can exhibit a deficit in technology skills as they reach the upper grades of our middle school. A 2008 survey helped us identify what areas were and were not being addressed, and resulted in a local "Essential Skills" document that was intended to guide the inclusion of technology into all program areas. This is still a work in progress, and several goals of this plan address the need for continued data collection and identification of areas in need of improvement.

Involving of our entire professional community in the conversation about technology use and 21st Century skills has also been a challenge. Guidelines for the 2007 Technology Plans encouraged us to address the role of "leadership" in the use of technology, and our goals aimed at increasing the level of involvement of our Ed Leaders in planning and implementing technology goals across the curriculum. We have been successful in this area, yet we still struggle to make technology a building-wide professional conversation. There is also an ongoing need for professional development on technology applications as well as instructional strategies conducive to technology integration, but a professional development model that fits our local and District schedule has yet to be identified.