

Best Practices WRSD Technology
January 2008

<i>Best Practices and Indicators</i>	<i>Y/N or NA</i>	<i>Explanation/Documentation</i>
Technology Planning		
1. The district has a comprehensive technology plan that provides direction for administrative and instructional technology decision making.		
a. The district has a board-approved technology plan that addresses both administrative and instructional technology. <i>(Basic Indicator)</i>	Y	
b. The district annually conducts an assessment to identify district and school-level technology needs.	Y	For Hardware: current database used for identifying asset needs for yearly planning. For Hardware & Software: request forms used throughout district to request needs and assessment of those needs.
c. The district has solicited and used stakeholder input in developing the technology plan.	Y	Members developing the plan consist of teachers, administrators, parents, lab assistants and a member from the community.
d. At a minimum, the district technology plan addresses the subjects below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual school technology needs • Equitable resource allocation, anticipating growth and technology advances ¹ • Funding for technology • Cost-effective acquisition • Professional development for technology users • Technical support needs of users • Infrastructure and network communication, including community access issues ² • Information management and delivery ³ 	Y Y Y Y Y Y Y	-Tech Plan has a new position for Tech Integrator which has not yet been established or funded -District network does not connect to other public entities. Use of labs and media centers by public is currently undeveloped.
e. The district technology plan is compatible with state reporting requirements and aligned with federal initiatives.	Y	

¹ Planning may include, for example, bandwidth needs and the rationale for these needs.

² Community access issues could include connectivity to community entities such as public libraries (connectivity can be through hardware, through the Internet, or both), and after-hours access to media centers by the public.

³ Data needs are well-defined and prioritized; delivery systems are designed to provide timely and accurate data.

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f. The objectives in the technology plan are measurable and reflect the desired outcomes for educational and operational programs. ⁴	Y	The technology plan consists of nine goals each of which have action plans, a timeline and assessment measures.
g. The district's annual budget provides funds for major technology initiatives as reflected in the plan.	Y	Replacement cycle for equipment is based on a 5 year cycle. The Tech Integrator position has not been established.
h. The district has taken advantage of opportunities to improve technology operations, increase efficiency and effectiveness, and reduce costs.	Y	Infrastructure equipment continues to be updated. Centralizing servers and major systems continues.
i. The district has identified an individual(s) responsible for implementing and updating the technology plan.	Y	Technology Director manages the plan while there are key components from Director of Curriculum and Tech Task Force members.
j. The district investigates grant opportunities for technology funding and stays current with state and federal funding initiatives. ⁵	Y	This is done on a limited basis (Title IID grant and ERate). Much of this funding is being reduced or new grants are too specific as to their application for general district use.

Cost-Effective Technology Acquisition

2. The district acquires technology in a cost-effective manner that will best meet its instructional and administrative needs.⁶		
a. The district bases its technology acquisitions on identified needs and its technology plan.	Y	All acquisitions are for the purpose of increasing or maintaining technology infrastructure or systems that directly or indirectly align to the goals of the Technology Plan, state ICT standards and ultimately the district Strategic Plan.
b. The district uses the results of research and evaluations of previous decisions to identify technology that will best meet instructional and administrative needs.	Y	This is done by reevaluation and assessment by current users in the district (teachers and administrators), research and consultation with other school districts, vendors and support consultants of the systems.

⁴ For example, when establishing objectives related to incorporating instructional technology into the curriculum, the district should include outcomes based on the effect this technology is expected to have on student performance.

⁵ Federal funding includes programs such as E-rate, and the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund.

⁶ Instructional needs include incorporating technology into the curriculum and needs of students learning how to use technology.

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c. The district has established standards for acquiring digital instructional materials, software, and hardware for administrative and instructional use. ⁷	Y	All requests are made after review and/or trial of software or materials, explanation provided as to how it will be used, and this is accepted or approved by the request process (local principal first, Tech Task or member second).
d. The district provides opportunities for district and school personnel to preview, evaluate, and recommend acquisition of technology strategies, instructional materials, and software.	Y	School personnel must preview and evaluate strategies, materials and software before recommending and acquisition.
e. The district coordinates with the schools and uses different purchasing strategies to lower costs of acquiring technology and instructional learning systems. ⁸	Y	All acquisitions are priced from various vendors to assure the best price when purchasing. We are in process of identifying every kind of technology purchase and need throughout the district in order to redirect all purchasing through the district technology department. This will issue maximizing the purchasing power.
f. The district assists schools in negotiating purchase prices for technology acquisitions.	Y	See above Section e.
g. The district considers future support, operating, maintenance, and disposal costs when it acquires technology.	Y	All desktop computers systems come with a full 5 year warranty, laptops have 3 years. Disposal costs are part of the technology budget.
h. The district equitably distributes technology resources to schools within the district.	Y	

Technology Professional Development

3. District and school-based staff receive professional development training for all technologies used in the district.		
a. The district verifies the availability of appropriate training before acquiring new equipment or software.	Y	Training that may go beyond what is currently available in district, is configured in the cost of acquiring new equipment/software.

⁷ Standards for instructional materials should take into account the Sunshine State Standards, and any other state instructional materials adoption standards.

⁸ Examples of such strategies are negotiating district-wide pricing on instructional learning systems as well as software, hardware, and coordinating orders to take advantage of bulk rate discounts.

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b. The district provides appropriate professional development in technology that is based on feedback from central office and school-based staff and is aligned with the district's strategic plan, technology plan, and the School Improvement Plans (SIPs).	N	Training or professional development in the use of technology needs more assessment and evaluation because: 1- Individual users are at great variants in their own understanding and abilities in using technology and therefore, 2- Integration into the curriculum is not even or formalized though state frameworks and ICT standards are aiming in this direction.
c. The district funds technology training.	Y	
d. The district provides a variety of opportunities in terms of time, location, and delivery mode for educators and other district staff to obtain technology training. ⁹	Y	As much as possible based on schedules. More can be used.
e. The district has established performance criteria that include technology skills for both administrators and teachers.	N	
f. The district provides professional development on integrating technology into the curriculum. (<i>Basic Indicator</i>)	Y	More can be used
g. The district provides appropriate professional development to administrators and non-instructional staff. ¹⁰ (<i>Basic Indicator</i>)	Y	Administrators and non-instructional staff have basic training they need for technology and systems they use. As systems are changed or added these personnel receive further instruction as needed by onsite staff or outside support.
h. The district provides specialized training for technology support personnel.	Y	Some training is available
i. District and school staff receives training to keep technology skills up-to-date.	Y	This is ongoing and is at different levels with different individuals. As systems are added or changed, necessary basic training is made available.
j. The district has a process to assess the effectiveness of professional development training provided to ensure competency in the skills targeted. ¹¹	Y	P.D. evaluations are always provided after any event.

⁹ These opportunities may include traditional classroom and computer lab instruction, as well as web-based instruction, electronic bulletin boards, videotapes, and other self directed, technology-based methods.

¹⁰ The type of professional development provided to this staff depends on their job duties and responsibilities. For example, data entry clerks at schools should be provided training on maintaining data integrity.

¹¹ Districts should strive to go beyond issues such as whether participants liked the professional development opportunity and focus on intended outcomes and skills to be mastered. Performance evaluations may be good indicators of improved skills as a result of professional development if there is something in the evaluation that addresses the issue.

Technical Support

4. The district provides timely and cost-effective technical support that enables educators and district staff to successfully implement technology in the workplace.		
a. The district conducts a comprehensive assessment of the technical support needs of the schools and district offices.	N	Hardware, Software and Repair request sheets are kept on file. Much of requests are done verbally. We are currently looking into a database system for logging all work requests and needs in technology. No formal assessment has been done.
b. The district budgets for all costs associated with the installation and support of its technology.	Y	
c. The district provides comprehensive technical support to the schools and district offices. ¹² (Basic Indicator)	Y	
d. Technical support is available at both the district and school level.	Y	
e. The district has procedures for a regular, systematic, and equitable prioritization of technical support services.	Y	This is a daily procedure to prioritize all requests from all levels of the distinct.
f. The district effectively coordinates the delivery of support services, analyzing the technical support provided, and shares the resolution of support issues among technical support staff.	Y	The tech department is always in communication regarding services affecting multiple systems and buildings and members share applicable information with local school personnel.
g. The district provides timely technical support in accordance with its service priorities.	Y	In general yes, but there is always work on systems and requests that are outstanding, and have to be shuffled down the list in order to respond to daily issues.
h. The district evaluates the quality and timeliness of the technical support provided.	Y	The technology director maintains all records of requests, dates and fixes on file. Each school also maintains some type of monitoring of requests from their school.
i. The district has an equipment replacement policy that specifies a time frame for technologies to be recycled or replaced to minimize the cost of supporting out-of-warranty computers.	Y	General computer systems are on a 5 year replacement cycle.

¹² Providing technical support is accomplished in a variety of ways. For instance, it may include one or more of the following: providing a trained non-instructional technology support person or providing a technology facilitator in each school; training an individual with teaching duties as an application expert to assist their peers; managing a central help desk at the district; implementing a work-order tracking system; or contracting for regional or vendor support services. Areas of technical support may include email support, intranet/internet access, software application support, web development, or computer hardware installation and maintenance.

Infrastructure and Network Communication

5. The district maintains a dependable, standards-based infrastructure employing strategies that cost-effectively maximize network and Internet access and performance.		
a. The district employs practices that provide a consistently available and fully operational network.	Y	
b. The district has developed written speed and access standards for district network resources.	Y	We have monitoring systems in place that log network activity throughout the WAN
c. The district has virus protection software and procedures in place.	Y	
6. The district uses technology to improve communication.		
a. The district uses web technologies, such as the Internet and intranet sites, and email to improve and enhance communication between groups such as schools, districts, the state, parents, and the community.	Y	All teachers and schools have Internet and email access. -In process is migrating to a GroupWise email/calendar system which will increase communication capabilities. -In process is an online parent Internet access module which will allow parents to quickly view their student's records online. -In process is activating the teacher online grade entry system for HS/MS to allow parent access to immediate grade information.
b. The district administration uses email to supplement communications of policies and information to schools.	Y	The district is in process of obtaining parent/family email addresses for the Student Information System to make it available to district staff for increased communication.
c. The district uses email to circumvent costly meetings whenever feasible and to increase the frequency and speed of communications to parents and teachers.	Y	

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7. The district has written policies that apply safe, ethical, and appropriate use practices that comply with legal and professional standards.		
a. Staff, teachers, students, and parents are provided written and verbal guidelines describing the appropriate and inappropriate uses of technology, such as school computers, the Internet, copiers, facsimile machines, and TV/VCRs.	Y	Student with parents/guardians are required to sign the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) form every school year, these remain on file at each school. Teachers and staff are required to sign the AUP once during their tenure or when ever there is a change in the document. Again, they are kept on file in the local school.
b. The district has implemented policies and procedures to prevent access to inappropriate Internet sites.	Y	The technology department maintains an Internet filtering appliance and yearly subscription which governs all Internet traffic on the WRSD Information Network.
c. The district provides staff, teachers, students, and parents with written and verbal guidelines describing legal uses of digital materials, both instructional and non-instructional. ¹³	Y	This is the same Acceptable Use Policy document referred to in 7a. above.

Information Management and Delivery

8. The district has established general controls in the areas of access, systems development and maintenance, documentation, operations, and physical security to promote the proper functioning of the information systems department.		
a. The district has written procedures and a standards manual. ¹⁴	N	There are no written procedures at this time.
b. The district has had an EDP audit within the last three years with no outstanding findings of material weaknesses.	N	There has not been an outside EDP audit done.
c. Appropriate segregation of duties based on district size exists within the data processing function. ¹⁵	N	There are more systems, centralized servers, databases, interoperating systems that are being brought online. In the technology alone are more demanding issues for security, backup procedures, training, user interfaces, data input and integrity.

¹³ Guidelines may address copyright issues and legal responsibilities.

¹⁴ This manual should include procedures as they relate to systems operations, systems development and maintenance standards, documentation standards, operations policies, and access security policies.

¹⁵ In smaller districts and minicomputer installations with limited opportunities for segregation of duties, compensating controls exist such as managerial or user review of work performed.

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d. The district protects systems from unauthorized users by using room locks, passwords, firewalls, and other needed means as conditions warrant.	Y	Rooms are locked, systems are protected with passwords, firewalls are in place and working
e. Controls exist to limit access to and prevent release of confidential and sensitive data.	Y	All data systems are protected by user login/password level of access.
f. The district ensures that independent databases are effectively managed to provide reliable and accurate data and ensure efficient operations. ¹⁶	N	Not completely, see 8c. above. Data integrity and reliability is greatly affected by the quality of data input. More needs to be done.
9. The information needs of administrative and instructional personnel are met by applying appropriate project management techniques to define, schedule, track and evaluate purchasing, developing, and the timing of delivering IT products and services requested.		
a. The district analyzes alternatives to identify the most cost-effective method of delivering IT products and services. ¹⁷	Y	Constantly evaluation of the process and consulting with other IT members in other districts.
b. The district can demonstrate that its information systems deliver IT products and services in a timely manner.	Y	Dated request forms are kept on file.
c. The district has a way to gauge user satisfaction with the delivery of IT products and services.	Y	There is no specific evaluation form used. We rely on the contact from individuals or administrators of their buildings. Last year a survey was made available to all district staff for this purpose. Very few responses were made.
d. Users are satisfied with the information they receive from the IT department.	Y	There is no specific evaluation form used. We rely on contact from individuals or administrators of their buildings

¹⁶ Independent databases refer to systems that are not directly managed by the district. For example, districts may have contracts with vendors providing food service or transportation management that includes the operation of independent databases.

¹⁷ Information products and services may include modifying existing programs, adding data elements to centralized computer systems, developing applications, writing interfaces, installing, configuring, and testing new technology, etc.