Case Study

Technology Plan Evaluation

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Planning for Technology
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The following case study is a review of the technology plan for Brecksville-Broadview Heights City School District. The district provides public education to approximately 4,100 students. Being your new consultant, I have reviewed and analyzed the current technology plan. The current plan is written for 2013-2018. With an extended plan such as this, it is important to re-evaluate due to changing technologies. Currently, it seems as though the plan is to continue growing with the ever-changing technology, however, with my recommendations, the district will instead be able to thrive in terms of technology. I am going to make my recommendations to the board that will bring the district plan to the level of other districts that excel in technology.

The district currently holds the following Technology Vision: "The Brecksville-Broadview Heights School District provides and supports the necessary technological resources to foster student growth in academic areas, develop next generation skills in students and faculty, and operate the school district in an efficient and effective manner." My recommendation would be to strengthen this vision by adding specific expectations for each of the different positions involved (teachers, students, support staff, administration, and possibly community). While this is a well-written technology vision, it is not specific and is too general to give any direction to the staff and students.

The district plan includes the following technology goals to help meet the needs of teachers and students:

Goal 1: Provide the necessary infrastructure to support the instructional and operational goals of the school district.

Goal 2: Provide ubiquitous access to technology for students and staff.

Goal 3: Provide appropriate levels of support to encourage the productive and efficient use of technology.

The goals were well-written and plan for the future. They account for the changing technology and for the infrastructure that will be needed in order to meet the growing use of technology in the classrooms. I believe these are strong goals to hold true. In the updated technology plan, I would recommend to leave these goals and include additional goals to meet the new needs you have experienced over the previous years.

Planning Team

Your current planning team is not specified in your district plan. It is critical to have a well-balanced and specified planning team. While it will be the responsibility of all to uphold the expectations, it is beneficial to have a smaller set of staff to make up the planning committee. A strong committee would be made up of district employees (including teachers, support staff, and administration). In addition, I would recommend asking for community members or parents to be part of the committee. For example, many schools have a Parent-Teacher-Organization, and these parents would be a great addition. They can assist the staff with what they experience outside of the classroom in regards to the technology and availability.

Curriculum Alignment & Instructional Integration

A strength of your curriculum is when you planned to slowly incorporate technology in the various grade levels. It was a great idea as some technology tools are not age-appropriate. In addition, it will be a transition for the teachers and administration as well. The slow incorporation of technology into the lower grades will also benefit the staff of the district. As

well as the students adjusting to one technology and grow older, they will be able to more easily digest the new technology and expectations. On the other hand, I felt as though a weakness was your specificity in what technologies will be implemented by the teachers and how they will be implemented. I believe adding this update will allow for a stronger alignment with the curriculum. With the addition of a planning team, this would be an easy addition to the district plan. This will be beneficial due to the changing technologies and adding specificities, it creates a cohesive plan for all teachers.

Technology Policy, Leadership, and Administration

The current technology policy includes the maintenance of each individual device. However, a weakness in this category is the lack of being proactive in regards to visions in technology. With the addition of a planning team, I would recommend they meet bi-annually in order to make the necessary updates to the district policies to meet state expectations and emerging technologies.

Technology Infrastructure Management and Support

The infrastructure plan has been efficient and has been able to keep up with the additional resources. The district complete an entire wiring update in 2013 that was able to withstand the additional devices through 2018. My recommendation would be to meet again as a team to reevaluate whether this is still able to adequately meet the needs of the district or if additional updates need to be completed in the near years. As you are adding technology and increasing the use of the network, it will be critical to evaluate the amount of bandwidth being utilized daily.

Budget and Planning

The district was very detailed in regards to budgeting with the technology plan. I believe overall this was a strength of the plan. While the various aspects had their own budgets, the district also included an overall expense budget (shown below). The plan includes a variety of ways to save costs throughout the years as well to make additional available funding. While the below budget seems significant, it is not exceeding current funding levels.

Area	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Wireless Upgrades	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000	$50,000	$350,000
Network Upgrades	$12,000	$22,000	$26,000	$28,000	$30,000	$118,000
Server Upgrades	$6,000	$20,000	$16,000	$4,000	$19,000	$65,000
Desktop Replacement	$15,000	$23,400	$13,200	$16,800	$5,400	$73,800
Teacher Devices	$20,000	$100,000	$100,000	$100,000	$10,000	$330,000
Student Devices	$300,000	$300,000	$510,000	$495,000	$495,000	$2,100,000
Innovative Technologies	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000	$75,000
Technology Staff	$60,000	$185,000	$305,000	$305,000	$305,000	$1,160,000
Student Tech Program	$0	$12,000	$12,000	$12,000	$12,000	$48,000
Totals	$503,000	$752,400	$1,072,200	$1,050,800	$941,400	$4,319,800

The district was sure to add specific staff for the technology portion. However, I might recommend looking into training for staff and how that would fit into the budget. Continuing education is crucial when it comes to new technologies and it seems with this plan that classroom teachers are expected to learn how to incorporate them into their lessons on their own.

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Technology changes at a pace that would be difficult for the teachers to keep up without proper training. When the teachers are educated with the technology, they will be able to properly implement it into their curriculum and lessons. This would benefit the overall student success and ability to seamlessly transition through this technology plan.

Recommendations for Change

For your vision statement and goals, my recommendation would be to strengthen this vision by adding specific expectations for each of the different positions involved (teachers, students, support staff, administration, and possibly community). I also recommend reevaluating the goals and adding specific goals to match the new technology being implemented beyond this technology plan.

I recommend added a specified planning committee. A strong committee would be made up of district employees (including teachers, support staff, and administration) as well as asking for community members or parents to be part of the committee.

For your budget, I recommend looking for training for the teachers and staff on the new technologies being implemented. It is critical for the teachers to be educated in the new technologies so that they can be properly utilized in the classroom.

Overall, I recommend being more specific in your technology plan. There were very few sections that were clearly written. Such as being specific with who is on the planning committee, what technologies are being implemented, how you plan to implement them, and how often you will meet to review these expectations. In addition, I recommended increasing your meeting frequency to evaluate current technologies and the success of the current plan.