Module 2 Assignment: Case Study – District Technology Planning
Planning for Technology 500

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For this case study, I will be evaluating the Norwich City School District's Technology Plan due to challenges in obtaining my own school district's technology plan. The NCS District's Technology Committee began regular meetings in January 2018 to develop a shared vision and goals to support technology district wide at the Norwich City School District. The committee surveyed staff, administration, community, and student stakeholders for input on the plan as it was developed.

Assessment & Evaluation

The rubric that I will be using to evaluate the Norwich City School District Technology plan is the same as the one to be used to grade this assignment. The District Technology Planning Rubric scores each category as one of the following:

0 – Feature Missing
1 – Needs Improvement
2 – Acceptable
3 - Accomplished

For each category, there are specific criterion to define the scoring that I will list within each category's section of this paper. The six categories that I will be evaluating are the following:

- Intro/Team Planning
- Curriculum Alignment & Instructional Integration
- Policy, Leadership & Administration
- Management & Support (including PD)
- Budget & Planning for Sustainability
- Recommendations for Change

1. **Intro/Team Planning**

Rubric:
0 – Feature Missing
1 – Needs Improvement – planning team is limited in scope
2 – Acceptable – planning team is inclusive
3 – Accomplished – planning team is inclusive and has well balanced representation

The District Technology Committee is made up of seven board of education members, four school and district administrators, four teachers, one administrative intern, three technology workers, and high school and middle school student review panels. It is unspecified how many students are a part of these review panels. With this in mind, it does appear that Norwich City Schools (NCS) has made an effort to have an inclusive, well-balanced planning team. However, for clarity, it would good for them to specify how many students are involved.

The committee did survey staff, administration, community and student stakeholders for input as it was developed, creating even more balance. The committee meets minimally at least three times per year to update the plan as needed.

For these reasons, I am rating this Intro/Team Planning section of this technology plan as **accomplished.**

Strength: A very inclusive, well balanced planning team.
Weakness: More specification on how many students were involved.
Recommendation: Specify how many students were involved for more clarity.

2. Curriculum Alignment & Instructional Integration

Rubric
0 – Feature Missing
1 – Needs Improvement – technology is not supportive of academic needs
2 – Acceptable – technology is supportive of academic needs. No examples of support are cited.
3 – Accomplished – technology is supportive of academic needs. Examples of support are cited.

Overall, the curriculum alignment and instructional integration in this technology plan is spelled out clearly. For instance, as part of their Technology Plan Goals, they state the following:

Goal #1/2: A Student Empowered Learning Environment will be established in all classrooms. PreK-Grade 5/Middle and High School students will have opportunities to explore curriculum-connected technology that will develop their abilities to problem solve and think critically in the classroom to become engaged, independent learners.

They go on to define their goal alignment as:

Develop a strategic vision and goals to support student achievement and engagement through seamless integration of technology into teaching and learning.

And finally, they provide a chart that defines action steps and action descriptions. For instance, one action step reads, “Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.” The action description then reads, “Provide necessary technology so that students have access to resources and a variety of tools to create opportunities for meaningful learning.”

These plans are then well supported by their plans to purchase technology. For example, here are what they plan to purchase and redistribute for grades PK-5:

- Purchase 1:1 in school devices for grade 5.
- Purchase additional iPads for carts in grades PK-2 and Google Expedition sets.
- Replace 1:1 class Smartboards with large format displays and video/audio streaming devices.
- Redistribute 5 carts in district to grade 6 SS (1), grades 3-4 teachers (3), and grade 2 (1) to prepare students for grade 3 technology use.
- Move 1 cart to Library.

- Purchase 1:1 in school devices for grades 3-4. Replace 1:1 class Smartboards with large format displays and video/audio streaming devices. Replace half of teacher devices to match student use.
- Replace unsupported 1:1 devices for grades 2-5. Replace half of teacher devices to match student use.

These plans show that the technology is supportive of academic needs. For this reason, I am rating the Curriculum Alignment & Instructional Integration section of this plan as **accomplished.**

Strength: Clearly spelled out curriculum alignment and instructional integration. Well-defined goals.
Weakness: None to speak of.
Recommendation: None.

3. **Policy, Leadership, & Administration**

Rubric:
0 – Feature Missing
1 – Needs Improvement – policy is not supportive of academic needs
2 – Acceptable – policy is supportive of academic needs. No examples of support are cited
3 – Accomplished – policy is supportive of academic needs. Examples of support are cited.

The NCS Technology Plan states that it does have a policy for the following:

- Internet Safety
- Cyberbullying
- Information Breach

It does not, however, say what these policies are, how they are implemented and communicated, or what consequences breaking the policy would be. One is left to assume these policies are in a separate document. The plan does say that the district plans to, "Review the current district policy and protocols for staff and students at the annual fall review. Ensure alignment across the district by developing and implementing guidelines appropriate for our digital citizenship program."

Because there is not further information regarding policy in this plan, I am going rate this section of the plan as **feature missing**.

Recommendations for Change
As a recommendation, I suggest writing each policy in the plan and include how it will be communicated and administered. For example, for internet safety the policy may be something similar to the following:

"It is the policy of to: (a) prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)]."

The plan should then state who will communicate this plan to whom, and when that should take place. For instance, it could say, "This policy will be reviewed by all teachers and administrators during the staff

meetings before school begins. The teachers will then be required to communicate it to all students and parents on the first day of school through a signed document."

Finally, for further clarity, the consequences for failing to uphold this policy could also be included, such as, "Students who fail to follow the school district's internet safety policy will have all school devices taken away and will not be allowed to be on the internet unsupervised while on school premises."

Strength: States what type of policies the district has in regards to technology.
Weakness: Does not communicate how the policies are defined or how they are administered.
Recommendation: Include within the technology plan a section that defines each policy and how they will be administered as written above.

4. **Management & Support (including PD)**

Rubric:
0 – Feature Missing
1 – Needs Improvement – no managerial, support or PD are identified
2 – Acceptable – support is recommended for managerial, support, or PD
3 – Accomplished – recommendations are made for all areas of support

The NCS Technology Plan does state that there will be staffing, professional development, and infrastructure included in their plans and lists what the costs of each of those items are.

For staffing, the plan states, "Staffing is provided through Regional Information Center and BOCES Co-Ser Managed Services including Managed Technology Leadership, Instructional Technology Training, and Managed Infrastructure Technology Services." This will cost the district $576,899 annually. For professional development, the district will spend $15,500 or $132 per day, per teacher annually. For infrastructure and network, the district will pay a one-time fee of $532,500. These costs show that the district if fully committed in this area.

Since recommendations are made for all areas of support in the technology plan, I will rate this section as **accomplished.**

Strength: Recommendations are made for all areas of support in the technology plan.
Weakness: None to speak of.
Recommendation: None.

5. **Budget & Planning for Sustainability**

Rubric:
0 – Feature missing
1 – Needs Improvement – no future recommendations are made
2 – Acceptable – recommendations are made, but are not sustainable
3 – Accomplished – Sustainable recommendations are made

The NCS Technology Plan provides estimated costs for anticipated items or services, whether the cost is annual or one-time, and the funding source. For example, the Network & Infrastructure is estimated to cost $532,500. This will be a one-time cost and the source of funds will be from a BOCES Co-Ser

Purchase and ERate and Smart Schools Bond Act. For another example, the district is purchasing Pilot Emerging Instructional Technologies for a one-time cost of $150,000. The funding source for this will be the BOCES Co-Ser Purchase and Grants and Instructional Materials Aid.

It is not possible for me to know if all of the costs are sustainable by the NCS district without knowing more details of their school district's budget, including their income and other expenses. However, since many of the purchases are being made through a bond act and grants, I am led to believe that this is indeed sustainable by the school district. For this reason, I am rating this section of the technology plan as **accomplished.**

Strength: It is clearly spelled out what the anticipated costs are for items and services. It is also clearly spelled out where the funding will come from.
Weakness: It is unknown whether or not this spending will fit within the school district's budget without knowing more information.
Recommendation: None to speak of pending further review of the school district's budget.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Norwich City School District Technology Plan is an accomplished plan. Their plan meets the highest ratings of the rubric in nearly all areas including team planning, curriculum alignment and instructional administration, and management and support (including PD). Budget and planning for sustainability is tentatively accomplished as well, however, further research into the school district's budget would be needed to be sure. The only recommendation for change for this plan is in regard to policy, leadership, and administration. With a further clarity on what the district's policies are and how they are communicated and administered, this is also close to being accomplished. Overall, this technology plan has many strengths and very few weaknesses.

Reference

Norwich City School District District Technology Plan 2018-2021
https://www.norwichcsd.org/Downloads/Norwich%20CSD%20Technology%20Plan%202018-212.pdf