

DELIVERY OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE BOISE SCHOOL DISTRICT: A WORKING DISCUSSION PAPER AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Background

The Boise School District Technology initiative began in the 1994-95 school year with the creation of the first Technology Plan. That Plan designated a model classroom of one teacher computer, five student computers, printers, a PC/TV converter and access to the network. The District passed a Supplemental Levy for \$3 million annually, dedicated solely to supporting the Technology Initiative.

For the first few years of the Plan, the District made computer purchases for the elementary education program and the secondary education program in alternating years. After the first few years, technology funds were allocated directly to all schools, so that school administrators and teachers could make their own technology purchases.

The benefits of this method of acquiring technology are that individual schools made decisions about the amount and types of equipment each needed. The downside, of course, is we now have a variety of different equipment with inconsistent configurations of student computers by classroom and a wide variety of software programs. Eleven years after the creation of the first Technology Plan, we also have thousands of pieces of equipment, many of which are outdated and no longer are functional. Moreover, the District's IT department has struggled to keep up with the growing demand for maintenance of the wide variety of equipment and software that has been accumulated over the years.

In the intervening years since creation of the District's first Technology Plan, external events and forces have also had an impact on the Boise School District. One significant event has been the downturn in District enrollment with its concomitant decrease in state revenue. Another influence has been state and federal requirements for the integration of technology in instruction and student demonstration of computer competency by Grade 8.

The time to consider a new Technology Plan and a new model for doing business with regard to the delivery of technology and technology services is here. For more than two years, three committees (Technology Planning Committee, Model Classroom Committees, and a Technology Leadership Committee) have worked tirelessly to construct a new model that is a significant departure from our current model. The Technology Planning Committee has included teacher, administrator, parent and student representatives. The Model Classroom Committees were comprised of both elementary and secondary teachers, subject matter supervisors, and administrators. The Technology Leadership Committee, created to coordinate technology services from a district-wide perspective, is comprised of the Deputy Superintendent, Directors, BEA President, and District Administrators.

The new technology model, a product of the various committees, is not without its challenges, but hopefully it addresses most of the issues raised by District staff and the committee members. The committees wrestled with the issues and tried to balance the needs of classroom teachers with the overall cost of technology and its support.

The following display shows the "New Model" as it was finalized by the committees. The 'priorities' were also determined by the groups working on the model. The District will use current year (2005-06) funds to get up to

date computers for ALL staff, then use remaining current funds to buy as many printers and projectors for classrooms as possible.

The Model includes:

- a. Teacher (staff) computer and a projector
- b. Student classroom computers (varies by grade or subject)
- c. School labs
- d. Other school technology equipment

New Technology Model

<u>Spring 2006 Spending Priorities:</u>	\$1,000,000
Teacher PC's	
Other Staff PC's	
Printers	
Classroom Projectors	

<u>Student Computers (1st Priority):</u>	Classroom
(To be phased in beginning Fall of 2006)	Computers

Elementary Classrooms:

Kindergarten (Waterford)	3
1st – 2nd grades	2
3rd through 6th grades	5
Elementary Library	5

Secondary Classrooms:

Science – Grades 7-12	6
Social Studies	2
Language Arts	3
Special Ed	2
All other Secondary classrooms (+ Lab access)	1

Supported Labs:	# of Labs	PC's
Elementary	1	30
Junior High	2	30
Senior High	5	30
Alternative Schools	2	30
Libraries – Secondary	1	30
ELL Programs	1	20
TVMSC	2	30
GATE Programs	1	5
Technology Classes	2	30
Apple Mac Labs	1	25

Peripherals (2nd Priority)

- Projectors
- Printers

Optional Model Components

SmartBoard
DVD/VCR Players
Classroom Sound Systems
Document Camera System
Digital Camera
Fax/Scanner/Printer
Remote Personal Response Systems ("Clickers")

Technology Support Plan

The District's technology deployment and associated support has evolved over the last three years. We constructed a fiber network to connect all schools. This network allows us to provide more centralized service for programs that were once substantially handled at the school level. Examples include: email, student information systems (including report cards), server account management, and shared folders. In the coming year, we will use this network for phone and voicemail systems too.

Two years ago, we implemented the Help Desk, giving all staff a central point of contact for problem solving. The system has the ability to take online requests, as well as to provide telephone support, through which the teacher is able to work through a problem while on the phone. The help desk process has improved each year and we look forward to it getting even better at assisting teachers solve technology problems in a timely way.

Beginning with the 2006-07 school year District technology support staff will be assigned to specific schools and will work with school administrators on being in the building on a regularly scheduled and consistent basis. More information regarding the staffing and support plan will be available in fall 2006.

Model Questions and Answers

The following are responses to the most frequently asked questions about the 'New Model.' Questions applying to a particular school will be addressed individually with the school staff. Additional questions and answers will be posted on the District website: (<http://www.boiseschools.org/technology/index.html>).

1. *Why do we need a "Technology Model?"*

We need a consistent and reliable desktop that is replaced on a regular, scheduled basis. It is important for all staff to know exactly what technology tools they should expect to have and that the toolset be consistent from school to school.

2. *What is included in the Classroom Technology Model?*

The model for the teacher toolset includes; an up-to-date computer, a projector, and access to a printer. The student classroom toolset varies by grade at the Elementary level and subject area taught at the Secondary level. The School model includes computer labs at each school and up-to-date computers for all support staff. (See "New Model" above)

3. *What will the model cost?*

We expect to spend up to \$1 million this spring on the first priority items (up-to-date PC's for teachers, staff and labs). The estimated total cost for all equipment will be over \$7 million. The new teacher and staff computers, where needed, will be in place for the start of the 2006-2007

school year. The student computers included in the model will be delivered early in the 2006-07 school year. The printers and projectors will be delivered as soon as practically possible. The District will use a lease arrangement for equipment, rather than an outright purchase. The \$3 million Technology Levy will be used to fund the lease.

4. *What will we do with the equipment already in place?*

We are in the process of completing a detailed room by room inventory that will serve as the basis for our rollout plan and equipment orders. Our goal is to have one operating system (Windows XP) on all District computers. We will work with each school to transition the old equipment out and deliver the replacement computers.

5. *Can a school opt to increase the number of computers in their building through independent funding sources?*

The model establishes a level of technology materials that can be financially supported by the district. As in all commodities the cost of the item is only part of the overall cost of ownership. The cost of support, power, network infrastructure, and software licenses constitutes over 2/3 of the total costs associated with a computer over a five year period. To financially maintain the overall system a maximum number of computers (district-wide) was established. The model incorporates this maximum number allowed. For this reason the District will not be able to service, maintain, or in any way support additional technology purchases made outside the model.

6. *Can schools use other funds (PTO, ASB, federal) to supplement the District Model?*

Although school funds should not be used to buy computers, they can be used to buy equipment identified as the 'optional' part of the model. This includes the "Smart Board," document cameras, digital cameras, sound systems, and video equipment (See "New Model" – 'Optional Components'). The District will specify these items on a "Bid List" from which schools can buy. These materials will have support cost included in the bid list prices and can be supported by the district over the life of the model.

7. *How will professional development be managed in this model?*

The Professional Development (PD) budgets are not included in the technology equipment budget plan. The District PD plan continues to emphasize technology based training programs.

8. *Why are we considering leasing rather than our traditional model of buying equipment?*

Leasing equipment gives us the opportunity to 'front-load' the model. This means we can get all the computers that are described by the model replacing the older machines. It also gives us the opportunity to have the entire District using one operating system (Windows XP).

9. *What happens to the leased equipment at the end of the lease?*

Most leasing arrangements allow equipment to be purchased for \$1 at the end of the lease term or it can be returned to the leaseholder. We plan to return the equipment at the end of its lease to make room for the next round of new equipment.