Curriculum Committee Report
Spring 2014

Committee Members

Debra Anderson - Oakhill Elementary

Jeff Book – Hanover Countryside Elementary

Brock Friedman – Laurel Hill Elementary

Ian Horn - Hilltop Elementary

Pat Kressin – Kimball Middle

Melissa Lane – Larkin High – chair

Sheila Widmann – Laurel Hill Elementary

School District U-46 Liaison
Dr. Suzanne Colombe – Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

Additional Support provided by
Craig Williams – Director of Information Services

The committee sincerely thanks Suzanne and Craig for their assistance and
patience as we work together for the good of our students!

Report approved by CAC Executive Committee – April 24, 2014

Report approved by the CAC General Council – May 8, 2014

Report to be presented to the Board of Education - School District U-46 – May 19, 2014

For the 2013-2014 school year, the Curriculum committee was asked to work on the challenges and opportunities presented by the idea of 1:1 Technology. 1:1 technology is the idea that every child in the classroom would have access – both in school and at home – to a digital device.

The number of factors involved in this decision is seemingly endless. Why would we want this? How could the District afford this plan? Is it just a device or does it also include internet access? What grade levels are included? What about privacy and security concerns? These were just a few of the many questions and comments heard at our first few meetings of the school year.

After realizing that we could not adequately cover even a few of these factors, and with consultation with Craig Williams, the committee narrowed its focus to an item that we felt we could address – What do parents want and need to know about 1:1 technology and its effects on education and their children.

Current Status of 1:1 Technology in the District

There is currently only one true 1:1 technology implementation in use in U-46, the Mandarin Chinese course. Students in this course use an online website that is accessible as an iPad app. The course is in its second year. Students take the iPad home.

Several schools and teachers have also received internal mini-grants of laptops. Of the 50 sets of teachers who received the mini-grants, 3 received a large enough quantity to constitute a classroom set. None of the computers in these mini-grants are currently going home.

The District is also experimenting with other investments in mobile technology, including tablets (Apple iPads and Android tablets), small Windows laptops and Google Chromebooks. These investments are meant to help the district make informed decisions about future device choices. As teachers use these devices in U-46 classrooms, the District staff will get a better idea of what the most effective technology will be in future classroom situations.

Future Possibilities of 1:1 Technology

Committee members educated themselves by reading journal articles about technology initiatives in various school districts, and talking to individuals who are already using 1:1 technology. Craig Williams, Director of Information Services for School District U-46, provided valuable insight at the beginning and midway points of this school year's project. He recently updated the committee on the Instructional Technology Master Plan, which was submitted to his supervisor Jeff King on February 25, 2014. This plan, still in draft form, was submitted to the U-46 Cabinet on Tuesday April 1, 2014. The plan remains under discussion and its adoption will be an ongoing process.

This ongoing process provides an opportunity for continued CAC involvement. This involvement could continue through the CAC Curriculum committee, or if enough members show an interest, a separate ad-hoc Technology Committee could be formed. Based on our discussions in this year's meetings, there will be lots of questions and concerns from parents and community members.

The committee's discussions led to numerous questions that can be grouped into three broad categories:

- Financial implications of implementing a One-to-One technology plan
- Privacy and security implications of students using their "own" device
- Training and coaching needs for:
  - Students
  - Parents
  - Teachers and other staff

These questions are listed in Appendix A.

But before these broad categories of questions can be addressed, parents and community members need to know "why" the district is pursuing this initiative. What are the desired outcomes for the students in the district as they make use of 1:1 technology?

Three themes are commonly introduced when asking the "why" question. They are:

- Fiscal responsibility – When does it become more fiscally responsible for the district to purchase devices rather than increasingly costly textbooks and print materials that quickly become outdated?
- 21st Century Skills – Our society is becoming more online/digitally based. Students need to be able to compete in society by using digital technology.
- PARCC – This state selected assessment requires online test taking, often in a narrow time frame. More digital devices will be needed in the district to meet this requirement.

All three of these themes are important factors in a decision to introduce a 1:1 technology plan. It is vitally important that the District speak with one voice, and have a clear purpose, when/if they move forward.

With these thoughts in mind, the CAC Curriculum Committee makes the following recommendations:

- School District U-46 needs to clearly communicate the answer to the WHY question about 1:1 technology before moving forward with adopting a plan. Only by answering the WHY, can the District garner family and community support to effectively implement the plan.
- Make use of the community resources available to the District through CAC, and other community advisory groups for feedback and evaluating concerns before adopting an all-encompassing plan. We further recommend that CAC promote the formation of an ad hoc technology committee to provide input and support as the District moves forward.
- Provide answers to the questions/comments that are listed in Appendix A. Some of these questions may be answered at the original implementation of the plan; others may require more time for answers to be available. Communicate this information clearly to parents and community.

Appendix A
Parent/Community Questions about 1:1 Technology

<u>FINANCIAL ASPECTS</u>

- What will this cost me as a parent?
- What will this cost the District?
- What if I have more than 1 child?
- Can the device be shared among students in the same family?
- What if I cannot pay?
- Can there be a sliding fee scale? Or payment plan?
- What about additional costs? Add ons? Apps?
- What will happen in case of lost, broken, or damaged devices?
- Is there an option for insurance?
- What about students who begin midway through the year?
- What if an individual parent wants to upgrade?
- Is there a plan for device obsolescence?
- Is there a trade-in option?
- Will there be consistency across district in case of children changing schools?

<u>PRIVACY/SECURITY</u>

- Will the devices be filtered?
- Will there be a change in level of filtering by grade level?
- Will the devices be limited to only educational apps as compared to a device with full Internet access? Could this vary by the student's grade level?
- Privacy considerations?
- Camera option?
- Use of social media?
- Educational vs. personal use of device?
- Use of district e-mail address for students?
- Is there an option to opt out?
- Policies/Procedures statement?

TRAINING/COACHING FOR PARENTS

- Safe environment?
- Orientation?
- Resources for parents – wireless access, discount programs
- Knowing when to turn off the device
- Charging station
- Availability of Tech Support? 24/7 ? Weekends?
- Will a training meeting be mandatory? Incentivized?
- Explanation of teaching method change
- What happens to the device in the summer?
- Why? How will this system help my student?

TRAINING/COACHING FOR STUDENTS

- Privacy considerations?
- Use of social media?
- Educational vs. personal use of device?
- Use of district e-mail address for students? Greater risk of virus/malware?
- File management/File structure
- Skype?
- Will a keyboarding class be taught to prepare students for this learning style?
- What happens to the device in summer?

TRAINING/COACHING FOR TEACHERS

- Content!
- How does the teaching style differ in this 1:1 plan?
- Can cheating on assignments or assessments be minimized? Controlled?
- Professional Development will be needed both on devices/techie things and content
- Availability of Tech Support? 24/7 ? Weekends? In the building/classroom?
- Will more robust technical support be available?