Planning for Technology

Local Technology Plan Case Study

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Introduction

As the new technology planning consultant for Dayton City school district, I was asked to review the current state of technology in the district by examining their current technology plan. The plan was created using the eTech Ohio online Technology Planning Tool version 3.0 (TPTv3) on June 22, 2009 and was certified for the period of July 2009 to July 2012. The plan follows the Ohio’s State Educational Technology plan. In the following report, I’m going to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses and provide recommendations based on the National Education Technology Plan as well as the Ohio’s State Educational Technology Plan.

Planning Team:

At any school district across the country, technology planning has become one of the most important educational enterprises. It is a project that ensures the best results for the students, the teachers and the district as technology in the 21st century has become an integral part of life and particularly education. The Dayton city school district technology plan establishes the planning team which includes the following:

- Assistive Technology/Special Needs Coordinator
- Community/Business Leader
- Curriculum Coordinator
- Instructional Integrationist
- Library/Media Specialist
- Parent
- Principal
- Superintendent
The committee looks solid and appears to have included representatives for all sides of the educational and technological processes, however this list was mentioned in the “pre-planning” part of the plan, there was no other mention of the planning committee and no more details on these members such as their exact number, gender, or level of involvement. I recommend that the revised version of this plan adds more details on the planning committee.

**Curriculum Alignment and Instructional Integration:**

This section in the technology plan was the most important. More than 60% of the plan focuses on this section alone. The plan has listed the following technology goals under curriculum alignment and instructional integration:

1. Making Ohio’s Technology Standards an Official Part Of Dayton City District's Curriculum
2. Using Technology to Improve Teaching and Learning in English/Language Arts
3. Using Technology to Improve Teaching and Learning in Fine Arts
4. Using Technology to Improve Teaching and Learning in Foreign Language
5. Using Technology to Improve Teaching and Learning In Mathematics
6. Using Technology to Improve Teaching and Learning in Science
7. Using Technology to Improve Teaching and Learning in Social Studies
8. Teaching Students about Technology Itself
The plan’s focus on how technology can benefit the students in each specific subject is praiseworthy. There is a whole section on each of these subjects with clear goals and expectations. The only problem is that the language in the sections tends to be repetitive at times, so you don’t specifically see how different subjects can be approached differently using technology.

**Technology Policy, Leadership and Integration:**

The plan analyzed technology policies, leadership and administration through a) awareness, b) adoption, c) exploration and d) transformation. The plan explains how to get to each of these targets effectively. It argues that to enhance educational technology use, the objectives to accomplish the goal will be incorporated in policy development relative to student email usage, distance learning, online communication systems, incorporating emerging technologies into new school building construction, and more importantly developing an infrastructure and environment that can be sustained, financially, over the years. It clearly states that accomplishing the educational technology strategy is “highly dependent upon offering professional development opportunities for teachers which not only includes integrating technology into the curriculum but also utilizing productivity tools to enhance their skills.”

This part of the plan was the clearest and most helpful in understanding the overall plan for the Dayton City school district. Nevertheless, I felt that this section was in need of more concrete details and real-life examples of how the policies and the leadership can ensure the effective integration of technology.
Technology Infrastructure Management and Support:

In the part dedicated to technology infrastructure management and support, the plan lists the following areas

1. Networking, Internet & Telecommunications
2. Access to Technology
3. Stakeholder Access to Educational Information & Applications
4. Educational Software
5. Security
6. Technology Support and Management
7. Total Cost of Ownership

Each of these sections was explained in three phases: How will we get there? How will we know we are getting there? And how will we sustain focus and momentum? The plan aims to show how technology will be implemented in the school system. It delved into the details of how to ensure the students and the teachers can have easy access to technology and receive the necessary support as they need it. The only recommendation here is that the section lacks clear illustration. For example, under each section the plan includes a table that shows where the schools are at the moment and where they want to be in the future in terms of technology use and integration. These tables are quite general and are not followed by explanation of their content.

Budget and Planning:

The plan explains the budget required for implementing the technology plan by breaking down the needs and the specific costs. Its mentions also that Dayton Public Schools has made
tremendous progress in leveraging funding to sustain and maintain technology initiatives. It also encourages schools to take advantage of available grants that can boost the budget and enable better implementation of technology. I think the plan should, however, have included have elaborated a little on the topic of grants it encouraged the schools to pursue such as the types of grants and where to find such opportunities.

**Summary and recommendations:**

This plan is well-written and clearly organized. It address the need for change and keeping up with the vast progress in technology in the field of education. The plan discusses how they are planning to prepare the students and teachers to succeed in the 21 Century. The only recurrent issue that I found in the plan is the lack of examples and details. I think with the addition of that the plan will look spectacular.