LEADING THE JOURNEY

An E-newsletter on EXCELLENCE in Leadership

Sharpening Technology Plans

Chris Carey, Information Technology, Forest Lake Educational Center

Abraham Lincoln once said, "Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe." When it comes to technology, schools would be wise to devote adequate time in sharpening a deliberate technology plan long before the first dollar is spent on equipment or software.

In today's technology-driven world, a vital part of any school's overall strategic plan must include a formal and carefully followed technology plan. In the experience of Forest Lake Education Center, this calculated integration has greatly helped our school move toward excellence in better serving our staff, parents and students the use of technology.

To meet these goals, our school has adopted three overall technology objectives. Each of these goals also contribute to the success of the school's overall strategic plan.

First, we developed and implemented an annually updated three-year technology master plan, which focuses on the use of current and emerging technologies throughout every function of the school. An appointed and active technology committee made up of school staff, involved parents, and interested community technology professionals meet regularly to review, and update the technology plan, which is then presented to the school board annually for approval, funding and implementation.

Second, we endeavor to ensure the school maintains a technology program that seamlessly integrates into the curriculum and all aspects of school life. Appropriate technologies are applied to students in every grade level, each staff member, and throughout the entire school campus. This is accomplished through spending sufficient time and money on research, planning, implementing, and training on existing and emerging technology tools and skills.

Third, we prepare students to live and lead in a changing world by providing access to, and education in, current and developing technologies. A dynamic tech curriculum has been established to promote the use and application of mainstream business platforms, as well as Internet research skills and safety. Teachers collaborate with each other to

Evolution of a Technology Roadmap

Linden De Carmo, Parent Volunteer, Sawgrass Adventist School

At the end of the 2012-2013 school year, Sawgrass Adventist School (SAS) was at a crossroads with technology. Therefore, we decided to launch an information gathering process before moving forward.

The initial feedback of both the board and parents was to utilize iPads. We surveyed two schools that had successful iPad rollouts, captured all the elements necessary for a successful rollout, and requested funding from the board, which agreed to fund the entire purchase up front and absorb much of the cost of the iPads so that it would be affordable for all students.

Parental feedback was largely positive at the end of the school year, however, two problems emerged. First, pre-defined goals to evaluate success or failure did not exist. Second, the project roadmap was unclear and scattered over a variety of media. This made it very difficult to provide evidence of a long-term plan for accreditation purposes. Consequently, we launched the process to formalize a five-year technology roadmap.

Step one: define our mission: *Create mobile technology-friendly classrooms capable of rich audio/visual technologies to enhance learning.* **Step two:** *Create an accurate way to systematically track progress.*

Each major goal was tagged and a yearly target was established to objectively verify progress. A preliminary draft of the roadmap was then circulated among the executive SAS school board and the IT team. Constructive feedback, such as depreciation timeframes and additional interim targets was added to the document, and the updated draft document was sent to the general SAS school board.   The board significantly increased funding for technology to facilitate the deployment and meet roadmap and education/training goals.

Our team emphasizes continuous evolution and growth of the roadmap. The direction may be ideal today, but three years from now, it may be archaic. Consequently, we review the plan monthly with the board, and at least once a year conduct a comprehensive survey of all consumers and producers

MISSION: STRENGTHENING ADVENTIST EDUCATION ONE LEADER AT A TIME

Technology Resources for the Classroom

Jonathan Sumner, *Associate Superintendent, Georgia-Cumberland Conference*

The NAD Technology and Distance Education Committee, known as TDEC, regularly investigates a range of educational technologies, resources, and standards to help educators navigate through the growing maze of information. TDEC also makes recommendations to the union directors concerning distance education.

Access the TDEC website from the NAD Education website, http://adventisteducation.org, by clicking on the "TECHNOLOGY" menu item at the top of the page, or directly at http://tdec.nadeducation.org.

The TDEC website offers a plethora of resources that are **financially supported by the NAD and union directors**. The following resources can be found at http://tdec.nadeducation.org/classroom_resources/:

- **FREE** – Encyclopedia Britannica

- **FREE** – Visual Thesaurus

- **FREE** – Corel Products

- **FREE** – Atlantic Union Teacher Bulletin

Some of the access codes are only available through the NAD Data-rollup Dashboard under the "Resource" minute. **Once you login to Dashboard**, use this link: https://dashboard.nadeducation.org/resources/Resources.

In addition, TDEC has produced a number of webinars to help educators. These can be **found on the Dashboard** at https://dashboard.nadeducation.org/resources/Webinars.

TDEC produces two reports a year. The latest video report for winter 2017 can be found at https://vimeo.com/204830829/31286d4cb5.

Discounted annual subscriptions for classroom resources have been negotiated by TDEC for a number of vendors. These subscriptions are offered through a storefront portal: http://tdec.nadeducation.org/classroom_resources/storefront/. **Open enrollment happens once a year, so watch the dates carefully.** Vendors include BrainPop, IXL, Reading A-Z, Spelling City, Typing Pals, Webspiration Classroom, etc.

Technology plan templates and other resources are available at: http://tdec.nadeducation.org/resources/technology-plans/.

Special pricing for software and hardware can be obtained from OETC. **Connect with your TDEC union representative to have an account set up for you**. (The NAD has paid for the membership.) If you do not know who your union representative is, review the list of TDEC members, http://tdec.nadeducation.org/members/. **Contact information can be provided by your local union**.

The committee is organized and tasked by the union directors to carry out specific initiatives and make recommendations. TDEC operates at the discretion and support of the union directors. The committee meets twice a year and is comprised of a representative from each union, a university representative, and distance education principal.

Do you have technology ideas for the classroom to share? Your TDEC representative would love to hear from you. ✸

Evolution of a Technology Roadmap (continued)

involved with the plan. This ensures we adjust with advancements in technology and more importantly, the needs of our students and teachers.

One example of this evolution is the mobile devices we are using. The initial thrust of our technology trial was iPads. We have discovered that, for our lower grade students, laptops are the more flexible solution. Another evolutionary illustration is our accelerated replacement plan. Originally, we planned to replace 25% of all our hardware devices each year. However, an immense number of devices failed in the first two years of the roadmap. Consequently, we likely will have a 45% turnover the first two years and 25% thereafter, once we have a known reliable starting point.

Currently, our focus area for improvement is team communication. We have transitioned to Slack (a team communication tool) for all Sawgrass school board and sub-committee communication, but, more importantly, for technology and IT interactions. Slack has numerous advantages over text messages, such as the ability to organize, archive and poll members. Combined with

Slack, we are trying to recruit technologically savvy roadmap committee members. Our goal is to have a reliable tool and team for tracking progress and tackling technology issues as they arise. ✸

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Sharpening Technology Plans (continued)

dynamically incorporate technology into lesson plans and curriculum. Finally, continuous funding has been provided to purchase up-to-date equipment, teacher training, and software for all administrative, academic, and campus-support areas.

As with any tool or skill, technology must be carefully, effectively, and consistently sharpened and improved to realize the most benefits. But remember that it takes a major commitment of time, expertise, and financial resources to make the most of any school technology program whose ultimate goal is to prepare our students to be successful in their future educational and professional endeavors. ✸

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