

DISTRICT TECHNOLOGY PLAN

Fiscal Years 2008 - 2011

Rush City Public Schools
Independent School District # 139
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Organization Leadership

Organizational leadership is provided through the joint efforts of the Superintendent of Schools and the district Technology Coordinator. Preliminary planning, research, and budgeting are discussed at this level, prior to bringing the issue to the Technology Committee. The Technology Coordinator is responsible for overseeing all technology support and services throughout the district.

Technology Committee

The District technology committee is an advisory body created to provide input into the district technology planning process. The Committee has met as needed during the past three years to discuss and recommend technology directions, evaluate technology use in the District and revise policies related to technology. Work on this technology plan began in earnest in November 2006. A small subset of the committee (steering committee) met several times between November 2006 and March 2007.

Technology Committee Membership

- Vern Koeppe, Superintendent
- Mark Saari, High School Principal
- Melody Tenhoff, Elementary School Principal
- Corey Tramm, Technology Coordinator *
- Maureen Guentzel, High School Media Specialist *
- Vivian Pasche, High School Special Education
- Doreen Karlsson, Secondary Guidance and Counseling
- Gara Goldenstien, Elementary Media Specialist *
- Paula Bengtson, High School Teacher
- Maureen Sybrant, Elementary School Teacher
- Alissa Schlagel, Elementary School Teacher
- Linda Lindeman, Special Education *
- Sue Mold, Parent

* Denotes Steering Committee member

District Demographics

Rush City ISD #139 serves nearly 1000 students in rural East Central Minnesota. Rush City is proud of the innovative educational programs offered in modern facilities. The Community's overwhelming support of quality education is evident through facility construction. The 14-year old junior and senior high building together with a recently remodeled and expanded elementary facility, a comprehensive family and early childhood center, and several outdoor facilities, provide a setting conducive to learning and opportunity. The district participates in several consortia including the St. Croix River Education District (special education, reading and

math initiatives, and technology), the East Central Minnesota Educational Cable Cooperative (distance learning and technology), and the Central Minnesota Library Exchange (inter-library resources and services.)

Needs Assessment

Technology related needs and concerns traditionally have been conveyed through several different channels. Some of these channels include: building staff and faculty meetings, staff and community input through the School Board Advisory Committee, and school board discussions. Technology related needs and concerns are assessed at the building level. Then, depending on the scope of the need or the severity of the concern, the issue may be taken to the district Superintendent or Technology Committee for discussion.

During the current technology planning cycle, the staff was surveyed to gather information related to vision and goals for the next three years. A brief synopsis of the information gathered is presented below.

The following questions were asked directly.

Question	Yes	No
Do you use technology for parent communications?	98%	2%
Do you use technology for administrative tasks?	95%	5%
Do you use technology for professional development?	45%	55%
Do you currently use technology in your teaching?	94%	6%
Do you currently make use of media center services?	57%	43%
Do you feel that you have adequate access to presentation technology?	74%	26%

Results of this survey were used to assess need for professional development and other technology initiatives. Respondents were also asked to indicate how technology could be used in the future in each of the above categories. Results were used to help generate the short and long term goals for this technology plan.

Priorities identified (and reflected in the plan’s goal statements) included:

- Additional computers for classroom/student use.
- Additional staff development training in technology.
- Additional access to presentation technology.
- Additional training in technology integration.
- Mini-sessions updating faculty/staff on latest technology.
- Greater use of electronic forms of communications.

Vision, Goals, Objectives and Strategies for Technology

Mission Statement and Basic Beliefs

The Mission of the district media/technology program is to establish an environment sufficient to provide each learner with basic skills that will help students become lifelong learners capable of critical thinking and problem solving. All students and staff will employ technology as a tool to access, analyze, and utilize information.

We believe that:

- technology is an effective educational tool.
- all technology efforts must be designed to meet learning outcomes and must be continually assessed.
- the use of technology to access, process, and communicate information is an essential skill that must be acquired by students and modeled by staff.
- technology must be networked throughout the district and community in order to provide adequate information accessing, processing, and communication.
- technology is required for effective administration.
- technology skills should be integrated throughout the curriculum and at all grade levels.
- effective technology modeling by staff requires adequate resources: equipment, software, training, time, and incentives.
- the use of technology must be ethical, safe, secure and equitable.
- integrating technology with instruction will have a strong, positive influence on achievement.

Current Technology Uses

Currently the district provides services in three buildings including separate elementary and high school buildings and a Family Center serving the needs of early childhood and adult educational services. At this time, all locations have high-speed Internet access, computers for staff and student use and an integrated e-mail communication system. All locations make use of web and networked applications for such purposes as grading, managing student data and tracking IEPs. The high school has one interactive television (ITV) classroom that receives and delivers courses through the East Central Minnesota Educational Cable Cooperative (ECMECC). All locations have computer labs available.

The high school and elementary facilities receive Internet access through a wide area network managed by the Minnesota Office of Enterprise Technology. US Cable provides internet access to the Family Center. Through membership in ECMECC, we have access to a video and data network hubbed at Pine Technical College in Pine City, MN. From the Pine City hub, the connection goes to St. Cloud State University where several other groups of districts,

libraries and public entities meet through the Central Minnesota Educational Research and Development Council (CMERDC). This unique partnership brings quality service to the District at a substantial savings over purchasing similar service as an individual district.

Goals & Objectives 2008 – 2011

The goals for technology in ISD #139 were formed through the work of the technology steering committee and broader technology committee with additional input from administration and staff. The groups studied results of the needs assessment tools mentioned earlier, held brainstorming sessions and set priorities. Following is a categorized list of short and long-term goals for the use of technology in ISD #139 in the next three years. It is expected that all short-term goals will be addressed by the end of the 2010-2011 school year.

Technology as a Tool for Parental Involvement and Communication

Short-term goals

- Provide parents access to their student's data through an online parent access portal.
- Continued development of the district's web site.

Long-term goal

- Increased use of individual teacher web pages.

Technology Integration with Curriculum and Instruction

Short-term goals

- Efficient use of digital research tools.
- Provide access to and training in presentation technologies.
- Teach students effective use of digital learning resources.
- Purchase & integrate new technologies, such as: video streaming and student response systems.

Long-term goal

- Establish smart classroom technology throughout the district.

Technology for Delivery of School Media Center Services

Short-term goals

- Provide greater access to media center resources through the district web page.

- Educate all students about the district acceptable use policy.
- Secure consent to the district acceptable use policy from students, parents and staff.
- Install classroom computers in grades 2 – 6 for use with Accelerated Reader.
- Promote the use of online databases as academic research tools.

Long-term goals

- Provide educational opportunities to staff and students regarding copyright, plagiarism, and other fair-use issues.
- Provide opportunities for media specialists to coordinate with classroom teachers.

Technology for Administrative Support

Short-term goals

- All faculty will use the online student information system.
- Broaden the scope of services provided by the district’s Skyward web access.

Long-term goals

- Impliment district-wide Voice over IP phone system.
- Design and impliment a district-wide intranet site to provide access to administrative information and tools.
- Continue to explore new technologies as they become available.

Technology Access for Teachers and Students

Short-term goals

- Establish a replacement cycle for faculty and staff workstations.
- Additional computers will be available for student use in classrooms.
- Expand access to presentation equipment.
- Make available a small fleet of wireless capable mobile computers for use in the high school facility.

Long-term goals

- Upgrade existing network hardware in the elementary facility.
- Expand the availability of wireless capable mobile computers for staff and students in the high school facility.

Assessment

Short-term goals

- Participate in the MCA-II Science Field Testing program, Spring 2007.

- Evaluate the impact of online testing on daily curriculum and instruction.
- Further expand the effectiveness of the NWEA MAP testing.

Long-term goals

- Find solutions to the problems/disruptions caused by online testing.

Online/Distance Learning

Short-term goals

- Expand course offerings available through the district's I-TV consortium.
- Develop educational opportunities through the use of IP Video.
- Assess current online course offerings available to district students.

Long-term goals

- Develop and implement a complete set of online courses.

Technology Professional Development

Short-term goals

- Provide targeted training opportunities in the area of educational technology for administration, faculty and staff.
- Encourage faculty and staff to attend technology related training and professional development.

Long-term goals

- Expect all staff members to have an accepted level of technology competency.
- Provide training opportunities to prepare faculty members to teach online courses.

Policies and Procedures

Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy

March 2007, the ISD #139 School Board reviewed and approved the Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy governing student and staff use of all types of computing, network and electronic resources in the district. The policy outlines the district's position on unacceptable uses and describes the measures taken by the district to limit access to information that may be deemed "harmful to minors" under state and federal laws.

A complete copy of the policy is attached to this technology plan. In addition to the policy, each school building has established a set of "administrative guidelines" that are distributed to students and parents at the start of each school year. The purpose of these guidelines is to further define the AUP and communicate site-specific information.

Equitable Access for Students with Exceptional Needs

ISD #139 participates in a cooperative of area school districts to provide high-quality, cost effective services to students with exceptional needs. The St. Croix River Education District (SCRED) provides assistive technology services to the district. Following is the description, outcomes and activities of the SCRED Assistive Technology Service.

Service Description: Students with disabilities may need special equipment in order to efficiently access the educational environment, educational materials or to meet their IEP goals. Assistive technology may be any tool or device that helps a child perform a functional task that s/he cannot perform well or cannot perform at all because of his/her disability. Assistive technology service is any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition or use of an assistive technology device. These services are provided to support schools in the following areas: a) evaluation of needs for the student, b) purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of devices, c) selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing of assistive technology devices, d) coordinating with other therapy or rehabilitation services, e) training or technical assistance for individuals, and f) training or technical assistance for professionals.

Service Outcomes: 1) Provide an equipment purchasing decision making system by which districts will achieve cost efficiency in this area. 2) Provide services for locating, purchasing and training in the use of unique, experimental or expensive equipment. 3) Special education personnel will be proficient in providing assistive technology assessment and services to students with disabilities. 4) Provide information systems for equipment and training services.

Service Activities: the Collaborative Planner for Low Incidence Disabilities and Assistive Technology will conduct the following activities:

- Develop a decision making process for purchase and use of equipment for disabled students.

- Cooperate with the Regional Low Incidence Project, which operates an equipment lending service.
- Provide special education staff and school administrators with information and training about assistive technology.
- Locate, purchase, inventory and maintain equipment which may be shared among the districts.
- Assist with the assessment of student need for assistive technology.
- Attend training on behalf of teachers, review information in the area of assistive technology equipment and instructional methods, synthesize information and serve as a resource for teachers and administrators with assistive technology implementation needs.
- Provide information networks and a professional library of equipment catalogs and instructional methods.

ISD #139 has provided assistive technology such as sound systems, voice recognition software, and adaptive input devices for many students in recent years through this service with SCRED. ISD #139 will continue to make the entire educational program accessible to all students as needed.

ISD #139 maintains a web site and will continually review it for compliance with Section 508 guidelines. Information and resources are made available in alternate formats when necessary and/or requested. The district utilizes the Center for Applied Special Technology's "Bobby" software to test the site for Section 508 compliance.

Data and Network Security

The following measures have been taken by ISD #139 to facilitate network security and data integrity.

- Access to all district servers is password protected and a hierarchy exists among users allowing access to a limited set of resources according to position or status. For example, students do not have access to staff resources and staff do not have access to administrative data.
- Human Resource and Financial data is stored on off-site servers hosted by a private company.
- The disaster recovery plan includes harddrive backup of critical data on a daily basis and includes off-site storage.

Future considerations for data and network security

- Virus threats continue to emerge. While the district is mostly Macintosh based, and therefore less susceptible to computer viruses, it will be necessary to stay vigilant with regards to computer viruses and other security issues.
- With a rise in the number of unsolicited e-mail messages (SPAM), it may be necessary to explore additional options for the elimination of these unwanted messages.

- Personal and network security issues associated with student use of “chat” rooms and Internet-based e-mail programs will need to be monitored and addressed.

Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA)

The District employs technology protection measures that meet or exceed CIPA requirements through filtering provided by the District’s Internet service provider, Minnesota Office of Enterprise Technology. In addition, other Internet safety issues are addressed by the Board approved Computer and Internet Use Agreement Policy Statement.

Future Needs (specific to policies and procedures)

Acceptable use policy for staff and students.

Currently doing:

- ISD #139 has a board approved acceptable use policy that was last revised in 2007.
- Students at the elementary level are instructed in acceptable use and take a short test to show their understanding of district policies (as they apply to elementary age students).
- ISD #139 obtains written consent to the acceptable use policy from all staff and students.

Future considerations:

- The current acceptable use policy will be reviewed and revised as needed.

Technology Infrastructure, Management and Support

Telecommunications Capacity

Currently, ISD #139 is served by a 1000mbps (Gigabit Fiber-optic) data connection to a cooperative hub site at Pine Technical College. From Pine City, ECMECC, including ISD # 139 connects (via Gigabit Fiber-optic) to the hub site at St. Cloud State University. At the St. Cloud hub site, CMERDC, through a cooperative purchase with the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and the University of Minnesota, purchases bandwidth and Internet services for all of its member districts including ISD #139. Through this Fiber-optic network, ISD # 139 also receives Interactive television classes and IP Video distributed by ECMECC.

Our technology infrastructure consists of both Windows and Macintosh-based servers running Windows 2000 Server and Mac OS X Server. Computers and peripherals communicate via the TCP/IP networking protocol. Client workstations are primarily Macintosh based. There are 6 servers in service including two student servers, an email server, the district finance server, and two staff file servers.

Externally our school district connects through a Cisco switch to a gigabit fiber-optic line. Internally, our connectivity at the elementary school site is running Cat 5e 10/100/1000

base-T. Most Macintosh computers on the network have gigabit NICs in them and are able to run at 100 base-T. The network hardware in the elementary facility is scheduled to be upgraded in 2009. All district servers are located at the high school site. The high school facility is running on a new Cisco 4510 Core, that feeds one edge switch closet and the elementary facility via a fiber-optic backbone. Computers at the high school facility connect at 100 base-T.

The greatest challenge in maintaining/upgrading technology infrastructure is providing accurate funds to upgrade equipment to remain current with colleges and businesses. In general, our needs are greater than the funds available for technology upgrades.

Equipment Access for Instruction

The district currently has an Internet connected computers to student ratio of approximately 5.9 to 1 (165 computers and 965 students). There are four computer labs in the district and two media centers which house the majority of the student accessible computers used for research, instruction, and assessment programs. One set of 30 notebook computers is also available for classroom use at the elementary building. The district's teacher to Internet connected computer ratio is approximately 3.9:1 (254 computers and 65 teachers).

Average Age of Equipment and Replacement Cycle

The average age of equipment used for delivery of instruction or public library services is 4-5 years old. Plans are being made to begin implementation of an official equipment replacement cycle (set for summer 2007). The implementation includes a flexible 4-year replacement cycle for most staff work stations, student access workstations, and computer lab workstations.

Technology Platform and Computing Devices

The technology environment is cross-platform, meaning that it consists of Macintosh and Windows based machines. A Majority of staff and lab workstations are Macintosh based, with the exception of one high school Windows Lab, and the majority of the financial staff using Windows based machines. Staff members have a choice of a desktop computer or laptop computer. The placement is about 60/40. The district's server environment consists of three Mac OS X based servers and three Windows 2000 Server based servers. There are currently 3 handheld PDA devices in the district provided by outside grants through administrative programs.

Level of Technology Staff Support

There is one technology support person to manage the entire district's computer and network infrastructure. This includes the elementary and high school sites, as well as the district's Family Center. This level of staffing has been sufficient, but often times leaves us unable pursue additional opportunities, such as: research, evaluation, and staff development.

Future Needs (specific to infrastructure, management and support)

- Elementary network hardware will require upgrading within this 2008-2011 cycle.
- Professional development opportunities relating specifically to technology infrastructure and management.
- Develop a plan and process for data management, security, backup, and disaster recovery.

Role of School Media Center

Rush City School District #139 has a fully staffed media center in each building. The media specialists have both been instrumental in developing the technology plan. Both school media centers provide supplemental materials for classroom instruction. The media specialists also assist students with the research process. Media specialists introduce teachers to new technologies relevant to their areas of instruction. The media specialists, along with the technology support person, assist teachers in the use of technology

Rush City School District #139 has maintained a steady budget for their media centers. No cuts have been made in personnel. Rush City School District #139 partners with MnLink to provide an on-line card catalog and circulation system for both media centers. The card catalog is available to anyone who has Internet access. MnLink is a shared automation system, which allows equal access to library resources across the state of Minnesota. Rush City School District #139 also partners with Central Minnesota Library Exchange (CMLE). CMLE is a multi-type, multi-county library exchange program where we gain greater access to books and periodicals.

Professional Development and Training

The staff development plan for Rush City School District #139 provides training to teachers, administrators and staff through in-services, workshops and classes. Training may be provided on a district, building or individual level depending upon need. One way the current staff development plan addresses the integration of technology with instruction is by encouraging staff and students to use technology and technology related resources. We have found that when a technology need arises in the classroom, faculty and staff are more open to the training. An effort is made to sufficiently train all school staff to integrate technology with instruction. The assessment of the effectiveness of the training is done by the individual. They have the opportunity to seek out and/or request additional training.

The administration of Rush City School District #139 is sufficiently trained in the use of technology as an administrative tool. The administration communicates with staff through e-mail. Grading and scheduling are done through the district student information system. The assessment of the effectiveness of the training is done by the individual building administrator. The biggest challenge in providing sufficient staff development activities for our staff is time. It is difficult to find a time when all interested faculty, staff and administration are able to meet for training. Training is provided during staff development days or on an individual basis. Ideally time would be provided for staff and administration to work on integrating the technology with instruction without being responsible for a classroom of students at the same time.

Budget for Technology

District 139 is committed to the on going funding of technology and technology support. The district employs a full-time network administrator, and has supported the purchase and implementation of technology district wide.

Fiscal Year	Technology Expenditure
2005	\$ 93,674.00
2006	\$ 96,132.00
2007	\$ 120,801.00

Through sound planning and effective implementation, the district will continue to provide a high level of support to meet the technology needs of administration, faculty, staff, and students. Based on the expenditures of fiscal year 2007 in the area of technology as shown above, similar technology spending can be expected for the 2008-2011 tech planning cycle. Please see the provided Budget Template below.

Funding sources used by the district to support technology include, but are not limited to: the general education funding, which is generated by the average daily student membership, the Federal E-rate reimbursements, the Title II – Part D funding, and the Microsoft CyPres Program.

Budgetary Concerns

One technology related funding issue is the steadily rising costs associated with the district's Internet Access. The district's cost for Internet access is very similar to that of much larger districts. The challenge continues to be paying the same costs as larger districts, while having a much smaller student population for generating revenue.

BUDGET TEMPLATE FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS, CHARTER SCHOOLS, AND NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS

UFARS OBJECT CODE	CATEGORY	ITEM(S) DESCRIPTION	FY2008 BUDGET	FY2009 BUDGET	FY2010 BUDGET	FY2011 BUDGET
100	Salaries and Wages for Technology Staff	Network Administrator Salary	\$40,215	\$42,250	\$44,375	\$46,500
200	Fringe Benefits for Technology Staff	Network Administrator Benefits	\$14,400	\$15,120	\$15,876	\$16,669
300	Purchased Technology Services	ColdFusion Web Site Development	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
	Consultant Services					
	Communications (telephone, Internet access)	ECMECC Fiber-optic Cable Connection	\$43,000	\$45,000	\$47,500	\$50,000
	Computer and System Services	TechCheck Support Services	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
	Technology Staff Development	N/A				
	Technology Workshops and Conferences	N/A				
	Technology Leases and Rentals	N/A				
	Purchased Technology Services (i.e., maintenance)	N/A				
400	Supplies and Materials (computer software, etc. both instructional and non-instructional)	Software licensing and updating, technology related tools, and technology related materials	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
500	Capital Expenditures (technology equipment)	Computer Technology (Includes implementation of hardware replacement cycle)	\$57,000	\$60,000	\$63,000	\$66,500

UFARS OBJECT CODE	CATEGORY	ITEM(S) DESCRIPTION	FY2008 BUDGET	FY2009 BUDGET	FY2010 BUDGET	FY2011 BUDGET
800	Other Expenditures (list)	N/A				
TOTALS			\$169,115	\$171,870	\$180,251	\$189,169

Implementation Plan

Implementation of this technology plan will begin immediately upon approval by the Board. In many cases, steps have already been taken on many of the short-term goals. The district technology steering committee will primarily have the responsibility to implement and evaluate technology based on the 2008-2011 technology plan. In general, the implementation will follow these guidelines.

- The committee will regularly review the technology plan and look at objectives contained within it when making technology decisions in the district.
- The technology plan will be used at all administrative meetings and discussions dealing with technology including budget-planning activities.
- It is expected that all short-term objectives will be in place by the end of the 2010-2011 school year.
- The technology committee will meet at least twice during each school year to advise the steering committee and make needed adjustments or modifications to the plan and planning process.
- The technology steering committee will meet as needed to address specific issues.
- Progress on the objectives will be continuously monitored and formally evaluated once per year.

Evaluation Plan

In small school districts where a small fluctuation in enrollment can have significant budget implications, it is difficult to set measurable objectives related to technology equipment. In this technology plan, the committee has chosen to, instead, provide technology goals and objectives.

The short-term goals that have been established for 2008-2011 should be achievable within the next three years. Of course, rapid changes in technology and issues related to school budgets may affect some of the goals. Additional evaluation activities, outlined below will be implemented for this plan to give the district a better indication of the effectiveness of the technology initiatives.

Evaluation Activities for 2008-2011 Technology Plan

The 2008-2011 technology plan will be used as a guiding document for technology implementation in ISD #139 over the next three years. As such, regular formative and summative evaluations will be completed to track progress and provide for changes that budgets and new technologies will dictate. Evaluation of the technology plan as well as work on subsequent plans falls upon the district technology steering committee. Following are activities that are expected to take place throughout the life of the 2008-2011 technology plan.

- Yearly review of the plan by the technology committee
- Yearly formative evaluation. Documentation of goals that had been set for the year and indication of progress on those goals.
- Stakeholder surveys will be conducted after the first and second years of the plan.
- Data collected will be used for yearly planning as well as a basis for development of the next three-year technology plan revision.

For Further Information

For further information on this technology plan, please contact:

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Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy

The District #139 Internet Acceptable Use Policy (as approved by the Board of Education) and the Computers, Network and Internet Rights and Responsibilities Agreement are attached as a part of this technology plan.