

Memorandum of Understanding

Information Technology Task Force

I. Purpose:

To establish the formation of an Information Technology Taskforce (ITTF) to facilitate the continued cooperation and collaboration between the City of Bristol's IT dept. (City) and the Bristol Public Schools IT department. (BPS). This MOU will outline the formation, responsibilities, and scope of the ITTF to align the goals and objectives between the two IT departments for an effective, collaborative and mutually beneficial relationship.

II. Scope and Objectives:

The ITTF will work to:

- Foster regular communication and mutual understanding between the City and BPS.
- Assist with the identification and management of shared goals, resources, and projects including shared infrastructure and network systems to reduce redundancy and costs.
- Ensure the alignment of technical standards, policies, and best practices.
- Address and resolve conflicts or discrepancies that may impact shared systems or users.
- Evaluate and report on the effectiveness of collaborative efforts.

III. Taskforce Structure:

- Membership: The taskforce will consist of the Mayor of the City of Bristol, the Superintendent of Bristol Public Schools, the City Comptroller, the School's Director of Finance, the Chief Information Officer (CIO), and the BOE's Director of Technology and Student Data (DTSD). Additional non-voting members will be designated as needed.
- Chairperson: Eric Evans
- Frequency: The taskforce will meet Monthly and hold additional meetings as needed for urgent matters.
- Decisions: Decisions will be made by consensus; if consensus cannot be reached, a vote will be conducted.

IV. Roles and Responsibilities:

A. Taskforce Roles and Responsibilities:

- Facilitate regular updates on projects and operations from each IT Department.
- Document, monitor, and inquire on progress of shared goals and initiatives.
- Create sub-committees or working groups as necessary to address specific technical challenges or projects.
- Identify broader initiatives for consideration.
- Review annual IT Operational and Capital Budgets as it relates to shared systems and resources.
- Review 5-year technology and infrastructure plans for shared service technologies.
- Resolve non-budgetary IT related conflicts or issues within the City and BPS.
- Provide management support, direction and advice to CIO and DTSD.
- Ensure IT input and collaboration on all construction projects with an IT component.
- Aid in communicating requirements and decisions to other City and BPS departments to minimize confusion or conflicts (if necessary).
- Provide interdepartmental perspective that may not otherwise be available to IT through normal channels.
- Review hiring, disciplinary, and termination/retirement processes for IT personnel.

B. City Roles and Responsibilities:

- The City commits to a transparent approach in the development and implementation of following shared service areas (but not limited to):
 - Cybersecurity
 - Hardware
 - Software
 - Telecommunications
 - Data Management
 - Electronic Communications
 - Connectivity
- The City shall ensure timely communication of any internal changes that may impact shared systems or resources.
- The City shall provide constructive feedback on collaborative efforts to improve future projects.

C. BOE Roles and Responsibilities:

- Will ensure timely communication of any internal changes that may impact shared systems and resources.

- BPS shall acknowledge the City's lead role and specialized expertise in areas impacting shared services and resources and align its practices and actions with any guidance and standards established by the City.
- BPS shall collaborate and provide timely access and support to ensure cohesive management and maintenance of shared IT infrastructure and resources.

D. Reporting Structure:

- All current employees represented by AFSCME Unions 2267 and 233 will remain in their respective bargaining units and continue to report to their existing supervisors. At this time, no changes to reporting lines or unit assignments are being proposed or implemented.

V. CIO and DTSD Involvement with the ITTF:

1. **Issues:** Any outstanding issues that affect the broader shared services aspect of the City and BPS shall be voiced at an ITTF meeting or sent to the Taskforce members by email. This is to ensure that issues are identified and resolved as quickly as possible.
2. **Status:** The CIO and DTSD will provide the ITTF with status reports on a monthly basis. These reports will be submitted more frequently when working through special or otherwise sensitive projects or dealing with significant issues.

VI. Five Year Technology and Infrastructure Plan:

Both parties agree to collaboratively develop a 5-year strategic plan to guide the management, maintenance, and advancement of shared systems and resources. This joint plan will, where appropriate, integrate relevant goals and priorities from the existing BPS 5-year plan, aiming to create a cohesive and mutually beneficial strategy. Key Objectives include:

1. **Alignment of Priorities:** Identify areas of overlap between the existing BPS 5-year plan and the shared plan, and harmonize efforts to meet both organizations goals.
2. **Annual Targets and Progress Reviews:** Setting annual milestones and conducting reviews to assess progress, ensuring both parties remain aligned with the shared objectives.
3. **Resource Allocation and Budgeting:** Establishing a coordinated approach to funding and resource allocation that supports plan implementation and benefits both parties.
4. **Responsiveness to Change:** Reviewing and updating the plan annually to remain responsive to emerging technologies, evolving needs, and new opportunities for collaboration.

VII. Funding of Shared Systems and Resources:

To support the effective management and advancement of shared systems and resources, both the City and BPS agree to a collaborative funding approach that balances costs equitably, maximizes available funding sources, and promotes efficiencies. Key principles and practices include:

1. **Equitable Cost Division:** Each organization will contribute to the funding of shared systems and resources based on an equitable division of costs. Contributions will be determined by factors such as usage levels, specific resource needs, and overall benefit to each organization.
2. **Leverage of eRate Funding:** Both organizations commit to fully utilizing eRate and other applicable funding opportunities to offset costs. The taskforce will assist in identify qualifying purchases and services to maximize the benefit of eRate funding for shared technology needs where applicable and noting that eRate will be 100% applied to BPS' portion of qualifying expenditures.
3. **Annual Budget Review:** The ITTF will conduct an annual review of the shared budget to evaluate expenditures, identify potential cost-saving opportunities, and reallocate funds if necessary to improve efficiency. This review process will ensure that financial resources are used strategically and in alignment with the 5-year strategic plan.
4. **Transparency and Accountability:** Both the City and BPS will maintain transparency in their financial contributions and expenditures related to shared systems.

VIII. Conflict Resolution and Termination:

Both parties are committed to maintaining a collaborative and productive partnership through the Mayor's Information Technology Task Force (ITTF). However, if issues arise that cannot be resolved, or if any party operates in a manner inconsistent with the terms of this MOU, the following processes will apply:

1. **Resolution Efforts:** The ITTF will make every reasonable effort to address and resolve disagreements through open communication and, where appropriate, by adjusting strategies to maintain alignment with the MOU's goals and values. Both parties will approach these discussions in good faith, aiming to find mutually agreeable solutions.
2. **Termination Process:** If resolution cannot be achieved despite these efforts, either party reserves the right to terminate this MOU. Termination shall be provided in writing, with at least 30 days notice to the other party.
3. **Consequences of Termination:** In the event of termination, the City's ability to support shared systems and resources for BPS may be affected. This may result in adjustments to the availability of shared services, technical support, and access to jointly maintained resources. BPS recognizes that termination may impact its access to resources that were previously managed or facilitated in partnership with the City.

Signature section below.