



Technology Status and Needs

Below is a listing of several technology categories within the District along with a brief description of the current state of that technology and corresponding needs. Also, attached is a detailed Technology Needs Cost worksheet that estimates funds needed over the next five years to maintain our current state and achieve the additional needs. As you will easily determine from the information below, we are in desperate need of additional funds for technology.

Computers

Thanks to the stimulus funds recently received and for the annual technology allotment from TEA, the age of the District's office and classroom computers is relatively healthy. Currently, all office, teacher, and classroom student computers (excluding COW labs) are less than five years old except for the computers at the Ninth Grade Center and Bessie Coleman Middle School which are now six years old. All Computers On Wheels (COW) labs are also over five years old. Most of those labs are nearing 9 years old and are beyond their useful life. COW labs amount to approximately 600 laptops District wide. While it is good news that the majority of our computers are of healthy age, requests for additional computers in classrooms are often requested. Also, in order to keep our computer inventory at or below five years of age, we need approximately \$360,000 a year in funding. We are currently spending about a third of that amount annually on computer replacements which is far short of our need.

Network Infrastructure

All offices/classrooms across the district are network enabled. The majority of our network switches were purchased and installed in 2002 using bond funds. The typical life of a network switch is 8 years so we are at end of life for the majority of our network switches. Many ports and components of these switches are failing off and replacement parts are unattainable. All of our switches currently provide a minimum of 100MB to clients and while 1GB is the new standard and 10GB is the emerging standard, there are currently no existing applications that require those higher bandwidths so we are not excluding ourselves from any functionality at this time. But, as the years pass, these switches will continue to fail at an increasing rate and require replacement so it is imperative that funds are earmarked for switch replacements.

Wireless

All campuses have WiFi capabilities. The majority of our campus wireless networks were installed in 2002 using bond funds. We installed the standard 802.11b at that time. Since then, the faster, more reliable, and more secure 802.11n standard has been adopted across the industry and is in wide use. Our 802.11b access points are in desperate need of replacement so that proper wireless performance can be achieved at the campuses and thereby open up the use of several applications that we are not capable of handling currently. WiFi management is also urgently needed to increase security and performance and decrease time spent on maintaining access points.

Phone System

The District currently has a VoIP Cisco phone in every office and classroom across the District amounting to approximately 1200 phones district wide. The majority of these phones were installed in 2002 using bond funds. These are 100mb phones and are capable of handling all our current applications but when a network switch replacement to 1GB is implemented in the future, these phones need to be replaced with 1GB phones as well to achieve that additional bandwidth.

Classroom audio-visual

Every classroom (approximately 600) in the District has either a projector or TV connected to the teacher computer for presentations. Approximately 200 of those classrooms have a projector instead of a TV. The use of TVs are limited since they do not project an image large or clear enough for many classroom activities. Therefore, all classrooms should have projectors installed in the future. Along with a projector, a smartboard and document camera would be valuable tools for teachers to use. We currently have approximately 100 classrooms with a smartboard installed. Ultimately, we would like every classroom to have a projector, smartboard, and document camera.

Technology Staff

In comparison to other Texas districts, technology and instructional technology staff counts are well below average. It is imperative that we add several instructional technology specialists to work directly with teachers to assist them with integrating technology into their instructional processes.