**Blue Ridge CUSD 18**

**Updated Technology Proposal**

**The Technology Project is finishing up year 2 of a 3-year implementation plan. The technology committee met February 2, 2016 to review and update the plan.**

**Introduction:**

Blue Ridge Schools have been building technology resources for the past two decades. By 2000 we had networked computer labs in every school, all classrooms had network connections, and the District employed a teacher/technology coordinator.

Since that time we have employed a full-time technology coordinator and an assistant technology coordinator. Faculty and staff have continued to increase skills in the use of technology for student management, communication and instructional purposes. Nearly all classrooms have Smart Boards and LCD projectors. The District is part of the Central Illinois Regional Broadband Network (CIRBN), which provides us with substantial bandwidth and creates the ability to handle significantly increased traffic on our network systems. IPads, Chromebooks, computer tablets, and laptop computers are in use by students throughout the school district, and have proven to be useful for content delivery and provide individualized interventions to build specific skills for students.

The District maintains a robust website, a District Facebook page with well over 1000 fans, and has recently launched into Twitter. Communication options include email for students and parents, public email lists, and SchoolReach texts/emails/telephone calls. All District telephone systems have been upgraded to VOIP systems, allowing calls to be transferred between campuses and alleviate the need for long-distance calls from Farmer City to Mansfield.

The State of Illinois adopted new standards in 2010 and is in the process of implementing new state assessment systems. Curriculum materials for nearly all subject areas are in the process of updates. Options now include more online resources and curriculum materials. In many cases these are available at low and no cost to schools.

In 2013-14, the convergence of these factors brought us to discussion of our next steps in the use of technology in instruction. Several models for use of technology instruction were explored. Students, staff and parents were surveyed to determine needs, concerns, and readiness for possible changes. The Committee visited other Districts, attended numerous conferences, and read articles regarding implementation of programs at other Districts. In the spring of 2014 the Blue Ridge Board of Education authorized the initiation a 3-year plan to have 1-to-1 technology for all students in grades 4-12. Full implementation is planned for August 2016.

**Survey Results:**

Surveys were completed in 2013-14 by parents of students in PreK through 8th grade, High School students, and District teachers. The following themes emerged from the survey responses:

* We need to start implementing this now or we will behind the technology curve later
* 1 to 1 computing would be helpful for the new PARCC testing-All students would be able to test at the same time
* Professional Development for Teachers will be needed throughout the process
* Additional technology support/personnel will be needed
* How will we pay for and sustain this program?
* How are students going to pay for repairs/devices?
* Could students bring their own devices instead of using a school issued device?
* Internet safety concerns
* How do we make sure students are on task?
* 10%-15% of students don’t have Wi-Fi at home (if able to take the devices home)
* Parent education on the program is needed

Concerns & Potential Pitfalls

* MONEY and sustainability
* Envisioning the long term plan
* Avoid becoming an expensive replacement for pencil and paper

**Technology Plan for Year 3 of Implementation - Summary:**

Grades PreK – 3rd grades will continue to focus on traditional instructional methods. IPads and tablets will be used in “centers” for skill development and to provide instructional interventions for students. Devices will continue to be purchased with the goal of 4-6 devices in each classroom for student use.

Grades 4-12 has been phasing in the use of Chromebooks over the past 2 years, with the goal that by the 2016-17 school year each student would receive a District issued device that is used at school.

**Technology Plan for Year 3 of Implementation – Specifics:**

**PreK – 3rd grade**

Grade 3 has 60 tablets in current use funded by Clark Foundation and Blue Ridge Educational Foundation. Several IPads have been purchased from building and grant funds. Additional tablets and IPads for classrooms will be purchased as funds become available. We may move older Chromebooks to 3rd grade and redeploy tablets to lower grades.

**Gr. 4-12**

13 teachers have piloted Chromebooks in their classes. Beginning in August 2016, all students in grades 4-12 will have access to Chromebooks. Chromebooks will be replaced as needed each year. Initially the team thought a 3-year rotation for equipment was needed, but many of the devices are still in good condition and may be useful for a longer period of time. Cost of up to $80,000 per year ongoing expense.

**Professional development will continue for participating teachers:**

* Participating teachers will receive Chromebooks before leaving for the summer and up to 2 paid days to work collaboratively and independently on curriculum and implementation – paid at the contractual hourly rate (Article 7, Section C of the Collective Bargaining Agreement). Cost $5,520.
* Up to 10 teachers will be permitted to attend the summer “Moveable Feast” technology training. Cost $5000.
* ½ day per quarter to collaborate. Cost $1260 for substitute teachers.
* Google for Education online training. Cost $0
* Participating teachers will share a document or blog
  + Work collaboratively throughout the year
  + Show work that has been completed in the classrooms
  + Guide for the next wave of teachers implemented the Chromebooks
* Participating teachers will present at curriculum day in January 2017
  + What they have done in their classrooms?
  + How it worked?
  + What they would do differently?

**Professional development for the remainder of the staff:**

* All PreK – 12th grade teachers have been issued a laptop computer (some are now in need of replacement), may take the Google for Education online trainings, and begin developing a classroom website to deliver curriculum and communicate with parents and students.
* Participating teachers will provide in-service training for other District personnel. This was done in January 2015, 2016, and will be repeated in 2017.

**Student training in participating classrooms:**

Teachers will provide training for their students in each participating classroom. Teachers will communicate how to appropriately use and care for Chromebooks. Students will review and sign updated Acceptable Use Policy. If students are allowed to take devices home they will need a protective sleeve to carry their Chromebooks. Cost per sleeve $15-30 for a total of up to $3000-6000.

**Parent training in participating classrooms:**

An informational letter will be sent home & parent meeting held at the start of the school year. Teachers will review the Acceptable Use Policy with parents, how Chromebooks will be used in the classroom, and student responsibilities for use and care. This information is also provided at Freshman Fling at BRHS. We are exploring the possibility of incorporating the AUP into the registration process.

**Policies, Procedures, Handbooks:**

Student handbooks, the District Behavior and Discipline Code, and Acceptable Use Policy were reviewed. No changes are needed at this time.

**Other Information Discussed:**

* Continue to explore purchasing Chromecast devices for pilot classrooms: $35 per class.
* Bloomington Area Career Center has started a technology support program. Students in the program complete internship hours back in their home district, providing tech support and assisting with equipment repairs. We have a student in this program.
* Students continue to be responsible for equipment repairs in the same manner that they are responsible if they damage or break other school equipment and property.

**Fees:**

* The District is not charging a separate technology fee. The textbook fee is gradually increasing each year to partially cover costs.
* The committee would like to provide parents with the option to buy aging devices at the end of each school year. Prices and availability will be determined each year.

**Year 3 Implementation:**

Beginning in year 3 we anticipate that the District will be able to assign 1 Chromebook to each student in gr. 4-12. All teachers will be able to use the Chromebooks in their curriculum.

**Year 4 going forward: Replace Chromebooks as needed.**

**Committee Follow-up and Accountability to the Board:** The Board has access to view the blog maintained by participating teachers throughout the school year. The Technology Committee will continue to meet *at least* once a year to review the implementation of the technology plan, make necessary adjustments, and plan for upcoming issues. The Committee will continue to provide an annual report to the Board.