

Glenbrook District 225 Technology Committee Minutes – August 1, 2013

Members Present: Bretag, Doughty, Finan, Hanley, Riggle, Siena, Thimm, Wegley, Williamson

Members Absent: Pryma, Shein

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m.

Dr. Riggle stated that the Technology Committee was formed five years ago to address technology challenges and ensure that technology proposals are properly prepared to go to the Board.

Dr. Riggle then proceeded to give a historical perspective of technology efforts made by the district since 2006 for the benefit of the new committee members. The perspective included a number of efforts that followed the adoption of a technology plan by the district in the spring of 2008 known as “Innovation Without Restrictions.” He stated that the technology plan developed in 2008 still serves as the philosophical base for our work today. Dr. Riggle will provide the new members of the Technology Committee with copies of the “Innovations Without Restriction” document in the near future.

A firm was hired to look at the network and the issues the district struggled with. In 2008 the Board authorized \$2.7 million to resolve network problems and provide laptops for teachers. The laptops were a split platform and could be used as a Mac or PC. Since that time, the technology industry has become more Internet based. The Student Information System at the time (SASI) couldn't function on a Mac which was a frustration for teachers.

Following the third year of a 3 year laptop lease teachers were given the choice of either a Mac or PC laptop. 55% of faculty chose the Mac and 45% chose the PC laptop. Both devices have performed admirably. Teachers use laptops to make presentations and to work in the office and classroom. After three years some of the laptops have experienced mechanical and technical problems, so the three year leases have served us well.

The district e-mail system was changed in 2011 from Novel to Outlook. The district used Outlook for one year, and then switched to Google when security concerns with Google Gmail were addressed to our satisfaction, which opened the availability to Google Apps across the district.

Computer literacy among staff members has increased substantially and there are fewer calls to the service desk. Google Apps makes frequent changes, but are easy to follow. It has saved time and money. Our technology budget is 2% lower than the industry average which is 6-7%. We are at 4-5% which includes technology staff, hardware and software.

The 2008 network revamp introduced the wireless system in our schools. We have been with Aruba, but when a large number of users try to access the Internet, the access points installed in 2008 can't handle the load. We are increasing the Internet capacity because our students and faculty weigh in more on our network. In order to accommodate increased use and activities such as video streaming, we are increasing from 300 MB to 2.11 GB. Due to recent efforts to increase redundancy, our Internet service is up over 99% of the time. If we wish to become a hot spot in the future we have the ability to go from 2 GB to 10 GB. We will determine if there is interest among the elementary districts, Village of Northbrook, Village of Glenview, Park Districts, Library, etc. to determine if they would like to partner with us. If other governmental entities wanted to partner with us we could increase our capacity and become more efficient at a lower price.

Review of Summer Projects

Revamping the building wiring at GBN was a major project this summer. Some building wiring had to be brought up to date and switches in both buildings needed to be replaced. New access points were added in classrooms. Testing will have to take place. Both schools will have the same services and capabilities.

In addition, the district transitioned from digital to Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephones which has resulted in a \$50-60,000 per year savings. In the past, moving telephone lines required a technician. With the VoIP telephones, our technology staff now program the necessary changes. We have the ability to unplug a telephone and plug it into another jack and the telephone number travels with the telephone.

Video security cameras also use the network infrastructure. The quality of the images will be reviewed.

Mr. Thimm showed the committee a picture of a wired closet before and after rewiring. They are now more organized. Closet ventilation concerns were addressed during recent construction projects.

The major hub for the network is located in the basement at 1835 Landwehr. To add needed redundancy a backup system was added at GBN. If something happens at 1835, we have backup at GBN and can switch over without a loss of data. If the power goes out, temporary battery backup would provide power until the generators come on.

Mr. Thimm stated that GBS received new access points in all classrooms. They are plugged into classrooms and the switch component upgrade to drive them is 50% completed. Existing wiring is complete. Switching and connectivity tests are next.

GBN will begin deployment into classrooms next week. The goal is to have the work completed by the start of school. Wiring at GBN is still in progress. Some equipment has not yet been received. If work is not completed before the start of school, it can be done in the afternoon when classes have ended for the day. Technicians can be used to accelerate the process. The wireless is running now and should be ready by the time the students get their devices.

Chromebook Process

Approximately 3900 Chromebooks will be distributed at booksale and the goal is to make the distribution as smooth and seamless as possible. Mr. Bretag gave an overview of the distribution process that will take place at booksale. Freshman students will receive training on Google Apps and the Chromebook during freshman orientation in the English Department. When the Instructional Supervisors return to school they will discuss how sophomores and juniors will receive instruction. Students can learn everything they need to know in a very short amount of time.

Mr. Doughty suggested sending a message to parents prior to booksale reminding them that students will not receive their Chromebook without the parent signature.

Filtering System Discussion

Dr. Riggle stated that the district has received a small number of concerns since the Chromebook program was announced. Some parents are concerned about filtering when students are away from the school. We have found a company that will allow us to filter at home in a secure manner. The district currently utilizes an appliance on the network for filtering called M86. The console management from Google will allow the M86 filtering to work on Chromebooks outside the district network, but there are security concerns with that system. Mr. Thimm

briefly explained the security concerns involved and stated that a new product called Securly can provide the needed filtering without the same security concern.

Securly partnered with Google to develop the product. We can tie into the Google Education domain and identify who you are and the appropriate policies allowed. No other product of this type is available. This product will not put our network at risk. We have control over what policies we enforce.

Our current filtering system is under a three year contract licensed for existing computers. We plan to continue to use M86 for a third year for devices other than the Chromebooks. This year, we can validate that Securly works for all devices and replace the M86 appliance which would result in additional savings.

Dr. Riggle stated he would like to move forward with Securly as soon as possible to keep the district in CIPA compliance as advised by legal counsel.

Mr. Thimm stated that the cost for Securly is \$20,000 and approximately \$30,000 the following year when all devices are added. M86 is currently \$8,400, but would become more expensive than Securly if the Chromebooks were added. Securly will be overall less expensive than M86 for the future.

Mr. Doughty stated that we should do this quickly.

Mr. Thimm stated that we could ask for a temporary license.

Dr. Riggle said we could use it for two weeks under a temporary agreement and advise the company we would pay following Board approval. The committee agreed that this trial period should begin prior to the students receiving Chromebooks at booksale to ensure that the district is CIPA compliant from the start. Mr. Thimm stated that he will contact the company and did not think there would be a problem with this arrangement. The purchase of Securly will be placed on the August 12 board agenda.

Other

Mr. Bretag stated that professional development has been provided through the summer. Over one hundred teachers took advantage of training over the summer. Leyden hosted a 1/1 Chromebook Symposium with teachers from across the country with 20 Glenbrook teachers

from both schools in attendance. It was exciting and lots of ideas were shared. Additional training will occur on the Glenbrook Days.

Mr. Bretag said that he found the interaction and knowledge sharing between the North and South staff to be very exciting.

Dr. Riggle stated that because GBS will be going to the block schedule many conversations between the schools and sharing of ideas will occur.

Interviews were conducted for the systems trainer position. A recommendation will probably be brought to the board around the 26th.

On August 6 Mr. Bretag, Dr. Williamson and Dr. Riggle will participate in a Google Symposium and share ideas with 40 districts who are interested in going to Chromebook. We will gain knowledge from Google people and find out where they are going. Google launched Google Play which is similar to iTunes. Electronic textbooks will be available for purchase and apps similar to iTunes. Google also worked with publishers to rent books through Google Play. When the rental is up, the book is pulled of your computer.

Dr. Riggle stated that there will be a greater availability of electronic textbooks, but the cost is not significantly lower. We buy back books at 50%. Some electronic rentals are for 6 months at a time which may require two rentals. There would be no buy back of electronic textbooks. Dr. Riggle stated that textbook costs could be reduced if departments discuss and eliminate textbooks which are not used.

Recap

Dr. Riggle provided a recap.

1. We will be filtering the Chromebooks using Securly.
2. New parent system portal – part of PowerSchool
3. New notification system (School Messenger) will allow parents to select messaging notifications from the school. They will be able to make choices. We will communicate with parents as the school year begins. Dr. Williamson added that parents won't be able to opt out of emergency notifications. They will have options for grade and attendance information.

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 a.m.