

Technology Audit Executive Summary

July 2012

Facilitated by:



BUCKS COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT #22

Our Children... Their Future... Bucks County IU

Pennsbury School District Technology Audit

Executive Summary

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One of the District Goals for 2011-2012 was to conduct an audit of Pennsbury's information management systems and technology infrastructure. How we manage data and what resources are in place were closely examined, with an eye toward making improvements in efficiency, being more compliant with reporting requirements, and serving our central mission of student learning. Feasible recommendations resulting from this audit are being considered for future implementation. A core committee of Pennsbury administrators worked with professionals from the Bucks County Schools Intermediate Unit (BCIU) #22 to assess our current systems and needs. Subcommittees were formed to focus on our information management systems related to student information, human resources, and finance. A needs assessment with regard to professional staff development in the area of technology was also conducted.

Part of this internal study involved the presence of educators and technology leaders from neighboring school districts. These volunteer participants visited our schools and Central Office facilities in early February. They conducted a detailed review of our data management systems.

This executive summary provides a detailed overview of the results of this technology audit.

THE TECHNOLOGY AUDIT EVALUATION TEAM

The Evaluation Team was led by Michael J. Masko, Ed.D., Assistant Executive Director of BCIU #22 and Mr. Mark Hoffman, Director of Instructional Materials & Technology at BCIU # 22. The following educational leaders served as members of the Evaluation Team:

Ric Cargas	Council Rock School District
Kathy Christie	Neshaminy School District
Barry Desko	Council Rock School District
Andrea DiDio	Bucks County Intermediate Unit
Thomas Evert	Bensalem Township School District
William Ferrara	Morrisville School District
Lisa Hoffman	Quakertown School District
Mark Hoffman	Bucks County Intermediate Unit
Kelly Lambert	Bucks County Intermediate Unit
Michael Masko	Bucks County Intermediate Unit
Thomas McCambridge	Central Bucks School District
Monica McHale-Small	Bensalem Township School District
Polly Moore	Centennial School District
Karen Moyer	Bucks County Technical High School
Laurel Podraza	Central Bucks School District
Patty Sabol	Quakertown School District

OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

At the conclusion of the audit, the Evaluation Team presented the following overall impressions to Pennsbury's Core Committee and other District staff members:

Strengths:

1. District staff members are aware of the shortcomings of current information systems and demonstrate resourcefulness and creativity in working around those shortcomings.
2. District staff members express interest in using technology to create efficiencies and better serve students and their parents.
3. District staff members display a commitment and dedication to the school district and its success.
4. District leaders invite and encourage thoughtful analysis, discussion, and evaluation of professional practice with the aim of bringing about systemic improvement.

Needs:

1. To coordinate, in the short term, better communication and collaboration to share available resources and best practices.
2. To create a long term plan and timetable to upgrade or replace all school district information systems.
3. To ensure alignment and consistency across all data systems in use across the district.
4. To provide ongoing, systemic, and job-embedded professional development in the use of various information systems.
5. To pilot and evaluate any potential changes to information systems, before those changes are introduced throughout the school district.

FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION TEAM

The Evaluation Team indicated the following strengths and needs for the Student Information Management System, the Human Resources System, the Financial Information System, and Professional Development.

I. STUDENT INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Strengths:

1. The system can be adapted to the needs of the end users. Customization is very easy to implement since the system is in-house and the district owns the code.
2. Healthy Tools is used and well liked by school nurses.
3. The IT Department is responsive to the needs of the schedule writers and delivers results to schedulers in a timely fashion.
4. The student registration process is centralized at the District office.
5. The Naviance system is well liked by counselors.

Needs:

1. To implement a more up-to-date and user-friendly Student Information System and grading program.
2. To increase access to the information that staff needs in order to make informed decisions.
3. To provide staff development to all users and to offer support for existing technology and software.
4. To improve communication between the IT Department staff and Student Information System users to further promote and provide end-user satisfaction.

II: HUMAN RESOURCES INFORMATION SYSTEM

Strengths:

1. A very dedicated and hardworking staff; there is a high degree of retention.
2. A willingness to learn new ways to improve upon daily tasks.
3. Customer service orientation with an eagerness to learn, and enthusiasm to help the staff.
4. The HR Department staff share a team approach. They are working to be cross-trained, which is essential in providing suitable customer service.

Needs:

1. To protect the integrity and privacy of employees' social security numbers.
2. To have the IT Department empower District users and to act as technology leaders within the District.
3. To migrate TERMS to a more current platform.
4. To research and implement a time tracking system that integrates with payroll.
5. To provide a human resources reporting system for District users.
6. To research and implement an applicant tracking system.
7. To install Wireless Access in all School Buildings.
8. To create a streamlined Network Account creation procedure.
9. To review policy for mail deletion after 90 days.

III: FINANCIAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

Strengths:

1. TERMS is able to store a wide variety of data types from across departments.
2. TERMS' strength is its management of Financial Services-related data.

Needs:

1. To adopt wide-ranging communication strategies to share TERMS-related information and resources.
2. To provide more TERMS-specific training to new and veteran users.
3. To account for privacy concerns currently in place.
4. To re-evaluate the processes used to procure supplies and materials.
5. To more efficiently connect the Human Resources data needs with those of Finance.
6. To consistently track and manage student activity funds.
7. To streamline the Purchase Order process.
8. To provide users with ready access to the data within TERMS.

IV: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Strengths:

1. The professional development offerings follow convenient, flexible schedules.
2. The professional development staff members are talented and dedicated.
3. The professional staff members demonstrate a high degree of willingness to be collaborative and supportive to one another, especially in the area of technology training.

Needs:

1. To improve communication around professional development opportunities in the District.
2. To create, define and communicate the expectations for the effective use of technology.
3. To offer a wider variety of professional development delivery modes.
4. To simplify training needs by standardizing hardware and software.
5. To eliminate external factors that create barriers in the delivery of professional development and the related use of instructional technology.
6. To develop clearly articulated procedures when rolling out new technology initiatives.

CONCLUSION

Based on the needs assessment for each system area, the Administration concluded that the human resources (HR), financial services, and payroll systems would be the first areas of priority.

To protect the integrity and privacy of employees' personal information, immediate action was taken to replace Social Security numbers with employee identification numbers. This action was implemented after the conclusion of the Technology Audit.

Systems that integrate HR, financial services, and payroll functions are presently being investigated; this review began with an analysis of other school districts' systems, on-line research of various vendors, and on-site demonstrations. This internal study is still underway and a recommendation will be forthcoming. Following this recommendation and implementation, improvements to the student information system (SIS) will be further explored. As part of the 2012-2013 District Goals, the analysis of SIS will be given priority status.

During the 2011-2012 school year, the Pennsbury School District embarked on the development of the 2012-2015 Comprehensive Plan, which is required by The Pennsylvania Department of Education. Incorporated into this plan will be improvements to information systems and professional development offerings to support the use of current and new technologies.

The Pennsbury Administration will continue to analyze the needs that were identified through the Technology Audit. With the understanding that budgetary constraints will persist, prudent recommendations will be developed and prioritized.

Vast improvements to the School District's technology infrastructure, coupled with more intensified and targeted professional development opportunities, will help to fulfill the mission of the Pennsbury School District and maximize learning opportunities and provide equal access to rigor for all of our students.

MISSION

The Pennsbury School District, a student-centered learning community, will prepare all students to achieve their highest potential and to demonstrate mastery of skills and talents necessary for life in a global society by providing a diverse educational program with the involvement and support of families and community.