

SECTION IV

INFORMATION SYSTEMS ADVANCEMENTS

Over the past year, many improvements have occurred in the area of Information Systems, including an upgrade to the District's firewall, an upgrade to the District's network infrastructure, enhanced email SPAM protection, upgraded busing software, upgraded financial and human resources software, implementation of point of sale cafeteria software in four schools, the first ever submission of employee data to the State EPIMS system, high school students requesting courses online for the next school year for the first time, parents given access to their children's classroom records online and teachers increased use of Smartboards.

No enhancement or improvement has impacted the District as much as the Citrix thin-client environment. The major goals for the use of Citrix were:

- Controlling the cost of computer related activities, which reduced software licensing costs, reduced hardware replacement costs, and allowed for the reuse of outdated equipment.
- Easier more efficient administration of desktop computers.
- External access that allows users to work from home, as they would from their work location
- Applications no longer platform dependent

The 2007-2008 school year was the first year of full implementation of Citrix, and, although a success, was not without problems. The District worked with the Internet service provider to solve complaints such as slowness, typing delays, and printing issues. A successful test was completed, which led to an upgrade of the offending equipment. The slowness and typing delays disappeared overnight.

Changes to the way printing was handled not only made that problem go away, but also improved the administrative tasks associated with printing. Since the adjustments were made, the District has seen the goals of the system come to fruition. The District currently has eighty-three (83) applications installed; teachers experience significantly fewer distractions because of computer problems; the District is better able to comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) by blocking web sites that are unsuitable for students. In addition nearly two hundred District staff members are able to connect to the District's system via their home computers, thus being able to continue to work at home.

It has been a busy, but very successful year in the District's Information Systems area. The real savings will be evident for years to come, saving the District expenditures associated with hardware and software. Technical support will also be more efficient and can now be performed faster. Teachers will spend less time with computer related issues which will allow more time for student-related activities.

The District is now well positioned to take on the new challenges that face the administration and the classroom, on a timeline that can be planned and managed. Such things as Internet II, network infrastructure enhancements, distance learning in the classroom, online interactive professional development, integration of various software applications, document management, are some of the challenges yet to come.

Education is evolving all the time, requiring constant planning, upgrading and adjusting, while still controlling costs. Teachers need the tools to teach and students need the tools to learn. The District is ready to adjust to any future technology related initiatives, administrative or classroom, it chooses to tackle.

