

**Wachusett Regional School District
Technology Plan
(School year 2007-2008 through 2010-2011)**

Introduction

Wachusett Regional School District regards technology as universally important to the academic preparation of the Region's students. If Wachusett's graduates are to succeed in an increasingly competitive workforce, they must possess the skills that are most necessary, recognizing that continuous learning is a requirement of an increasingly technological society.

The District recognizes that technology is the conduit to a world-wide base that will enable students to access information at will and to increase communication with neighbors from other countries and cultures. It provides the potential opportunity to establish personal links with all parts of the globe. In addition, as a tool for discovery and for analysis, it promises to help students to develop discriminating minds.

Therefore, the District has made a commitment to ensure that all staff members possess proficiencies that will enhance instruction as well as transfer to students application; that all students will achieve a high level of competency and an understanding of the importance of technology in an information age; and that the community will become engaged in supporting a broad-based program of technology education.

Copied from the 1995-2000 Technology Plan; Page. 9

Background

The technology initiative of the Wachusett Regional School District was instituted during the 1994-1995 school year as a result of an infusion of new moneys under the auspices of regionalization. The following year, 1995-1996, implementation of the technology plan began in the classrooms supported by professional development opportunities for the staff. Plans were being developed to network the District.

The vision of the Wachusett Regional School District was to develop and utilize a wide area network that would provide learning resources and administrative functions across the region. The integration of technology would support the Massachusetts Common Core of Learning by creating opportunities to stimulate thinking, to facilitate communication, to increase knowledge to real-world activities, to pursue purposeful work experiences, and to contribute to school and community.

Students need to know how to access ever-changing information as quickly as possible and be able to communicate in an electronic world. The vision is not to have classrooms

without walls but rather classrooms without boundaries, e.g., sixth graders in the District will work on global projects together with their peers in this country and across the continents. Technology will expand the social environment beyond the classroom, shrinking the world.

The vision identifies the need for on-going professional development for all staff to increase technological proficiency in order to enhance lesson planning and instruction. It also provides for a network system that provides for a fully automated, paperless administrative and accounting system.

From teacher conferences to homework assignments, bulletin boards, reference sources, and world-wide information, the network will create a community-wide resource to connect not only schools in the District but also homes, libraries, and municipal offices as well. All students and staff will have connectivity to the community network and the technological experience to compete in the global workplace.

Mission

To implement today's state-of-the-art technology within a plan for tomorrow by constant and diligent augmentation to keep pace with future technological products and enhancements in order to be able to offer students the resources and tools necessary to compete in an ever-expanding, increasingly-skillful, global employment environment.

Copied from 1995-2000 Tech Plan; Pages 13-14

Years 2000-2007

Local technology plans were submitted to the DOE yearly and subsequently approved. In 2005, along with several ultimate District goals, the District added goals to heighten technology use and awareness for both staff and the student body. The Technology Plan became an ever-changing document mainly due to the rapid changes in the technology world and budgetary issues. The K-8 schools changed from Apple hardware to PC hardware due to massive renovations and/or rebuilding programs. Much of the software quickly became outdated as new versions of the same software came onto the market requiring more memory. New administrative programs were also put into use as well as programs for scheduling schools, grading of students, and self-directed study programs for students. District policies dealing with the massive influence of technology were rewritten and eventually adopted. Additional technology support staffing has been increased to provide coverage for each school. The servers have been updated providing greater capacity. The District is moving from a Novel system to a Citrix system, which allows students and staff greater access to the world of technology.

Years 2007 – 2011

As the Wachusett Regional School District looks back over the past 12 years, it is apparent that the District has made great gains in technology. A school system of 6

elementary schools (K-5), 3 middle schools (6-8), 2 elementary/middle schools (K- 8), a high school (9-12), an early childhood center and an administration office, is electronically connected. The Wachusett District is made up of 7,178 students and 978 staff members. All personnel, both professional and paraprofessional, have access to E-mail, along with a variety of administrative programs designed to provide up-to-date information that are both efficient and productive. Programs are available for the teaching staff designed to assist in scheduling, grading students, assessing students, and for individual and group instruction.

Classrooms are well equipped with computers, a ratio of 1:4; with additional computers available for student use in common areas, computer labs and libraries. Smartboards, along with speaker systems, have been installed in most classrooms, printers are placed about the buildings, and scanners are available. All high school staff members have been assigned a laptop, giving them freedom of access for planning, grading, and research. The staff in the District's newest elementary school, Glenwood Elementary School, (opened in September 2006), also have assigned laptops and is experimenting with student hand held devices. The District special education staff members are assigned laptops for ease in writing IEP's.

The District looks at the present as a pivotal time in technology. Yes, the District has come a long way but it must look at other key issues. The District needs to develop a plan to replace older computers and other pieces of equipment. Assessments need to be put into place to assure that the use of technology is enhancing the educational needs of the students. If the District is going to spend considerable money on technology, it is important to decide how we should spend and what the students are going to learn in the process. An assessment and review process will be developed to examine current practices, how these current practices follow the state guidelines, and what are the students gaining from the experiences. Each program needs to be analyzed as to knowledge gained and how students are going to use the new knowledge. It is a time to not only look at the 13 years of education the District provides, but how and what knowledge will the students need to succeed in the changing world.

The District will take the five benchmarks:

1. Commitment to a Clear Vision and Implementation Strategies
2. Technology Integration and Literacy
3. Technology Professional Development
4. Accessibility of Technology
5. E-Learning and Communication

and will analyze each to focus on what should be done, how the District needs to go about planning for the future, and assessing progress.

As the benchmarks are put into place, the District needs to constantly be aware of new equipment and materials and making appropriate changes. The budget will also play a big part in keeping the District on task. The District's goal, therefore, becomes a document to guide the District through the next four years by looking at what we have, where we would like to go, and how do we get there. A recent survey completed by the

staffs within the buildings needs to be further studied. By using the District's strengths, we can correct the weaknesses, and provide a better technological experience for the students of the Wachusett Regional School District. With a better technological experience, the District is providing a wider knowledge base that should lead to a deeper learning experience and, thus, a better understanding of the world around us.

Benchmark 1

Commitment to a Clear Vision and Implementation Strategies

The District's technology plan needs to establish a clear, yet changeable, set of goals. These goals, directed by the budget, need to provide a direction for the use of technology within the District. Ongoing strategies need to align with State Frameworks in supporting student learning.

Years 2007-2009

- 1.1 The District will annually review the composition of the Technology Committee.
- 1.2 The District will review the current status on an annual basis and set new and more appropriate goals when necessary.
- 1.3 The District will review the latest editions of the state standards with the school administrators. The administrators will review the standards with the teaching staff.
- 1.4 The curriculum staff and administrators will continue to provide the teaching staff a list of materials that are important to improve teaching and learning.
- 1.5 School policies governing the use of technology will be reviewed and revised as needed.
- 1.6 A technology budget will be developed yearly along with the funding sources to be used for hardware, software, and staffing.

Years 2009-2011

- 1.7 A plan will be developed and implemented to assess the impact of technology on student learning.
- 1.8 In view of possible health and safety issues, the District will review possible risks and dangers to students through the use of technology. Parents and the

community should constantly be made aware of these issues. Student use policies will be established.

Benchmark 2

Technology Integration and Literacy

Classroom instruction, through the means of technology, will be stressed to enhance student learning. The use of technology, in a student's future life, demands a greater and greater commitment from the schools in providing meaningful use and technical knowledge.

Years 2007-2009

- 2.1 The District will establish a list of web sites that support District curriculum in all subjects.
- 2.2 100% of the students are using technology as a means for learning and showing proficiency.
- 2.3 100% of the staff will meet the advanced high comfort level by 2010-2011.
- 2.4 The District will maintain a technology director/coordinator and support staff to keep all programs in excellent working order.
- 2.5 The District will maintain technology support in each facility.

Years 2009-2011

- 2.6 The District will develop ways technology can be intergraded into all phases of the curriculum.
- 2.7 Instructional technology teachers will be employed to work with the teaching staff to enhance learning techniques and thus improve student knowledge.
- 2.8 The District will maintain a staff member dedicated to data management and assessments.
- 2.9 Along with professional development, time will be organized allowing staff to share "Best Practices."

Benchmark 3

Technology Professional Development

Teachers need access to a wide range of professional development opportunities in order to meet the on-going changes and challenges in today's world. The District will provide a variety of review workshops as well as workshops on new techniques. These benchmarks will be on-going.

- 3.1 A yearly survey of staff will include a section on the needs for professional development.
- 3.2 Professional development will provide for new ideas and techniques as well as for updating the assisting curriculum programs.
- 3.3 Professional development will be provided for administrative programs. These programs will be for new staff as well as refresher updates.

Benchmark 4

Accessibility of Technology

The problem is not with the accessibility of computers, but in keeping them current. The District needs to establish a technology replacement cycle. The District needs to support the integration of technology into the curriculum. Sufficient technology staff is necessary to support programs and services.

Years 2007-2009

- 4.1 The District will research new programs and equipment that will include handheld electronic devices.
- 4.2 The District will make all equipment or materials available to all students unless described differently in a student's IEP.
- 4.3 The District will replace wide area network connectivity from copper T1 to fiber if cost effective.
- 4.4 Schools within town limits should be connected via fiber.

- 4.5 Replace District-wide software with applications that better prepare the District for future requirements and communicate with each other, preferably via an automated fashion.
- 4.6 The District will implement software that will allow for automated backup and inventory of technology related hardware.
- 4.7 The District will finish the implementation of the Thin-Client desktop environment.
- 4.8 The District will develop and implement policies and procedures for the storage and protection of District data.
- 4.9 The District will investigate the advisability of working with the community to provide Internet service for students and staff during school time as well as outside the school day.

Years 2009-2011

- 4.10 The District will research and investigate a wide area network and Internet failover.
- 4.11 The District will investigate the feasibility of providing access to course/seminars at college and universities.
- 4.12 The District will study the need for offsite storage of school and District data.
- 4.13 The District web site will include an up-to-date list of places where students and staff can access the Internet after school hours.
- 4.14 The District will create a plan for the replacement and addition of equipment in classroom areas – especially printers and scanners for ease in receiving materials.

Benchmark 5

E Learning and Communication

The District maintains an up-to-date web-site for the purpose of keeping parents and other interested parties informed. Professional development opportunities are available through web-based programs. The availability of Smartboards in many classrooms provides instant

enhancement to the learning process through an array of web sites. The District will continue to monitor the following benchmarks.

- 5.1 All District computers are hooked up to the Internet.
- 5.2 All classrooms with a Smartboard are able to project information directly from the Internet. The District will increase the number of Smartboards as money becomes available.
- 5.3 The District will continue to maintain and add to its web site. All information will be available to the general public.
- 5.4 ConnectEd, an automated telephone notification system that went into effect in the fall of 2006 will be evaluated for effectiveness on an annual basis.
- 5.5 The computer system will be maintained with firewalls as needed.
- 5.6 The District will comply with all federal, state, and local policies in dealing with electronic communications for both staff and students. Policies will be issued notifying students and staff that any information sent over the District network may be a public record.