

Strategic Plan

Information and Advocacy Report



TO: Board of Education

FROM: Sarah Straka, Director of Instruction

DATE: July 19, 2021

RE: Information and Advocacy Report - Learning and Growth

OVERVIEW

Board Goal I: Learning and Growth - We will graduate life-long learners.

Objective D: Implement cutting edge and innovative learning practices

- Indicator 1: Integrate technology in instructional and learning practices
- Indicator 2: Incorporate research-based and innovative curriculum and instructional practices

It has been customary practice to provide a separate summary of each Information and Advocacy Report Indicator. However, due to this unique pandemic-related instructional year, this report will combine the topics of technology, innovative curriculum, and instructional practices into one interrelated summary.

Focus on the Hardware

During the 2017-2018 school year, the Interactive Projection Device Task Force came together to develop an [Instructional Technology Five Year Plan](#). This plan was set in motion the summer of 2018 and will be revisited during the 2021/22 school year. At times, when organizations create a multi-year plan, external and internal factors can prohibit full implementation and completion. Fortunately, even in a pandemic, this was not the case in Mount Horeb Area School District. Our Technology Department and school building administrative teams were able to deliver each goal on time or even ahead of the projected implementation period. Because of this, by the 2021/22 school year, all students in grades 3-12 could be offered and/or have an assigned Chromebook to utilize in the classroom. This goal is dependent on current device return rates and the condition of the Chromebooks from the 2020/21 school year. Below is a breakdown of how those devices may be allocated and used by students if enough devices are on-hand in the district by the start of 2021/22 school year.

- Grades K-2: Students have access to iPads and Chromebooks within the school building throughout the school day. Staff reserve classroom sets as needed. The amount of devices allocated specifically to each classroom has been growing each year.

- Grades 3-5: Students have access to Chromebooks within the classroom throughout the school day. Each classroom has enough devices to assign one Chromebook to each student; these devices will remain in the classroom and will not be taken home.
- Grade 6-8: Students have access to Chromebooks throughout and beyond the school day. Each student is assigned a new Chromebook in grade 5 which will remain with that student through grade 8.
- Grades 9-12: Students have two options to utilize a mobile device for learning:
 - Bring-Your-Own Device (BYOD): Students are encouraged and allowed to bring their own device for learning. For the purpose of this program, the word “devices” will include laptops, netbooks, cell phones, smart phones, iPods, iPads, tablets, and eReaders. Please note that Nintendo DS and/or other gaming devices with internet access are not permissible at this time. Students will be required to adhere to the District Policy 522.7 Internet Use and District Policy 443.5 Student Possession and Use of Personal Electronic Devices.
 - District-Provided Chromebooks: Devices will be assigned to each high school student. This assigned Chromebook will remain with the student during their entire high school career. Students may elect to not use this provided device and bring in their own device.

A [Digital Learning](#) website has been created to provide more information to families and students regarding the above information. Families and students will be directed to this site during the District’s annual summer registration event. At this time, families will learn about Chromebook care expectations and a new warranty/insurance option. District Technology Coordinator, Josh Cataldo, recently vetted several Chromebook insurance companies and selected Securranty. Families may now elect to purchase yearly insurance to cover repair costs should their student’s Chromebook become damaged or need replacement.

We plan on soliciting this website to families who have checked out a district Chromebook. <https://securranty.com/mhasd-insurance>. The cost is \$29.95 for any model of our Chromebooks and families can sign up multiple students and pay on this website. The family will work directly with Securranty for any claims, including filing and sending the damaged unit into Securranty. The district will provide loaners when needed.

Focus on Digital Learning Tools and Instructional Practices

Due to beginning the school year in a virtual learning environment, staff members needed to learn and embrace varying learning platforms and interactive tools. In addition, families also had to learn about these platforms and tools in order to support their students. Therefore, the [Vikings @ Home Learning Hub](#) was created. This one-stop-shop provided both staff and families information on Clever, Seesaw, Google Classroom, several Google applications, and various digital tools. These tools allowed teachers to provide content to students, engage them during instruction, and collect information on student learning.

Back in March, staff were surveyed on their satisfaction with the provided tools. The results of the survey were shared during the April Education Committee meeting and can be found [here](#). Based on

staff feedback, many digital tools currently used will be subscribed to again and incorporated into the 21/22 Teaching and Learning Budget.

Focus on Professional Learning

Another aspect of the aforementioned Instructional Technology Plan focused on ensuring professional development was provided and available to staff. CESA 2's Digital Learning Director, Beth Clarke, has been the main facilitator for these training sessions. Prior to the pandemic, teachers were divided into cohorts and provided a two-year professional development cycle centering on digital literacy and implementation: Year 1 focused on Chromebook care expectations, classroom management, digital tools/applications, and flipping instruction and Year 2 focused on integration of the [SAMR model](#). If you remember, the fifth grade teachers started this journey with Ms. Clarke during the 2018-2019 school year, as this was the first year of our large scale Chromebook purchase for fifth-grade. Professional development then continued with teacher cohorts receiving training prior to or during the year in which their grade level students received an assigned Chromebook.

With the onset of the pandemic, digital implementation professional development was fast-tracked. All staff were provided the opportunity to learn more about common Google applications such as Classroom, Forms, Sheets, Slides, and Docs. Additionally, all staff were provided training on how to plan, pace, engage, and assess students in a virtual environment. The bulk of this training occurred throughout August with two additional district-wide training sessions in October (Assessments) and February (Blended/Hybrid Learning).

Now that teachers have been exposed to more digital tools with a baseline knowledge of instructional practices, it is time to circle back with those teachers that did not complete their two-year digital implementation training cycle to ensure that digital learning experiences continue to be deep and transformative.

Moving Forward

As technology continues to become more prevalent in our staff members' personal and professional lives, there will continue to be new applications and tools to incorporate into their classrooms and instructional practice. These applications and tools typically come with a cost in order to receive the premium versions. There will be instances where a free version can suffice; however, when this cannot occur, there will be more requests for district financial support. As of now, the District has committed to specific products. If additional products are requested/required, there will need to be a large consensus among staff and review of district and building budget capacities. In the past, we have been able to find ways to a "yes" with most products and would look to find creative solutions to meet staff and student needs.