

Glenbrook District 225 Technology Committee Minutes – March 6, 2012

Members Present: Bretag, Hammer, Jakes, Pryma, Ptak, Riggle, Shein, Thimm

Members Absent: Regalbuto

The meeting was called to order at 7:13 a.m.

Proposed Budget for FY 2013

Mr. Thimm reviewed the proposed technology budget for FY 2013. He stated that the budget was developed with the assistance of Dr. Ptak, Mr. Jakes and Mr. Bretag. The budget is a work in progress and is close to the final version which will be submitted to the Board for review on March 19.

Mr. Thimm reviewed changes to the following budget categories:

Program 2662 - General Operating Expense - \$5,000 increase due to increases in library database subscription increases and \$30,000 for a second Internet connection to meet the needs of the organization. These changes represent a 4.8% increase.

Program 2661 - Administrative Software Systems – There is a \$25,000 decrease in consulting service costs. A \$200,000 contingency is included in the event that we have to move to a new student system. This represents a 350% increase.

Program 2663 – New Initiatives – Computer leases total \$338,005 and equipment purchases total \$224,000. The details are included in the five year Technology Master Financial Plan. The increase in this category is 0.3%.

The overall budget increase with the reimbursement from E-rate revenues is 16%. If the contingency is removed, the increase is 0.9%.

Mrs. Siena is reviewing financial system packages and will bring a recommendation to the board for discussion on March 19. The financial systems have been narrowed to two; eFinance and Skyward.

Long-range Financial Plan

The long-range financial plan is an effort to capture all equipment, network infrastructure and server and SAN storage needs over the next five years. The plan lists the replacement dates and useful life of each item to make the budget more stable and consistent as we are going into leasing and capturing the devices.

The lease is shortened in 2015 because we may choose a different type of equipment, i.e., desktop vs. mobile. We would like to keep our options open in the future.

Three basic principles considered when developing the long range plan. The first is getting all technology needs on a replacement cycle. Second, is to even out expenditures. Third, develop a consistent documented financial pattern .

Overall, when you look at the technology budget, we are more dependent on the software and only 2% on equipment. We would like to be lower, but we have to be careful before we cut back because of the importance of the day to day operations is substantial and if we cut leases short we will not be able to operate software.

Mr. Thimm asked the committee for suggestions on the layout of the financial plan. Mr. Shein commented that there is more detail than are necessary in the 3-5 year template.

RFP for SAN

Mr. Thimm stated that the server for SAN storage has served us well, but has exceeded its life expectancy and is out of warranty. District 225 and District 214 are planning to replace data system centers and would like to leverage our joint purchase power to obtain lower prices and work together to build a foundation for disaster recovery. Nine proposals were received from vendors and the proposals are being reviewed by District 225 and District 214. The quotes received from the vendors varied because some vendors chose to include more options. The number of proposals under consideration have now been narrowed to three or four. The storage servers have to work well together and the manufacturer must provide troubleshooting assistance when necessary. A proposal will be selected and recommendation made to the Board on April 19. The goal is to have the servers and storage implemented before the end of the second semester.

The proposal will change the way we operate our system. We will have \$168,000 annually to do the server refresh. It will be a three year commitment, with a \$1 buy-out lease purchase at the end of the lease which would allow us to retain the equipment to be used for disaster recovery.

Mr. Shein asked who would write the procedure and conduct disaster testing. Mr. Thimm reviewed several ways a disaster could be simulated and stated that we can establish a quality test plan and schedule.

On Friday, March 2 we had a double disk SAN system failure. Hewlett-Packard initiated replacement of the hard drive and in the process a second hard drive failed. Our whole group was down. That space became unavailable and the system was the key server for this building and had a big impact because the HP IP address that handles the Internet couldn't connect to other resources. If we were able to send it to another SAN directory IP address were flowing we wouldn't have that problem.

Disaster Recovery Plan

Mr. Thimm provided the committee members with a diagram of our current connections to the district data center. Additional diagrams illustrate disaster recovery plans for the next three years.

Year 1 - The current configuration with a planned GBN-GBS connection to provide redundancy access from either school to the data center and an additional Comcast 100 MB connection.

If we established an Hcap fiberlink it would allow all students to get to the services they need. The cost would be \$2,500 per month before the 40% E-rate discount. Mr. Shein asked if the E-rate discount would we be liable for the \$2,500 monthly fee. Mr. Thimm stated that it is under

E-rate and we would not be bound and we cannot resell. We need to think about what we want to do and when to stop asking for funds.

The data center is a concrete building with sump pumps and air conditioning. The only thing we don't have is open air to air handlers, which eliminates taking in hot air. The only downside is there is no way to get fresh air in.

Dr. Riggle said he is uncomfortable with the location of the data center in the basement and we could possibly consider a move to the third floor in the future.

We can get prices to get Internet connection in each facility and move it during the contract. We will need to put the connections in place. With a connection to GBN and District Office we create two points of failure. More firewalls will have to be built which will result in additional cost.

Year 2 – A direct fiber link from District 225 to District 214 to provide for shared disaster recovery.

We have additional needs going forward and we will have the opportunity to connect to District 214 through shared fiber from Comcast. A 1 GB connection using existing fiber links would provide basic connectivity. Establishing a connection with District 214 will build redundancy and allow access to each other's Internet pipelines.

Oakton received a \$1,000,000 grant to build a ICN fiber connection that we can gain access to in August 2013. We will benefit from the ICN services and connect to ICN for free.

Year 3 – A plan to offer compute and storage services to the elementary feeder districts and municipalities.

We would be able to offset our costs by providing services to the villages and municipalities. The Northbrook feeder districts have dedicated Internet services. If everyone with Internet services in Northbrook connected and it would help to offset our costs.

Dr. Riggle stated that District 31 is not looking for new technology, but asked what would be available to them in one year. Mr. Thimm said if they joined with us it would be easy to connect to us and we can connect them to Oakton and benefit from ICN. We can provide filter, server, disk access and the costs can be reduced because they won't have to buy the fiber connection. All public entities can join forces and the costs would be lower than they are currently paying.

We would like to let the community know about this opportunity and ask if they would like to participate or not. District 34 is not part of the shared disaster recovery. Dr. Riggle said if they provide the connection to us it wouldn't be expensive for District 34. They are interested in sharing and leveraging and plan to build out in the next year or two.

Dr. Riggle asked the board committee members if they have the information they need for a proposal to be brought to the full board. The board members indicated the proposal could be presented at the March 19 meeting. The technology budget will be brought to the Board in April for approval.

Dr. Riggle stated that the April Technology Committee meeting will focus technology initiatives related to student engagement.

Financial System Update

The financial system products under consideration have been narrowed to two. A committee is viewing demonstrations and a recommendation will be brought to the Board on March 19.

Student Information System Update

Dr. Riggle said he was pleased to report that the servers have been stable since the new build was deployed on the 14th. MIG was informed that we will stay with them for the 2012-2013 school year. If we are to stay with MIG beyond next year, they will have to provide:

1. Server stability – Currently they are doing OK. They have gone through 17 or 18 days in a row without issue. We are using an old version of TeacherLogic because of a programming matter. Foxpro allowed it to work on PC servers in a .net. A new product will be out in the next couple of weeks and a demonstration scheduled on March 22.
2. Have to be able to operate data management – Tablo is an application which will be purchased out of Title I funds and works on laptops. It will be server based and we hope to complete data plan mapping in Tablo and validate our data management.
3. Scheduling – Will it work to schedule our classrooms? One school was able to schedule, but it was laborious and the other school was not able to build a schedule. Both schools are scheduling now.
4. Data Storage – This is getting better.
5. Integration of special education module – This is underway and once it is integrated if they are solid we will be fully functional and people in the building would be pleased.

A \$200,000 contingency has been added to the technology budget as a placeholder and allow us to make a decision and recommendation to the board at a future date. If MIG is unable to meet our needs we would need a year to transition over and the earliest date we could transition would be July 1, 2013.

The four products under consideration are:

eSchool Vanguard – This product has received good reviews and was not in existence when the last student information system was selected.

Infinite Campus – This was our second choice when the last student information system was selected. This product has received mixed reviews.

PowerSchool

Skyward – This product is Internet-based.

Other

Mr. Shein requested that students come to a meeting to show the committee how they are using technology. He said he would be interested in hearing about a day in the life of a couple of students.

Mr. Hammer asked if students have access to WiFi after the school library closes; i.e., 6 p.m. Mr. Pryma indicated that at that time students are usually waiting for a ride home and are not short of devices that can access the Internet. Students have their own laptops, etc.

Mr. Hammer asked if students can check out netbooks. Dr. Riggle stated that a pilot for next year will be discussed in April. Title I funds to GBS and not GBN. Title I funds are intended for low income students and we would be in violation of Title I if we loaned a laptop or tablet to a student who is not low income. Dr. Riggle stated that we need further clarification to avoid violating Title I regulations and the possibility of having to return funds.

Mr. Hammer asked if an area could be established with 10-15 laptops in an open area for after school use following the close of the resource centers. Mr. Pryma said he examined the issue and there wasn't an interest on the students' part. Dr. Riggle stated that if the students only have 15 minutes to spend they don't want to change the environment they are using and would be concerned that they might lose the work they created during that time. Mr. Bretag stated that the ARC and IDEA rooms are open until 4 p.m. Some students spend time reading there and when offered the opportunity to use computers, they indicate they are not interested. Mr. Jakes stated that the GBS Library is open until 4:30 and at that time it clears out. After the holidays there was a big increase in the number of students bringing their own devices to school.

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 a.m.

Future Meeting

The next scheduled meeting is April 12, 2012 at 7:00 a.m. in Room 128 at GBS.