

Technology Plan Cover Sheet
2013-2015 (July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2015)

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION	
District/Agency/School (legal name):	DISCOVERY PUBLIC SCHOOL OF FARIBAULT
District Number:	4081-07
Technology Plan Status	The District/Agency/School has an approved 2012 technology bridge plan: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2013-2015 Technology Plan Date of Creation:	08/01/2012
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Discovery Public School of Faribault

Independent School District 4081-07

2013-2015 Technology Plan

History of Discovery Public School

Discovery was organized by Catholic Charities of Minnesota and a school leadership committee in 2001-2002 to give their students a new alternative to the traditional public school, private school, or home school settings. Students would attend from the Faribault community as well as students that resided in the Covenant Academy Residential Program. The residential program closed down in the summer of 2005, and the school had to move as a result. The professional staff went to great lengths to keep the school alive and serving students for the 2005-2006 school year. In the early years, the school relied heavily upon Catholic Charities for support, but more recently the community has been the main focus of the school. Community organizations and businesses are the new supporters of the charter school. Parents are actively helping the school try to achieve a goal of 50 or more students.

With the loss of residential students, the school has faced a decrease of enrollment. At a high point for the 2005-2006 school year, the school educated 53 students in grades 7-12. The school year began the year with 22 students, and enrollment had climbed to over 30 students. The goal of the school is to add a sixth grade section next year to achieve our goal.

The Discovery Public School was able to successfully add the sixth grade and experienced tremendous growth during the 2006-2007 school year. At a high point the school educated 64 students in grades 6-12.

Since then the school has continued to grow in enrollment, and is currently averaging between 60-65 students each year. Our use of technology has increased. Our school currently has a small computer lab with 12 computers, 2 LCD projectors, 3 Televisions, an updated phone system, and each teacher has an individual computer. We are also trying to set up as many additional computers in our Resource Room as possible. In the future we would like to purchase more software to help build on student's educational skills and technological skills. The school's technology has been improving, but there is still a long way to go. We would like to continue building up our lab, and increase the number of laptops and projectors. We would also like to begin updating computers by adding a minimum of 5 computers each school year.

Future of Discovery Public School

In recent years the school has had a very tight budget so IT expenses have not been the top priority. Discovery School mainly works with Minnesota Computers for Schools when purchasing materials. These are refurbished computers at very reasonable prices. The school has also installed a server, and looks forward to continuing adding more technology.

Technology Needs Assessment

Our first level of needs assessment is by anecdote – staff or students indicate a feature to the technology systems which is not functioning as desired, or is missing altogether. As we become aware of broken or missing features, we conduct informal surveys to identify how widespread is the concern. We also estimate a budget in time and other resources to determine the cost.

The school's Curriculum Committee also indicates needed technology to support instruction, identifying the technology required for effective use of new curriculum materials. The best examples of this are when the committee made the decision to build our computer lab, and when we recently decided to install a server. We have also received some guidance from our financial auditing firm to address additional security policies and practices.

The school's basic technology needs go in the following order:

- Maintain and update current technology
- Increase number of computers (desktops and laptops)
- Increase number of Televisions / DVD players
- Implement wireless connections for laptops
- Educational Software
- Classroom laptop cart

These items are what our E-Rate funds would go. The school has improved a lot in the area of technology, but needs to continue to update and grow.

Goals and Strategies

Organization Leadership and Planning Committee

Discovery Public School has a Technology Coordinator who works with the school Technology Committee and other committees in the school. The Technology Committee reports to the School Board and works with the school's Long Range Planning Committee. The Technology Committee assures that the school is following its technology plan, and advises the school on technology requirements which develop outside of the plan.

The Technology Coordinator is supervised by the school's Administrator. The school currently has a Managed Services Agreement with Syand Corporation to install and update all technology. The school has been working with Syand for the past 5 years. The Technology Coordinator is responsible for communicating with Syand to resolve all IT needs.

Parental Involvement and Communications

Communication with parents begins at parent meetings and conferences. We publish our Acceptable Use Policy in the annual Student Handbook, which is sent to the parents of each student. We provide information through our website and newsletters. Most communication we provide is via telephone or standard mail, because many families do not have internet capability at home.

We intend to increase the use technology, especially Internet technology, to communicate with parents. We will be more intentional about collecting parent e-mail addresses to facilitate prompt (but non-confidential) communication. Also, we will be updating our school's website to reflect current news and information.

Our new telephone system will also continue to improve our ability to communicate with parents. We believe that our parent communication has improved as a result of the move.

Technology Integration with Curriculum and Instruction

The two drivers of technology at Discovery are instruction and administration. In upper grades we provide instruction in Microsoft Office applications. All grade levels make some use of computer, and will use internet when it is accessible.

We have noticed that the level of technology available in the school also affects the curriculum choices presented by staff. The technology needs make new curriculum exceedingly difficult to implement, but staff are being trained across curriculum by the quality teaching network and others how to implement best practices with technology into content. Teachers are at different levels of technology integration. All teachers have access to televisions, VCRs, and DVD players.

An improvement from past years was how all of our teachers were able to post class information on our school's website, but we still must make it available to those whose only access is the public library. Parents and students will be able to review course descriptions, grading criteria, and current assignments. Students can currently email assignments to teachers through the Internet from their homes or the local public library.

Delivery of School Media Center/Library

The school only currently has a small library, which is housed in the Reading classroom. Area students are able to utilize the public library, and it is accessible for class trips for research. In the

future we would like to offer the availability of e-books and magazine articles which would not be otherwise available. Community members share magazine subscriptions with the school in order to have access to other sources of information. The school participates in the Star Tribune and Faribault Daily News Newspaper in education programs.

The school library is a steadily growing and improving! We have a huge collection of books that were mostly donated or purchased from Half Priced Books. We are also in the process of beginning our computer updating process to upgrade older computers each year. Overall our library/computer lab is much improved from the past.

School Administrative Support

Discovery currently uses the JMC, Inc. software for student information. Our upper grade teachers also use the JMC Classroom Attendance Entry program for period attendance. Next school year, the school will utilize the JMC Lunch program. The school will continue to utilize as many of the JMC programs as possible.

The school has acquired additional printers over the years, and also has a well-functioning copy machine in our office. The school has added additional computers as necessary to the office for employee use. The school's server, which was installed last year, was also placed in the main office. The server will allow teachers and students to access all of their documents from any computer in the school that is connected to the server. The school is very excited about the possibilities of using the server in upcoming years.

Data and Network Security

We currently rely on firewall features of our ISP service, through our local router, and passwords on shared folders. We perform centralized back-ups of critical data to CD-R discs. We want to use disk "ghosting" software to create our own customized backup discs for newly configured systems, allowing us to easily restore the systems to their initial configuration. We also rely on commercial antivirus software running on all client computers in the network. Our newly installed server should be an even more effective back-up tool moving forward.

Internet Safety Policy for CIPA Compliance

Students are expected to understand and abide by our Acceptable Use Policy, which prohibits certain uses of our computer systems. Both students and parents sign an acceptance form. We also contract with our ISP to provide internet filtering for staff and student Internet access. The filtering is in effect for all student and staff computers. The filter protects minors from material that is pornographic or otherwise harmful to them.

Technology Goals

The school's biggest goal is to keep adding more technology. In today's world the need for technology will only keep increasing, and the school realizes this. The challenge lies in the school's budget. The school is steadily becoming more financially stable, and in future years plans on increasing the technology portion of the budget. Ideally the school would like to add more computers, LCD projectors, wireless connections for laptops, and a laptop cart for whole classes to use.

The school would also like to further utilize their JMC program. JMC has many different uses for schools. The school currently uses JMC for attendance, grades, transcripts, etc. This year we will begin using the JMC lunch program. In the future Discovery would like to train all teachers to individually use the JMC program to even further the value of this program.

Discovery School also would like to continually utilize different functions of the recently involved server. Ideally each student and teacher will have their own account and can save all settings and documents to log on from anywhere in the school. Teachers currently have this ability, and the school will work towards adding student logins down the road.

Another reason to continue increasing the amount of computers and technology is online testing. Discovery administers both the NWEA, MCA Tests online. This currently can be a hassle due to a limited number of functional computers. The amount of online testing will only increase in future years, so the school sees increasing the computer lab size as a top priority.

The school would also like to continue purchasing Educational Programs for student use. The school currently uses Skills Tutor to work with on computers with students who are academically behind or need additional help. The school would like to build on this by purchasing software to use for ELL students, Special Educations students, and teach a computer skills/keyboarding class.

Professional Development Plan

Professional Development has been one of the most challenging technology issues facing our school. Our current training has been focused on the use of our computerized grade book and attendance programs (from JMC, Inc.). We have a limited number of self-study books and videotapes available for staff to learn how to use the Windows operating system, Microsoft Office applications, and the JMC teacher and office programs. Staff also attends MDE training sessions for specific administrative applications such as the EDRS system and MARSS reporting.

We will continue to provide staff with written documentation and training sessions in the administrative software used at our school. We will continue to inform staff of training opportunities in the community for operating computers and using common applications, like

Word and Excel. Through use of general funds, the technology coordinator will provide a yearly in-service for staff, in order to review and teach about new technology and methods.

Due to the resources available, our current staff development strategy in technology has focused technology use within content. Content specialists have been brought in and have utilized available technology to direct staff development. Many resources have been able to be accessed as a result. We also encourage teachers to master a minimal set of features in important applications, e.g. how to update their class websites, basic operations, and so forth. Teachers are encouraged to sign up for development opportunities offered by MDE. We provide the teachers with a technology manual at the beginning of the school year, and access to books.

While developing a complete instructional curriculum for grades 6-12, technology standards will be addressed. The school has changed a great deal since its inception that it has not been possible to set a complete curriculum. This curriculum will include familiarity with computer systems and use, keyboarding, publishing and presentation applications, and programming. Courses include material on Microsoft Office components and HTML for web pages.

Evaluation

The single area in which Discovery needs to do substantially more is in the area of evaluation. Discovery has been constrained by tight budgets, and as a result has not purchased what they have wanted for classroom use. The school is finally getting the pieces necessary to evaluate staff use and needs. The school will conduct informal surveys, and will meet as committees to review technology usage. The survey and committee will make recommendations for professional development activities as needed.

Staff members as a whole are more technologically advanced. This has led to increased need and usage of computer technology. Professional development and increased levels of education have introduced a demand for computers within content areas.

We have updated our telephone system, due to a lightning strike ruining the old one, and are able to communicate from room to room, as well as the office. The website continues to grow as teachers provide updates and news.

We have increased parent communication based on the use of technology. Parents are more informed now than at any time in the past. We look forward to making even greater leaps and bounds in terms of parent communication. The amount of information available from the school website has increased. This area will continue to be our largest area of gain as forms and grades will become available.

We have increased the number of Board and committee minutes available on-line. All of the Board Minutes are available as on-line Microsoft Word documents. We considered this to be

more accessible to our constituents. The website just like the school is still under construction, but will grow as the school realizes the potential of the school and as things calm.

We have initiated and maintained an inventory of the equipment and software licenses as recommended by MDE and our auditors. We have increased the use of listserv programs to communicate with our school community via e-mail.

Before staff leave at the end of the school year, the Technology Coordinator will prepare a staff survey to evaluate the staffs experience with technology in the school over the past year. Before the survey is submitted to staff, it will be reviewed by the school's Administrative Assistant and approved by the school's Administrator. This survey will be conducted semi-annually by the Technology Coordinator and the results will be reported to the School Board and Technology Committee.

We will interview teachers and program staff which is funded under the No Child Left Behind program to document their use of technology during the previous year. These interviews will be conducted at the end of each semester through the school year, and will influence the technology budget and schedule.

The results of all evaluations will be reported to our Administrator, School Board, Technology Committee, and Charter School Sponsor. The report will be intended to invite responses from the various stakeholders in the school's community.

Progress and goals will be reviewed by the school's Technology Committee, School Administration, and the School Board. Technology has been discussed in length at school board meetings and the board is very involved in this process. At the end of each school year a budget and timeline is put in place to decide how the school's technology dollars should be spent. Most recently the school decided to sign a Managed Services Agreement with Syand Corporation. This gives the school unlimited hours involving any maintenance to their current technology.