

South Portland



Technology Plan

2008-2011

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1. Community and Parental Involvement – *Involve a broad representation of the school community in the planning process. Include a description of how the technology will be used effectively to promote community and parental involvement and increase communication with parents, including a description of how parents will be informed about the technology and its proper use.*

This past year we were pleased with the turnout at parent information nights. We had the opportunity to present a session on the proper use of technology to our parents in conjunction with an open house at each middle school and the high school. These sessions were linked to the student's right to take home laptop computers through MLTI and our own extension of 1-1 laptops to the high school, specifically grade nine. We will continue these efforts to inform parents on the responsible use of technology each fall.

A major focus of the District has been the improvement of our web pages and how we can use them to communicate information to parents, community members, and a larger audience of people considering employment or residence in South Portland. We monitor traffic to our websites and receive community feedback frequently. One of our sites has received over 20,000 hits! We have a centralized webpage which holds many forms and communications that come from our Central Office. Each school also has an individual page and the building administrator acts as the "editor in chief."

All of our schools use technology to create a newsletter which they send home to parents. This newsletter is also published digitally. A frequent column details the use of technology in our schools. To communicate how technology is used to the greater public we often work with local papers to create stories and press releases. Also, all of our public meetings are broadcast on local access television, and the topic of educational technology is frequently on these agendas. Last, each school holds an open house annually and the Technology Integration Specialists (TIS) work with classroom teachers to showcase student work.

We continue to use group emailing to communicate school related information to parents and community members. This feature is used primarily for weather related cancellations and news, however we are investigating an expansion of more general information to

those who wish to receive it. The “Alerts Email” has received tremendous public support and praise with over 800 subscribers as of January 2008.

One of our goals is to have more student and parent involvement in technology planning. We are pleased to have had students who are keenly interested in technology serve on our Secondary Facilities team, and their input into the technology designs for our proposed high school and middle school renovations have been invaluable. We currently have students who serve on interview panels for hiring of Technology Integration Specialists. In 2006 we formed the “InfoTech Team.” This group includes the technology director, TISs, building administrators and librarians. We plan on adding a parent to this group in an effort to expand our stakeholders in the technology planning process. Our initial attempts to add a student have not worked since the group meets during the school day. At schools of all levels we have “Tech Teams” comprised of student volunteers who help teach teachers and classmates, as well as create multimedia presentations.

*2. **Vision** - Establish a vision statement linking the tools of technology with areas such as curriculum content, instructional practices, professional development strategies, and enhanced services. (If you have already established a school or district-wide vision statement you may use it rather than establishing a separate statement, so long as it encompasses the requirements above.)*

The vision for the South Portland School Department is that technology can (1) enhance and enrich curriculum, (2) improve communications, and (3) improve productivity.

*3. **Goals** – Articulate specific goals, aligned with the Maine Learning Results, for using advanced technology to improve student academic achievement.*

Our Technology Goals are:

Our students will learn to solve problems cooperatively through teamwork assisted by appropriate technologies. They will use various technology and traditional resources to become “collaborative and quality workers” and “creative and practical problem solvers.”

Our students will develop an appreciation for and the ability to use technology in problem solving situations. They will become data bases, and other resources.”

Our students will have opportunities to work with voice, video, and data technology in an atmosphere conducive to their varied learning styles.

Our students will have equitable access to computers and other technology tools where instructional needs are best served.

Our students will be educated on the ethical use of technology, and how technology is changing the world in which we live in the hopes that they become “responsible and involved citizens”

Our students will be provided with a range of experiences designed to develop the technological skills necessary to function responsibly in life situations marked by rapid technological change.

Our staff will be supported by ongoing professional development and information skills experts at all levels (librarians, literacy specialists, technology integration specialists), so that they will have the skills to effectively use technology in their classrooms.

Our Local Comprehensive Assessment System will have technology embedded in all of the content areas.

***4. Identify Necessary Technology** – Include a technology assessment. Gather information about technology currently in use so that what will be needed to meet new goals can be determined. Include a list of the equipment and telecommunication services that are necessary to reach the goals.*

The South Portland School Department is fortunate to have adequate financial support from our School Board and City Council. We are very well equipped with modern servers which are the brains of our technology infrastructure. We have upgraded our city wide WAN with \$275,000 in network hardware, increasing connection speeds between buildings by 100 times. We have achieved all of our goals set forth in our last technology plan, however our replacement cycle estimates of \$100,000 per year for new computers was not met in this year’s budget due to serious shortfalls in state funding and the general economic climate. We are happy to report though that over the past three years we met the equipment replacement goal with upgraded over 40 laptops and 150 computers through donations of used but viable equipment from the Social Security Administration, the Department of Agriculture and the Federal Districts Attorney’s office.

Goal #1 Implement a new Student Information System: Our primary technology goal for the next few years is to implement Infinite Campus. A group of stakeholders representing all aspects of our school community went through the RFP process to select a replacement to our outdated SIS. We chose Infinite Campus from a number of qualified vendors. The State Department of Education conducted a similar search a few months later and came to the same conclusion. In an effort to collaborate with the State and other schools, South Portland agreed to be a pilot site. Moving our teachers off a system we have had in place for ten years will be a difficult task, and require frequent, ongoing staff development. Understanding and utilizing the many features of Infinite Campus will be an ongoing endeavor. For the first time we will be able to communicate grades and attendance information with parents in real time through an online Parent Portal. We will devote considerable human resources and time to the training of our dozens of clerical and support staff.

Goal #2 SmartBoards and Presentation Systems: We retained this goal from our past technology Plan, but have adjusted the numbers lower to reflect the growth already achieved. Beyond teacher access to a computer in their workspace, the Technology Committee believes that true technology integration is best achieved by using mobile computers, digital peripherals and SmartBoard technology. We have a goal to increase access to SmartBoards by 20% over the next three years. We believe that all classrooms and students benefit from the visual presentation of information. We will increase the number of classrooms that have LCD projection devices by 25%.

Goal #3 One to One computing: While we await possible funding for MLTI expansion to the high school, we purchased 250 non MLTI laptops for students over the past 2 years. We will buy (or receive via donations) 40-60 additional laptops per year to move closer to one-one access to computers for our students at ALL grade levels. This is of course contingent upon MLTI and EPES figures. We will also make laptops available for check out by high school students who do not have access to machines at home.

Goal #4 Sustainable Technology Budget: As mentioned above, we did not reach this goal through local support entirely. We were fortunate enough to find and receive donations of

considerable value over the past three years. We recognize that donations alone are not sufficient to sustaining up to date technology on a 5 year computer replacement cycle. We will continue to reach for the figure of \$100,000 annually in local budget support for replacement computers.

5. Collaboration with Adult Literacy Service Providers – Describe how the program will be developed, where applicable, in collaboration with adult literacy service providers.

Since our last technology plan our School Board of Directors has approved a plan that creates an Adult Education program in South Portland. There will undoubtedly be courses that focus on technology education, or where technology is integrated into the course. We will make all technology resources available to ensure the success of this fledgling program.

While South Portland Schools do not have an Adult Literacy program *per se*, there are many instances where we work with students who are not following the traditional path of an in school K-12 education. For various reasons, some students work off site with the aid of a tutor or a full time teacher; we frequently provide laptops access to these students and instructors. Our goal is to provide access to coursework through online “E-Learning” software. We have also purchased PLATO software, which has enabled the non traditional learner to experience rigorous coursework and work toward mastery of standards, regardless of where they are physically located.

6. Strategies for Improving Academic Achievement and Teacher Effectiveness – Describe how funds, specifically Ed Tech funds where applicable, will be used to improve academic achievement, including the technology literacy of all students attending schools served by the SAU; and describe how funds expended will improve the capacity of all teachers in schools served by the SAU to integrate technology effectively into curricula and instruction.

Each summer our staff is invited to various professional development opportunities which are funded by NCLB Title 2D monies. In the summer of 2008 South Portland has collaborated with Cape Elizabeth schools to present the Cape Elizabeth/South Portland

Summer Academy where staff members for one week are immersed in a technology professional development which they will use in their classroom the following school year (http://docs.google.com/Doc?docid=dcw378fg_155gxq2wesm&hl=en). We continue to offer training on technologies which include SmartBoards, projectors and laptop computers. We will offer twice annually a graduate level course by members of the InfoTech Team based of the Big-Six model of research, which wonderfully blends technology and library skills (<http://infotech.spsd.org>) Ongoing, school-year, staff development includes informal 2 hour after school “quick shops” on various strategies to integrate technology, use resources, or build basic computer skills. We are committed to “just in time” professional development offered during the school day to our teachers during prep periods, by our technology integration specialists. These efforts to improve teacher effectiveness with technology are funded in part by Title 2D.

From our regular budget we have hired Technology Integration Specialists (TIS) at all grade levels. While we do offer technology specific courses at the 6-12 level, we have reduced these offerings in favor of an integrated approach of technology instruction. Our TIS work with the classroom teacher on units or projects and “infuse” them with technology in an effort to build skills among the staff and the students. At the lower grade levels direct skills instruction does take place under the direction of the TIS, and these skills are reinforced by integration into a culminating project or unit. South Portland has devoted considerable financial resources to this goal and is seeing the results in greatly improved student and faculty technology literacy. The impact of TIS is such that the technology curriculum in the middle grades is constantly in revision due to the quick learning and mastery of skills by or elementary students. In addition, basic computer literacy courses and typing have become virtually unnecessary at the high school and have been removed from the course of studies.

Staff is required to work with the TIS to create technology integrated units. TIS also work “behind the scenes” to examine common assessments and determine how they might be imbued with technology skills so that all of our staff and students are reached. This is a challenge in a school system of our size, but a definite district goal, supported by the building administrators, the Technology Director and the Assistant Superintendent.

Basic, day-to-day use of technology is expected of all teachers who enter grades, attendance, and communicate with parents, colleagues and students electronically. This will increase significantly with the implementation of Infinite Campus.

7. Integration of Technology with Curricula, Instruction, and Assessment – Describe how technology (including software and electronically delivered learning materials) will be integrated into curricula, instruction, and assessment and include a timeline for this integration.

Our Infotech Team, has emerged as leaders in this area. Composed of library media specialists, technologists and administrators the integration of technology and information literacy across the curriculum is our primary goal. Using various Web 2.0 technologies such as wikis, podcasts, United Streaming, and blogs, as well as innovative hardware (Smartboards, iPods) we have made it our goal to transform how teachers teach with technology. The courses taught by this group also stress the importance of helping our students use online and print information in a responsible and effective way. This group offers day long sessions, quick after school sessions and graduate level college courses on these important topics and strategies.

Our Technology Integration Specialists and Library Media Specialists work together with every classroom teacher to integrate technology into what the teacher already does. However we also focus on specific local common assessments at key grade levels to be sure every student learns specific technology skills within the context of a larger unit of study. We always try to include the classroom teacher, the library media specialist and the technology integration specialist in our integrated model. An example is the 5th grade Gulf of Maine project: (<http://infotech.spsd.org/EL/Gulfofmaine/GOMFoodWeb.htm>)

Building administrators set expectations with their staff for technology integration each year and are responsible for determining use. This use at MLTI grades is assisted by the new surveys from the DOE that help us understand how technology is used in conjunction with this initiative.

8. Technology Type and Costs, and Coordination with Funding Resources –
Develop a step-by-step action plan, with timeline, that includes goals, activities, required hardware and software, costs, and funding sources. Describe the type and costs of technology to be acquired and how it fits within the current structure (use the list developed in the technology assessment in # 4, above.). Designate sources of funding, specifically Ed Tech funds, E-Rate funds, and funds from other Federal programs, and state and local sources that support technology acquisition and integration. (The example below is available as an Excel document for an optional template).

TECHNOLOGY TYPE, COST, AND FUNDING SOURCE

GOALS	ACTIVITIES	HARDWARE/SOFTWARE	COSTS	FUNDING SOURCE
Ongoing Staff Dev.	Summer Academy, Quickshops, Release Time sessions, Orientations (2008-2011) Five year maximum replacement plan.	Varied	Instructor pay \$12,000	NCLB Title 2D & Office of the Assistant Supt.
Up to Date PCs in Every Classroom	Establish sustainable expenditure budget (2008-2011) Infotech team meetings	PCs and monitors	\$100,000 annually	Building Budgets and Local Operating Budget, Donations
K-12 Technology Curriculum Guide	(ongoing) Equipment purchase and installation	Publisher, Access and Word	\$0 - \$2,000	Substitute Budget for release time.
“Smart” classrooms	(2008-2011) Equipment purchase	SmartBoards, LCD projectors, audio systems	\$40,000 annually	Per Pupil Technology Allowance
Increased one-one access	(2008-2011) Subscribe to United Streaming	Update mobile laptop carts for three elementary schools.	\$20,000 annually	Per Pupil Technology Allowance
Increase educational video content	(2008-2011)	Discovery United Streaming	\$11,000 annually	Local Budget and building library budgets Already funded from Reserve Account with monies saved by being a DOE pilot site
Infinite Campus	Implement IC and train all district staff	Trainer pay, staff time	\$20,000	

9. Supporting Resources – Describe the supporting resources such as services, software, other electronically delivered learning materials, and print resources that will be acquired to ensure successful and effective uses of technology.

The South Portland Schools is implementing Infinite Campus. One component will allow parents to log into a website to see how their children are doing in school, in real time.

Since 2006 we have opened web access to our students so that they can access all of their school files at home, and easily upload work they have done outside of school.

Staff and students have access to helpdesk technology. This ensures that their computers are in good operating condition, and will allow us to centrally manage calls for tech support (whether it be how to integrate technology, or how to format a paragraph in a word processor, or to fix a broken machine).

Our website has a resources page, where many common files and templates can be found, as well as a “How To” section to address need of staff and students.

All of our computers are protected by Sophos antivirus software which is also available to our users at home.

Nearly every square inch of our schools is covered by wireless access points, allowing technology learning to happen anywhere in our facilities.

All of South Portland’s libraries (public and school) are now using the Minerva system.

10. Steps to Increase Accessibility – Describe the steps being taken to ensure that all students and teachers have increased access to technology. The description must include how Ed Tech funds, if applicable, will be used to help students in high-poverty and high-needs schools, or in schools identified for improvement or corrective action under Section 1116 of Title I; and how the steps taken will ensure that teachers are prepared to integrate technology effectively into curricula and instruction.

As stated above in various sections, we are constantly striving to equip our students, staff, and classrooms with the latest technology equipment and software. We are very much focused on one to one access to technology, despite the financial challenges that presents. In the past 2 years we have added student access to over 250 non MLTI laptops, and will be purchasing 25 more this summer, as well as deploy 15 donated laptops to families of high school students who cannot afford one at home.

By opening up our file servers to outside storage and access, we are effectively removing the barrier between home and school, thereby increasing student, parent and staff access significantly (a study reveals over 92% of families have internet access at home). That being said, we will work to find ways for impoverished students to access online resources from home, or after school in our labs and libraries. We do, on a limited basis, loan out laptop computers, as well as participate in a program that rehabilitates older machines to give to families who cannot afford computers.

11. Promotion of Various Curricula and Teaching Strategies that Integrate Technology – Describe how various curricula and teaching strategies that integrate technology effectively into the general curriculum and instruction will be identified based on a review of relevant research, and promoted to lead to improvements in student academic achievement

The TIS in each building plays the important role of “technology advocate.” She/He routinely contributes to newsletters, or writes email to staff, highlighting and encouraging best practices in technology integration. Also building based Open Houses serve as showcases for success stories in technology, and share with the community the great work our students are doing.

Our Infotech team has been a leader in presenting to staff at all levels the Big-6 model of research. We also added graduate level courses on this subject, twice per year. Along with other staff members, they will continue to lead staff development such as the Summer Academy and Quickshops which promote the integration of technology.

Finally, we focus on specific local common assessments at key grade levels to be sure every student learns specific technology skills within the context of a larger unit of study. We always try to include the classroom teacher, the library media specialist and the technology integration specialist in our integrated model. One we are particularly proud of is the 5th grade Gulf of Maine project:

(<http://infotech.spsd.org/EL/Gulfofmaine/GOMFoodWeb.htm>)

***12. Professional Development** – Describe how ongoing, sustained professional development for teachers, principals, administrators, and school library media personnel will be provided to further the effective use of technology in the classroom and library media center.*

Ongoing, school-year, staff development includes informal 2 hour after school “walk in” sessions on various strategies to integrate technology, use resources, or build basic computer skills. Starting in the summer of 2008 South Portland has collaborated with Cape Elizabeth schools to present the Cape Elizabeth/South Portland Summer Academy where staff members for one week are immersed in a technology professional development which they will use in their classroom the following school year (http://docs.google.com/Doc?docid=dcw378fg_155gxq2wesm&hl=en). We continue to offer training on technologies which include SmartBoards, projectors and laptop computers. We will offer twice annually a graduate level course by members of the InfoTech Team based of the Big-Six model of research, which wonderfully blends technology and library skills (<http://infotech.spsd.org>). Ongoing, school-year, staff development includes informal 2 hour after school “quick shops” on various strategies to integrate technology, use resources, or build basic computer skills.

Our Technology Integration Specialist at the high school has found success by working with different subject matter departments during their prep periods within the school day. This model works well as the teachers often have similar interests and the instruction can be focused on how to integrate technology into their subject areas. At the K-5 levels, our TIS offer informal walk in trainings most Tuesday afternoons.

All staff, ed techs, teachers, principals, clerks are entitled to reimbursement for courses taken outside of our District. We encourage people to take technology related classes, and routinely share and post information about such offerings beyond the walls of our schools.

Also, as mentioned above, our TIS work with teachers informally and formally each day to help develop their technology and integration skills.

13. Innovative Delivery Strategies – Describe how the development and use of innovative strategies for the delivery of specialized or rigorous courses and curricula through the use of technology, including distance-learning technologies, will be encouraged, particularly in areas that would not otherwise have access to such courses or curricula due to geographical distances or insufficient resources.

South Portland School Department is currently part of the ATM Distance learning network. There continues to be insufficient use of the Distance learning equipment. We have however seen an increase staff use for meetings in 2007. We feel this lack of use stems from a number of sources:

1. lack of understanding of DL
2. robustness of elective offerings @ SPSHS and nearby colleges/institutions
3. poor room choice (small space, with inadequate furnishings)

To remedy this situation we continue to work on a multipart plan:

1. air conditioning to be installed (Summer 2005 - completed)
2. custom made furniture (unfunded, but we will try again)
3. investigate and promote “virtual field trips” (Fall of 2008)
4. offer the space to our new Adult Education program

14. Accountability Measures – Describe the process and accountability measures which will be used to evaluate the extent to which the plan activities are effective in integrating technology into curriculum and instruction, increasing the ability of teachers to teach, and enabling students to reach Maine’s Learning Results.

Each TIS keeps a detailed log of consultations and collaboration with classroom teachers. As all teachers are expected to work with the TIS, accountability is “built in” and building administrators oversee this process.

Many forms and information are now only available online. This ensures that teachers have the basic skills to function in a technological world. Starting in the fall of 2008 all teachers will be required to maintain an online grade book. Each elementary teacher creates progress reports on a computerized form. Furthermore, all teachers at specific grade levels work with library media specialists and technology integration specialists on district wide local common units and therefore be required to use educational technology.

Many of our Plan’s goals are measurable by simple data collection (e.g. did we indeed increase SmartBoards by 20%?). We audit these goals year by year, and met the vast majority of our last plan’s goals.

For our MLTI grade level schools, the tech lead is required to do DOE surveys which very clearly indicate the use of laptops by teachers. These results are analyzed by building administrators to be sure there is accountability in technology use and integration to meet local and State goals.