Pandemic Operations Technology Committee

December 2 (rescheduled from Nov. 18) Agenda and Notes

Present: Charlie Gerke, Matt Mitchell, Mark Meier, Chad Busarow, Cerissa Harper, Jennifer Lynn, Jessica Harper

1. The main topic of conversation today was planning and questions to consider and resolve following the ordering of student and staff devices using the variety of Covid relief funds:

    a. How will devices be distributed? Will all District devices be part of the District device "pool" for distribution, or will devices that have been purchased using other funds (building tech funds, curriculum adoption, etc.) be reserved for the original intended use?
    b. The overall District plan is to provide a device for every student ("1-1"). Does this mean that all students will be assigned a device at the beginning of the year and they can take it home with them? Will the plan be different for different grade levels? Will devices need to be returned at the end of each school year?
    c. The group understands that an accreditation issue for the District is to increase/improve the use of technology. What can be done to address and provide support for the training required to address this goal?
    d. The recommendation of the group is to form a District level committee to address these questions and concerns. Charlie will relay these questions and concerns to the MSD Admin Council.

    Charlie noted that due to the time limits imposed for the expenditure of the available funds, orders for devices needed to get submitted asap or MSD would lose access to those funds. As noted above, the questions and concerns raised by this group and others need to be addressed prior to the distribution of the devices.

2. Why Chromebooks? Jennifer asked why Chromebooks were the devices selected, and expressed concerns about the shortcomings of these devices including:

    a. Students cannot save documents directly to the device and therefore can't work offline. This can make it very difficult for students to save and submit their work, depending on their situation.
    b. ChromeBooks utilizes only the online versions of software and applications. Typically, these are not as robust as the "full" versions.

    The tech crew noted that the primary issues driving this decision are device prices (CB's are affordable) and the ability to manage and monitor Chrome devices remotely.

3. The group also discussed the purchase of laptops for staff use.   Matt reported that quotes for different laptop options are being pursued based on the feedback from the tech survey that was sent out a few weeks ago. The group discussed the issue of touch screens and felt that this may not be an option needed by every teacher (60% of the teachers responding to the survey said touch screens were needed, 30% said they were ok with or without, and 10% said they did need touch screens). This discussion came about because Matt's initial research indicated that touch

screens added significant cost to each device. Jennifer and Jessica said that many teachers might not really know how to fully utilize touchscreens. They felt teachers would need to be instructed as to how they could incorporate the use of touch screens. They also felt it would be helpful if building admins could discuss this with their staff and provide additional feedback to Charlie and the tech crew prior to any orders being placed. Charlie agreed to bring this up during today's Admin meeting.

4. Next meeting will be held on January 6, 2021 via Teams.