

**Information Technology Department
Annual Report
2019-2020**



Office of Business and Operations

Department of Information Technology

Ted Koutavas: Director

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Vision Statement

The vision of the Information Technology Department is to provide and create an evolving information infrastructure and services providing technology excellence that advances learning, teaching, and student engagement.

Mission Statement

The Information Technology Department strives to provide our students and staff with competitive, reliable, innovative, and sustainable technology to support teaching, learning, research, collaboration, and service.

Executive Summary

Rich Township High School District 227 has made tremendous progress by bringing technology into teaching and learning environments. The primary purpose of technology in education is to positively impact instruction, thereby contributing to the overall success of our students.

District 277 recognizes the significance of moving beyond simple technology integration to adopting a philosophy that allows for technology to transform learning experiences to provide more significant equity and accessibility for all. We believe that technology can accelerate, amplify, and expand the impact of effective teaching practices when carefully designed and thoughtfully applied.

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Information Technology Department Staff

We are proud to introduce to you the talented individuals that provide and manage the centralized information technology and support services for the Rich Township High School District 227.

Ted Koutavas – Director of Technology

Roosevelt Louissaint – Network Administrator

Pam Jonas – Technology Department Assistant

Matt Nauden – Technician Rich Central

Anthony Richardson – Technician Rich East

Michael Shepka – Technician Rich South

Network Infrastructure

The network infrastructure is comprised of hardware and software resources that enable network connectivity, communication, operations, and management of an enterprise network. It provides the communication path and services between users, processes, applications, services, and external systems/the internet. The District 227 Technology Department installs, supports and manages the entire network infrastructure, including:

- Support the local area network (LAN) of 4,500 wired data drops and 300 wireless access points as well as the wide-area network (WAN)
- Provide and support access to the internet for all users
- Create and manage all network and email accounts for staff and students
- Support the network firewall and security services
- Manage and support for Internet Content Filtering, meeting Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) compliance

Hardware/Devices

A large part of the best practices in today's classrooms involves technology. An array of hardware devices are used by students and staff at all three District 227 campuses.

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Classrooms are equipped with a cart of thirty (30) Chromebooks, a teacher workstation, and a projector. All Special Education classrooms have iPads and Interactive boards. Math classrooms also have Interactive boards.

As District 277 moves away from the traditional classrooms and lab spaces, the Technology Department will support flexible classrooms that are conducive to more collaboration and less structured learning environments.

The following hardware and devices are used daily in the classrooms:

- Chromebooks – 4,000
- Desktop workstations – 450
- Laptops - 200
- iPads - 275
- Interactive boards - 120
- Classroom projectors - 180
- Lab workstations – 400
- Printers - 90
- Network copiers – 30
- Servers both physical and virtual - 18

Software Applications

The Information Technology Department has made a concentrated effort to migrate and purchase hosted software on cloud servers. Cloud-based applications can be updated, tested, and deployed quickly and provide a more straightforward operation. Cloud-based applications are also cost-effective, thus saving the District money.

- Office 365 and Google cloud applications including email, OneDrive and cloud storage services
- SchoolNet (Data warehouse, assessment, analysis, and reporting platform)
- Schoology (Learning management system)
- Secure print software for all copiers
- Building access/ID card software

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- Digital media delivery systems for the media centers and book room
- eBooks
- Install, license and support all District purchased software
- Manage all aspects of the PowerSchool Student Information System (SIS)
- Online registration portal

Support Services

The Information Technology Department manages a range of internal and external support services.

State Reporting Compliance

The state of Illinois requires districts to report student enrollment, discipline, and course grades at various intervals.

- Upload weekly enrollment and exit files
- Process semester and year-end discipline data
- Process semester and year-end teacher and student course assignment data
- Process and upload all necessary files for state-mandated testing

Assessment

The state of Illinois requires districts to assess students in the following state-mandated tests annually. The Information Technology Department provides the necessary support and is aligned with the District 227 Education Services Department in the electronic administration of these tests.

- Illinois Science Assessment (ISA) - course-based model with content aligned to Biology I
- Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) – assessment for students with cognitive disabilities
- ACCESS – assessment to identify English Language Learners (ELLs)

Help Desk Work Orders

One of the most critical services that the Information Technology Department provides is the necessary hardware and software support to our students and staff. We focus on providing the

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best possible support and service with the quick resolution of immediate needs, incidents, and technical issues for all of our end users.

- For the 2019-20 school year, the Information Technology Department completed 2,059 work orders.



Security Systems

The safety and security of schools are vital in today's environment. Plans, processes, and systems must be in place to protect students, staff, and property. The Information Technology Department supports the effort of the security teams by providing technical support in the areas of:

- Supporting the building visitor access hardware and software
- Maintain the emergency 911 (e911) database for the District
- Work with Building & Grounds to support the video security systems

Strategic Planning

The District 227 Information Technology Department believes that technology can accelerate, amplify, and expand the impact of effective teaching practices when carefully designed and thoughtfully applied. To this end, purposeful strategic technology planning has occurred involving key stakeholders.

Technology Strategic Plan 2019-2020

For the 2019-20 school year, the Information Technology Department has completed the following strategic initiatives:

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- **Online enrollment for all grade levels**

With our PowerSchool partnership, we have been able to implement their online enrollment portal for our parents. Using the online enrollment forms, parents can review and modify critical demographic data saving our families precious hours spent filling out forms by hand. Also, parents can submit digital forms that the District requires for the enrollment process.

- **Online student fee payment system**

The online student fee payment portal was made available to our parents last fall. With this portal, parents have a secure and easy way to pay student fees. Account balances can be viewed in real-time and using the secure portal or downloadable app; parents can pay their student(s) fees.

- **Workflow management software for internal office forms**

A workflow is a sequence of tasks that processes a set of data. Workflows occur across every department in the District. We have worked with the Educational Services Department to identify and automate the Request for Professional Development Funds form as well as the Field Trip Request Form. Next year we plan on expanding this initiative.

- **1:1 Devices for staff**

Going one-to-one in the classroom is a game-changing endeavor for teachers and students at District 227. Infusing technology appropriately into the classroom can lead to high individualization of instruction, student-led learning, and targeted differentiation.

This past year we provided teachers with a Chromebook the same device that students will be using. Our teachers' comfort with technology varies widely, and we have given them plenty of time to learn the basics of the device and receive professional development, it was essential for us to get all teachers on board with this initiative before distributing devices to students

- **1:1 Devices for students – Over 1,000 Chromebooks currently issued to support remote learning**

At District 227, we have spent significant resources to introduce technology into classrooms. We have used technology to individualize learning, increase student engagement, and improve equity. The most significant initiative will be our 1:1 program for students. This technology initiative will provide one device (Chromebook) per student. We intended to begin the program in March of 2020 with our current freshmen, but COVID 19 changed our plans. Being well prepared by having carts in every

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classroom, our District was able to respond and respond effectively when COVID 19 hit and remote learning was enacted.

In the past three months, we responded to our student needs for a device by providing various curbside distribution days, so our students who needed and requested a device was able to pick one up. To date, we have issued over 1,000 Chromebooks to our students.

- **Classlink – Single sign-on and password management for students**

As our classrooms use more devices and access more digital resources than ever before we were faced with the challenge of students memorizing dozens of passwords to log them into resources and applications. Their school files have also now spread across hard drives, network shares, and cloud storage.

To solve this issue, we looked at ClassLink. Classlink is a one-click single sign-on solution that gives students access to everything they need to learn, anywhere, with just one password. Accessible from any device, ClassLink is the perfect tool for ensuring the success of our 1:1 initiative.

- **GoGuardian – Classroom management/secure digital learning for students**

As part of our 1:1 initiative, we needed a solution that could measure effectiveness, engagement, and student progress across any device. With the implementation of GoGuardian, we can oversee how our students are using Chromebooks and what programs are most effective. Teachers using GoGuardian are now empowered with a complete classroom management tool, and students are positioned to succeed with increased internet content filtering.

- **5 Maps Analytics – used to map student boundaries**

As part of the District consolidation plan, we needed the means to identify a student's home campus by their residency address. Using the 5 maps analytic software, we were able to load student location data and plot the student's home campus based on their address.

Technology Strategic Plan 2020-2021

The following technology initiatives have been identified for the 2020-21 school year.

- **Time and attendance system**

After a thorough review of current practices, the Business Office identified specific strategies to revamp the way employee time and attendance was being recorded. The first thing that had to change was the current manual payroll and benefits model. An automated system would eliminate the need to hand-calculate gap time and improved

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the process for tracking hours worked. By implementing a new automated Time & Attendance, the payroll team will save hours of work during each two-week payroll period.

- **1:1 Devices for students**

As previously stated, the most significant student technology initiative will be our 1:1 program. This technology initiative will provide one device (Chromebook) per student. With over 1,000 students already having a device, the technology department is currently evaluating and preparing the remaining devices to be issued to our students come this fall

- **ScholarChip implementation for student attendance**

Attendance is a reliable indicator of future academic success. If a student is struggling, attendance can be the red flag that they need additional support or interventions. But it's difficult for a school to offer assistance to a student trending toward chronic absenteeism or displaying issues with truancy without accurate data. Student attendance tracking software removes many of the challenges facing schools and integrates well with top-down and trend level reporting. Adding in smart ID cards so that students can take ownership of their attendance reporting improves the system further. With the right attendance tracking software like ScholarChip in place, we can offer help to students in need early on and set them back on the path to a productive educational experience. Implementation is scheduled to be completed for the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

- **Purchase and install additional Interactive boards for classrooms**

As the District moves to a flex-mod schedule, additional demand is placed in the classroom to deliver collaborative means of instruction. Putting interactive boards in every classroom will make a review or revision of lessons more convenient. Make it easier for the teacher to structure lessons and increase the level of engagement between teachers and students. Also, interactive boards allow students with various disabilities to learn better.

- **Additional 1M Devices (phones with hot spot) for our incoming freshman**

With over 1,200 phones with hot spots currently issued to students, we intend to continue this initiative with Sprint and the 1M device project. Our goal is to make a device available to any of the incoming freshmen who need one.

- **Laserfiche implementation for record scanning and retrieval**

Laserfiche software from Datamation is an industry-leading document management and process automation solution. Working with our partners at Proven Business Systems

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and starting with our Special Education Department, we will identify, scan, and archive historical student documents.

- **Upgrade Internet Service – Additional 1GB data circuits for South**
Students and staff need high-speed internet access. As we consolidate to two campuses it is essential that the access our students need is responsive. Adding a high speed data circuit at Rich South will meet the increased data demand.
- **Upgrade the Access Control software to better secure building access**
Access control systems ensure that only authorized individuals gain entry to certain areas of our campuses. These systems can range from an electronic lock at the entrance of a building to a series of locks on server racks at a physical data center. At District 227, the current access control system software is over ten years old and is no longer supported. A software upgrade will provide additional functionality with a web-based interface that will improve security in all of our campuses.
- **Perform a data security risk assessment**
A cybersecurity risk assessment is about understanding, managing, controlling, and mitigating cyber risks. It is a crucial part of any risk management strategy and data protection efforts. The Technology Department will engage and perform this assessment.

The Information Technology Department supports the students, parents, and staff of District 227 with the implementation of educational technology initiatives. Our goal is to support the educational objectives of the District by providing the necessary technology that will support learning 24 hours a day, seven days a week, build 21st-century skills, increase student engagement and motivation, and accelerated learning. All are leading to student success!

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