

McKinney ISD Special Education Technology Plan

Introduction

This plan is intended to facilitate the development of a high-quality course of instruction for students with disabilities within the McKinney Independent School District. The 2200 students who qualify for special education services within MISD deserve that the individuals in charge of their education investigate every avenue to provide them with a free and appropriate public education. The education they receive should prepare them for life in an increasingly technology-saturated society.

Vision Statement

McKinney ISD's Special Education team believes that every student who qualifies for services in the district will receive the highest level of instruction available through the implementation of an effective combination of human and technological resources.

History of technology utilization

Among other large school districts in the Region 10 service area, McKinney ISD enjoys a reputation of being one of the earliest adopters of emerging education-related technology.

MISD has utilized an incentive program in the past, called Power Brokers, in an attempt to introduce technology into the classroom. This program rewarded teachers with certain hardware items such as laptop computers, digital projectors, and digital cameras, to name a few. Teachers earned these items for documenting their use of technology within their classrooms and integrating it into their curriculum.

McKinney ISD's Special Education Department has historically lagged slightly behind the rest of the district in the utilization of hardware and software technology. This can be attributed to the department's focus on the acquisition of highly specialized curriculum and tangible manipulatives that are used in the special education classrooms.

Current status of technology utilization

It has traditionally been the goal of MISD to implement new technologies where they will have the most immediate impact on the students' learning and their levels of success. Consequently, district-wide MISD has spent a lot of money on tech-related curriculum and a lesser amount on administrative software or technology.

Each campus has a dedicated Technology Integrator available to the teacher. This person is available at all times to help the teacher think of new and innovative ways to use technology in the classroom, and to help the launch of new technology be as seamless as possible.

Each campus has implemented a networked TV system, called NetTV. The capabilities of this system include showing appropriate television broadcasts to students via cable reception, showing locally produced videos, and serving as a display monitor for the teacher's computer.

Every teacher in McKinney ISD has a laser printer and at least two computers in their classroom. One of the computers is for teacher use for such things as electronic gradebook maintenance, email, and other professional communication.

Every campus has approximately one digital projector/document camera (commonly called an Elmo) for every 280 students. This is one of the most popular new technologies to hit the classrooms of MISD in the last five years.

Goals

The goal of this plan is to increase the variety and types of technologies that are available to the special education teachers of MISD in an effort to expose the special education students to a wider variety of instructional methods and to accommodate a wider spectrum of learning styles.

Implementation plan

The goals of this technology plan should be completed by the end of school year 2007/2008, or three years. The hardware and software acquisitions outlined by this plan are described in greater detail in the following two sections. The general timeframe for this plan is as follows:

- The first year of this plan will focus on acquiring new computers for deployment in the special ed classrooms.
- During the second year of this plan, the focus will be on software acquisitions.
- Additional hardware items will be acquired during the third year of this plan. Digital projectors, scanners, and CD-writers for each special ed classroom are some of the major acquisitions that will be made in this phase of the plan.

Hardware

This plan calls for a 100% increase in the number of computers directly available for student use in the special education classrooms and settings. This would bring the number of computers available for students at any given moment to four instead of two.

Also a scanner for every special education classroom will be provided, as well as one CD writer/rewriter. A document camera/digital projector (commonly referred to as an Elmo) will be provided to each resource classroom as well as to each self-contained classroom.

Additional hardware as deemed appropriate by the Admission, Review, and Dismissal committee will also be provided in an effort to provide students the most appropriate public education. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis as justified by the special education student's disability. This type of technology is known within the special education department as assistive technology. This type of technology is not directly instructional in nature, rather it provides certain special education students with justifiable needs access to school, curriculum, and community.

Software

Implementation of this plan will see McKinney ISD's Special Education department acquire a multiple-user license for the CLASS software program which facilitates the proposal, drafting, and updating of individual education plans (IEPs). These plans outline the course of instruction for each special education student on an individual basis and sets goals and objectives for the student to strive toward throughout the course of one calendar year. The number of licenses that will be acquired will be determined by the number of special education case managers in the MISD Special Education Department. Currently the 20 campuses that comprise MISD utilize approximately six case managers each. The number of CLASS software users will increase throughout the lifetime of this plan as growth occurs across the district.

Additional classroom software that directly impacts student learning will be provided. The specific software titles that are purchased will be determined by a needs survey conducted at the campus level and tailored for the specific needs of each campus' special ed population.

Facilities

No new facilities except those that occur as a result of natural growth of the district will be necessary for successful implementation of this plan.

Staffing

This plan can be successfully implemented within the current levels of staffing. This plan calls for the creation of no new positions other than those that occur naturally as the result of the overall growth of the district.

Funding

Available funds

Technology-related items that are acquired for use within the MISD Special Education Department will be purchased through local district funding.

Additional funding sources

In addition to local funding, additional sources of funding such as grants, endowments, and gifts will be considered and pursued as deemed appropriate.

Plan Administration/Management

This plan will be administered by the Department of Special Populations. The Senior Director of Special Populations will be responsible for monitoring the progress of the plan's implementation, and delegating authority to subordinates within the department to put the plan into action.

The Department of Special Populations will be assisted in meeting the goals of this plan with the cooperation of MISD's Technology Services Group (TSG). The personnel within TSG will be responsible for the installation of all new hardware and software that is acquired in pursuit of the goals of this plan. Technology Services Group will also be responsible for minor repairs of the equipment used within this plan.

Staff Development/Training

As new hardware and software are acquired, the training of appropriate individuals will be conducted. This includes the administrators and teachers within the special education department as well as members of the TSG as necessary. The goal of this training plan is to provide as much local training as possible. This will involve sending a minimum of users out of district for training. Employees who do attend training out of district will be expected to provide training/staff development to others after returning to the district and demonstrating competency.

This type of training/staff development plan will flow easily with the existing staff development system that McKinney ISD has had in place for a number of years. Scheduling of training sessions as well as maintenance of trainee transcripts will be maintained by the existing staff development system.

Support Structure

Technical support for the users of assets acquired through this plan will be provided by TSG. This technical support will utilize the existing TSG processes and procedures including the online help request, campus-based technology specialists, and the MISD Helpdesk.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance

McKinney ISD will comply fully with the American with Disabilities Act in providing equal access to facilities, employment, programs, services, and activities to persons with disabilities.

Performance measures

The effectiveness of this plan will be constantly evaluated through various means. Some of these include the informal monitoring of the academic progress of students receiving services in the special education department. This is an ongoing process and happens daily throughout the district with the special education teachers and case managers. Examples of factors that are noted in this process include student engagement with the curriculum, attendance rates, and grades.

The review of academic progress of MISD's special education population is formally conducted every nine weeks and is monitored through the case management system that is implemented on each campus. The case managers are in the best position to see the effectiveness of the deployment of this plan. They will report their findings and conclusions directly to their supervisors and this information will be relayed to the Director of Special Populations. These findings will also be reported to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Committee (ARD) that exists for each special education student. These findings and observations will be used to propose services and instructional goals for each special education student.

Through formal and informal methods, the effectiveness of this plan in providing access to curriculum and community of the special education students of MISD will be documented.

Excellent! Very professional and thorough. You've address all of the required elements very well. -Dr.D.