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Technology Plan for 2006-07 - Consolidate

Since it is time once again for superintendents and business administrators to develop school budgets for the 2006-07 academic year, I would like to point out a few simple, yet often overlooked, ways in which schools can reduce their technology costs.

As the years go by schools grow, technology improves and software advances; all these changes require schools to add to and enhance their technology. The problem is that schools tend to add and enhance without cleaning up or removing the old. After several years of additions and enhancements schools' technology will become unnecessarily crowded, disorganized and some components will become obsolete.

If your school is in this situation, it may be time to consider consolidating.

Here are three key areas to focus on when consolidating:

1. Consolidate File Servers

Over the years it is quite common for a school to purchase additional servers to accomplish various tasks. These tasks could include email, file storage, anti-virus, printing, application delivery, etc. Each additional server increases a school's technology cost as it relates to hardware obsolescence, licensing, support and maintenance.

Your school can begin to save on technology costs by reducing the number of servers it utilizes. You will be able to eliminate servers by consolidating services on your more robust file servers. You may need to increase the memory or hard disk capacity on these servers in order to consolidate, but by eliminating one or more servers in the process the savings is evident.

Remember, fewer servers translate to greater cost savings.

2. Standardize and Consolidate Software Applications

With such a large variety of software applications and versions on the market today, a school may be using more applications than is necessary.

Now is a great time to audit your school's software applications; by doing so a school can get a very clear picture of all the software that they are running along with each application's licensing and version number.

Once you have a clear picture of your software application situation from your audit, look for ways to

consolidate on packages that provide similar functions. For example, your school may be running Math Blaster, Math Media and Larson's Math. By consolidating to the package that provides the greatest functionality for your school, you can significantly drop your licensing, training and support costs.

3. Consolidate Workstations

Many schools often have a variety of workstations comprising different ages and operating systems. Consolidate by eliminating those workstations that are performing poorly and require the most time and attention from your IT personnel. This will free up your IT personnel to focus on newer machines that require less support as well as focus on higher priority goals and objectives.

Focus on quality over quantity when it comes to your school's technology environment. Consolidating file servers, software applications and workstations will allow you to increase quality and eliminate unnecessary quantity resulting in a decrease of technology costs.

Enjoy the New Year.

Sincerely,



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