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## The Benefits of a Technology Plan

Spring is here and the end of another school year is approaching. Looking ahead to the 2005-2006 school year, I thought it appropriate at this time to emphasize the importance of a good technology plan.

As a school administrator, an astute technology plan is invaluable to your school or district. Unfortunately, most plans are poorly written and rarely implemented or followed. Hence, I would like to point out several reasons why a good technology plan is a critical element in successfully running a school or district.

If you were building an addition for your school, the entire addition would be planned on paper prior to breaking ground. This plan would outline the building's design, necessary materials, plumbing, heating, cooling and electric systems along with the responsible parties for each phase of the project. Also, it would define the project's budget and timeline. Once finalized, these plans would control the entire process of the project, and everyone involved would work off of them.

The same approach needs to be applied to your school's or district's technology plan in order to get the most out of each dollar spent on technology; whether that money is spent on personnel, hardware, software, or even outside consultants.

### A good technology plan has the following benefits:

- Establishes clearly defined technology goals and objectives for your school or district.
- Provides a timeline along with a corresponding budget for each phase of the plan.
- Marries the responsibility of each goal and objective to appropriate personnel.
- Allows an administrator or school board to check on the status or progression of the plan at anytime.
- Provides an early warning system for administrators when timeline or budgetary thresholds are exceeded.
- Provides the necessary focus for the responsible parties (IT Staff, Teachers, etc.) implementing the plan.
- Allows the entire organization to see what the school's technology plan is and how those goals are to be met.
- Significantly reduces technology costs associated with unfocused personnel and purchases not aligned with your school's goals and objectives.

When putting together your school's technology plan, you will want to look ahead three years. Do not be concerned with any modifications that may be required in year two or three, the benefit of a good plan is the necessary flexibility to modify goals and objectives as required. The critical piece of the plan is the detail level of that first year, which allows you to set up the goals and objectives for year two and three.

Remember that once each year of your plan is completed you will need to build year three again (now year four) and review year two (now year three) for any changes or modifications that may be required. A rolling three-year technology plan should be your ultimate goal. This keeps everyone involved on the same page: knowing the school's short- and long-term technology goals and how they will be accomplished.

I admit that putting together such a plan requires a significant investment of time, energy and effort for you and your staff; however, the cost savings, benefits of focused personnel, and enhanced curriculum for your students are certainly well worth it.

Enjoy the remainder of the school year,



Paul Crawley is an MCT, CNI and CCNA. He has taught network operating systems for both Microsoft and Novell beginning in 1994. He is President of Crawley & Associates, Inc., an education technology consulting firm founded in 1995. The company is located in Fair Lawn, NJ. Paul can be reached at [pcrawley@crawleyinc.com](mailto:pcrawley@crawleyinc.com).



[www.crawleyinc.com](http://www.crawleyinc.com)

121 Lincoln Ave.

Fair Lawn, NJ 07410

Phone - 973-636-7350