The High School of Commerce

Technology Tips *SUPPLEMENT*

The Lap Top Cart Policy- As of 2/23/2009...

Lately there have been a number of changes with the way we use technology here at the High School of Commerce. Considering the dire straits we find ourselves in with regard to the resources we have available, it's not really unexpected for this to be the case. However, we have to make even more changes to both meet the expectations of the district and maintain the integrity of the resources we still have. With that in mind, as of 2/23/09 (the week after February break) we will be implementing the following:

1. Everyone will need to be (re)trained in the proper use of the laptop carts.

a. Training will be done in B155.

b. It shouldn't take any longer than 20 minutes (you can do it on your prep).

c. This training (as well as the time taken to complete the TSAT) will count toward school-based training PDP's for recertification. All records of compliance will be turned in to admin.

2. Everyone will need to take and complete the TSAT on MassOne (the DOE's web portal for Massachusetts educators).

a. This will also be done in B155.

b. If you do not have an account for MassOne (or have forgotten your username and password), please contact Mr. Musiak ahead of the time you'd like to take the TSAT.

c. Depending on your level of proficiency with technology, the TSAT can take anywhere from 10-30 minutes to complete.

3. Laptop carts will only be reserved for 2 days.

a. The cart must be picked up and dropped off in the Library/Media Center each day.

b. The reservations are based on first come, first served sign up. Please be aware of your colleague's needs for the use of the carts as well as your own. We do have limited resources.

c. Please be diligent concerning the pick up/drop off of the carts. Be aware of your colleague's schedules as well as your own.

4. Laptops will not be removed/borrowed from the carts as individual units for either teachers or students.

5. Any problems or issues with computers in the laptop cart …

a. For most small issues, please call Mr. Musiak in B155 (ext. 4155)

b. For more significant issues with the cart or individual machines, please make notations on the "Lap Top Cart Log" and notify Mr. Franks upon cart return at the end of the day.

As you can see, things are getting to be far more clearly delineated with regard to the use and care of resources that are limited, to say the least. While these guidelines may, on the surface anyway, look to be restrictive, they are meant to be quite the opposite. Hopefully they will encourage more of the integration of technology lessons that are directed toward the high standards and expectations we all have in our classrooms

This is a re-print of the letter that was sent out last week via e-mail. For those colleagues who will have difficulty planning for what will seem to be an insurmountable obstacle, **please see me**, I can help you modify your plans so that the standards and expectations you're setting can be met within these circumstances.

Planning, planning, planning...

As I've said since the world was young, the most important thing we can do when we're thinking about meeting the standards for each of our content areas is **plan** for the outcome.

Taking into account the fact that we have extremely limited resources and the fact that there are students who are depending on us, we have to be adaptable in the way we design activities to meet the need of our expectations for outcomes.

Before we get to the point where we say "This is what we want to do in order to meet this expectation for performance",

hopefully we've already said, "What is it that we really want our students to be able to know and do?" as well as, "What do they already know?"

Since I'm sure you're already aware of the type of "backward planning" that's expected of us (especially using the MYP template here at the good ol' HSofC), here are a few questions you might want to ask yourself to clearly delineate what will be your focus in your class activities. Hopefully this can save you a few steps and you'll have more time to focus on what you're teaching in the instructional block.

♦ Ask yourself which aspect of your project you **REALLY** need to monitor in your class.

- If it's doing things on the front end of a project (like research on the Internet), perhaps setting up a TrackStar track that is specific to the types of information you want your students to have would cut down the time spent searching and increase the time on learning about the subject matter your students to understand/know.

Stuff To Know

ALL THE FOLLOWING ARE AVAILABLE IN B155

- *If you need help with getting on MassOne and taking the TSAT, please come on down to B155. We need 100% participation!!!*

- *I am available to co-plan, co-teach, and work out just about any other method for the integration of technology in your classroom. I am a good resource for ideas and inspiration when you find yourself in a bind trying to find an activity that will make the most appropriate connection with a lesson.*

- *Schedule a time to get trained for the use of the laptop carts.*

No training = No laptop cart use.

- *The Springfield Public Schools has a district license for…*

GradeKeeper

Please stop by B155 for details

- *E-mail and MassOne accounts are a necessary part of what we do these days. If you don't have either one, please stop by B155 and sign up for them.*

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The TSAT-Teacher's Self Assessment Tool

"Technology Self-Assessment Tool (TSAT) This online tool allows educators to quickly find out which skills they need to acquire in order to best help their students. The tool can aggregate teacher data (anonymously) for a school or district, allowing administrators to see where the need for professional development is greatest."

Massachusetts Department of Education, (2009). MassOne-Tools and Services. Retrieved February 10, 2009, from MassOne Web site: http://massone.mass.edu/tools.html

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What we have to do here at the High School of Commerce (and every other school in the city) is get 100% staff participation in this survey (I know that there are some here who have taken the survey already, but your skill levels have changed since you took it last haven't they?). There is no, "Let's get most of the folks and consider it a job well done". We need to dot all the I's and connect all the T's. Here are the reasons in a nutshell:

1. By 2012, *every* one of our students needs to be technically proficient in the use of technology (Most of the programs in the MS Office Suite

> ***"The world expects results, not excuses."***
>
> **Amedao Manfredi**
> *"A member of my family"*

we have in the SPS qualify) to meet federally mandated standards with regard to computers and multimedia presentation.

2. The city standard for the integration of an online component of a class as a requirement for graduation is in effect for students beginning in 2010. The information on the requirement can be found in the District's Technology Plan available on the SPS website.

3. Considering the amount of money being discussed by the Federal Government in President-Elect Obama's plans, it's a good bet that Springfield is going to apply for a substantial piece of that any pie that's available. The data that backs up the reasoning for the technology/tools section of the any application has to be incontrovertible   Subsequently the whole "dot the i's and cross the t's" thing is more important than ever. As that would be a part of the State formula for funding as well, the data you and I provide is that much more important when we look for State monies in these short economic times.

4. While there isn't a specific requirement for technology as of yet in the recertification process, you can count on one being added in the near future. Teachers will have individual instructional technology goals to complete as part of their IPDP (depending on their content area I'm sure). By completing the TSAT, you (as well as everyone involved in trying to create greater understanding and success in this district) will have a better understanding of your needs based on the responses you give

> **Ed's Note**
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> Throughout the last three years here at Commerce, I've been telling you exactly what is going on with regard to technology at the school (and here in the district) through writing this newsletter. This supplement is being written because the random factors have aligned and all the things that we all thought **could** come true, **have** come true. The technology in this building is, to say the very best we can, abysmal. It's not because of any one event, person, or conspiracy. It is what it is. We have to deal with it while we try our best to fix the problem.
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> To that end, you have all gotten a letter that I collaborated on with Mr. Collins and Mr. Franks. It is a first step in doing what we have to do in order to make sure that we can service as many people as we can until such a time as things are better. And... they will get better. Already we have encouraging signs that things are happening for us here. The 25K that Mr. Collins mentioned at last week's meeting was just a start.
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> Please remember, these are not "be-all-end-all" policies or documents. They are flexible as we should be in our planning They will evolve as we do in our teaching.
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> I am encouraging you to have your voice heard if you have suggestions that contribute to a process that will be long and exceptionally drawn out considering the financial straits that we find ourselves in these days. If you want to add your slant to this newsletter, let me know, I'm always open to suggestions and your writing.

Planning, planning, planning...

- If it's formatting you'd like to see for their final presentation, then specify clear expectations ahead of time in a rubric that is detailed with explicit direction. Then, show examples of previous student work as exemplars to give the class an idea of the direction they should be heading while they design their own projects and gather the materials outside of you class as homework. This could be done with a checklist sort of thing to direct them if you have underclassmen (or younger students for those of you in lower grades). Again, the more specific you get, the closer you'll get to the desired outcome.

Once you've looked at the sort of thing that you want to monitor in your classroom, that should give you a pretty good idea where you'll need to go in terms of utilizing the computer resources at your disposal. Of course, there are even more ways that we can

use the time that we have better. Here are a few:

- ♦ **Anticipate the needs of students before those needs become an issue. Things like:.**

  - ♦ Have a formatted area on a flash drive for students to save their work (You can get an 8 GB drive which is plenty big enough for all your classes). The laptops all have USB ports that are functional, while the desktop computer stations here at the good ol' HSofC do not.

  - ♦ If your students are working on the desktops here in the building, consider making sure that they have e-mail addresses. The reason for this is simple. They'll be able to save their resources to say… a Word document and email it (to keep everything in an electronic format) to themselves at the end of class in order to save their work.

  - ♦ There are obviously going to be differences in the skill levels of students throughout the room. One of the things that I've used successfully in many different classes is the collaborative approach. Let it be well

known that helping (not **doing** the work for someone else) each other out is not only perfectly o.k., but that you encourage it and will give extra credit for those who not only **give** help to their classmates, but **get** help and have that help make a difference in their successful project.

- ♦ Plan for specific times in handing out and returning the laptops. Being aware of the time as it passes can be a very motivating factor for students (and teachers :)). Make certain that students are aware that they must save their material and completely shut down their computers at a specific time. Students will be far less frustrated if they don't complete if they know they're doing what they have to within a **very** controlled structure at first.

Please keep an eye out for the regular issues of the "Tech Tips". There will certainly be more on these subjects coming up in every issue. Of course, as always, if you'd like to contribute, PLEASE DO SO!!! I'd love the input.