

TechExchange Proposal

March 11, 2009

Background

Over the last few years, school-based technology staff (sometimes referred to as Technology Coordinators, but encompassing a wide variety of staffed positions, ranging from teachers who also have technology duties, to career technologists, to technologists who are hired under non-technology positions) voiced their desire for a resource within the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) system which would provide practical training for daily tasks they are asked to perform.

In the past two years, a structure for technology staff interactions came in the form of FirstClass, the email and conferencing tool now provided to all CPS employees across the District. Through FirstClass school-based technology staff and CPS' Information Technology Services (ITS) representatives are able to interact in real time to address every day challenges.

During the summer of 2008, a school-based technology staff forum comprised of representatives from both elementary and high schools, as well as members of ITS, gathered at R. Clemente Community Academy (High School) to discuss the options for steadier collaboration and training to strengthen the support students and staff get in using current and future technologies.

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On the example of the annual TechTalk, the ITS forum for disseminating information on new initiatives to principals and school-based technology staff, John Abanco (Francis Scott Key Elementary School), Victoria Andrews (Northside College Preparatory High School), Abraham Bolden (John M. Harland Community Academy), Gian Luca Ferme (Roberto Clemente Community Academy), Marie Garza-Hammerlund (Socorro Sandoval School) and Charles Gunn (Washington Irving Elementary School) recently discussed the need for a new forum for school-based technology staff. They named this initiative *TechExchange*.

TechExchange would:

- provide a peer-to-peer, quarterly, hands-on conference for school-based technology staff and administrators;
- allow schools to showcase technology-based local initiatives;
- facilitate seasoned technology staff to train new incoming staff by sharing their every day experiences;
- increase the technology efficiency in schools, propagate effective solutions generated by individual schools, and support ITS' standards;
- focus on practical solutions. It would be an opportunity to share and learn. It would be a chance to help each other and improve technology staff's professional practices.

Ideally, this forum/conference would:

- take place 4 times a year, typically on a school day. It would not happen on regular Professional Development days: Staff and presenters always require assistance from technology staff on those days;
- be comprised of two concurrent 2 hour sessions repeated in the morning and in the afternoon, on a single day (typically from 9 to 11 and from 12 to 2):

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- each session would cover one or two topics (depending on the potential depth of the topic) in each session, and
- a general session would address the whole group participating that day on general topics and to explain the focus of the day;
- have two conference facilitators, present for the whole day to help with logistical concerns (ideally, one from a high school and one from an elementary school);
- schedule presentations following a Request for Papers which would be submitted to choose the topics and detail, as well as to gauge the thoroughness of the presenters; evaluation of presentations will emphasize compliance with ITS standards;
- have a committee to evaluate papers and potential presentations with ITS' support;
- be allowed to promote its offerings through the District and TechCo FirstClass Conferences to both school-based technology staff and principals, and articulate in detail the topics to be covered so TechCos can make an informed decision whether or not to attend;
- offer CPDU's;
- be allowed to use common space at the Medill or Elizabeth Training Facilities (while the Administrators at each of our schools are very generous and would be happy to help out, it will be difficult to schedule this forum during a school day when students are present).

The above are areas where ITS or another CPS department would be instrumental in supporting this initiative.

Following are a few possible topics:

- Specific educational software uses (successes and challenges).
- Implementation of specific technologies.
- SAFARI Montage utilization
- Examples of FirstClass school implementations
- Network printing and print management.
- Imaging workstations.
- Configuring and managing Deep Freeze.
- Managing a school's Active Directory Organizational Unit.
- Maintaining and reconciling a school's technology assets.
- Managing lending laptop carts.
- Managing computer labs.
- Purchasing policies.
- General MDF/IDF resources orientation.

This proposal has been reviewed and agreed upon by

John Abanco (Francis Scott Key Elementary School)

Victoria Andrews (Northside College Preparatory High School)

Abraham Bolden (John M. Harland Community Academy)

Gian Luca Ferme (Roberto Clemente Community Academy)

Marie Garza-Hammerlund (Socorro Sandoval School)

Charles Gunn (Washington Irving Elementary School)