

MINUTES

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE

June 20, 2005

The Committee met at 6:03 PM in the Curriculum Training Room. In attendance were Mesdames David, Walsh, Johnson, Fitzsimmons, and Messrs. Foran, Porter, Grymes, Newsham, Colantuni, Rudy, Rockoff, Hagen, Sieger, Eisenhour and Eaton. The Committee addressed the following items.

T.C. Williams Educational Plan/Smaller Learning Communities Update. Dr. Walsh led the Committee in a discussion of the development of the smaller learning communities at the high school. The staff has elected to use the term “academy” to describe the smaller learning communities. Dr. Walsh distributed a working draft of *Building the Future: The New TC! Redesigning the High School Educational Program* (copy attached.) In 2005-2006 students will be assigned to four standard academies. Seniors will be assigned according to their current guidance counselors; sophomores and juniors will be assigned in alignment with the demographics of the high school as a whole. served by their current guidance counselors. The four academies will consist of 450 to 500 students each. After the 2005-2006 school year academy assignments will based on the demographic aspects of the high school as a whole, including ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, honors program enrollment, ESL identification, IDEIA identification and TAG identification. In 2005-2006 students will be “academy identified” in their interactions with guidance and support services personnel. Academy identification for instructional purposes will be developed simultaneously with changes to the master schedule in 2005-2006 and implemented in the 2006-2007 school year. There will be cross-academy instruction on a regular basis. Mr. Porter suggested that for instructional purposes an academy should be considered a student’s “home base.”

Potential Laptop-Related Instructional and Student Life Enhancements. Ms. David distributed a working draft of the *Laptop Implementation Plan 2004-2008* (copy attached.) Ms. David briefly described the progress and challenges in the eight key areas described in the plan. With respect to the first of these, “Instructional Integration,” Ms. David emphasized that extensive staff development among secondary school teachers takes time. Ms. David quoted the Superintendent to the effect that with respect to technology fluency students are “natives” while teachers (or some of them) are “immigrants.” In response, others respectfully observed that (i) laptops do not represent new technology and (ii) in light of public expectations, external mandates, and other imperatives the school system does not have the luxury of extended time for the thorough and successful integration of the laptops in the curriculum and student life. The Committee does not wish to evaluate the success, or lack thereof, of the laptops thus far on anecdotal evidence. The Committee noted that enhancing the effectiveness of the laptops appears to be a 2005-2006 strategic goal for the School Board. Ms. Johnson and Mr. Eisenhour advised the Committee that five laptop-based final exams were given this year at Minnie Howard. Teachers were required to make advance requests for “classroom sets” of laptops to administer laptop-based final exams. With the advent of on-line SOL testing, the administration of interim and final exams on the laptops should be expanded. Ms. David informed the Committee of plans to implement extended after-school media center hours in 2005-2006 at George Washington and Francis Hammond to provide an environment for students to do individual and collaborative laptop work. Mr. Sieger said that there were approximately 100 dial-in calls per night from Minnie Howard students seeking Internet access. There was a discussion of the difficulties, thus far, in printing student work materials from the laptops. Because printing triggers additional costs the likely solution to this may be supervised printing “stations.” In response to inquiries from Mr. Newsham, Mr. Sieger said that the organization of the Technology Leadership Group had “got past us” for 2005-2006. The Superintendent has emphasized that all elements of the Technology Plan be carried out as designed and this will be addressed in 2005-2006. Mr. Rockoff described the evaluative processes associated with the laptops. The Committee encouraged the staff to extend and concentrate the efforts to maximize the instructional and student life benefits derivable through the laptops.

Adjournment. The Committee adjourned at 7:38 P.M.

Working Document

Last Revised: 6-29-05

Laptop Implementation Plan

2004-2008

Table of Contents

1.	Instructional Integration.....	page 3
2.	Laptop Customization.....	page 10
3.	Offsite Internet Access.....	page 14
4.	Printing Access.....	page 17
5.	Email Access.....	page 19
6.	Collaborative Systems.....	page 21
7.	Family Involvement.....	page 24
8.	Evaluation	page 28

1. Topic: Instructional Integration

DESIRED STATE:

Laptops will be used as integral tools in every 9-12 classroom to enhance teaching and learning in all content areas.

CURRENT STATUS:

Minnie Howard School staff members are completing year two of instructional integration efforts. The T.C. Williams and STEP staff members are in the initial stages of implementation.

DISCUSSION:

Increasing student achievement through the full integration of technology as a tool for learning is the primary goal of the ACPS Laptop Initiative. Over the last decade educational organizations and institutions have struggled to define “technology integration.” While there is no single, comprehensive definition, there is general agreement that technology is *a means to an end*, but not the end in itself. In developing the National Education Technology Standards for Students, the International Society for Technology Education (ISTE) stated the following:

“Effective integration of technology is achieved when students are able to select technology tools to help them obtain information in a timely manner, analyze and synthesize the information, and present it professionally. The technology should become an integral part of how the classroom functions-as accessible as all other tools.”

By providing every student in grades 9 through 12 with a laptop computer, ACPS has made technology “as accessible as all other tools” for learning. This is the first step in the process. Reaching the higher goal of full integration of technology to maximize student achievement requires a major paradigm shift in how all teachers deliver instruction in their classrooms. ACPS teachers and administrators are like any other segment of the population with respect to proficiency in technology. Some are “early adopters” who were “born ready” to teach with technology. Others need additional time to learn the mechanics and envision the possibilities that laptop computers afford themselves and their students. This plan responds to all ACPS high school educators, in that it provides a differentiated approach to professional development that appropriately supports early adopters, novices and everyone in between. At the end of this four year process, all students will benefit from the full integration of laptop technology into every subject and content area.

1. WORK PLAN: Instructional Integration

2004 - 2005 School Year			
ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES NEEDED	EVIDENCE OF COMPLETION
Provide student and staff instruction in the ethical and responsible use of technology	T.C. Williams Staff Development Council, TRTs and TRT Coordinator	Legal review Plan development	Completed September 2004
Conduct annual building-based needs assessment to design appropriate professional development for staff	Director of Staff Development, TRT Coordinator, Associate Principals, TRTs and building based staff development councils	No additional resources needed	Needs Assessment Document; Schedule of corresponding training sessions
Design and deliver <u>differentiated</u> professional development offerings in response to the needs assessment survey	Director of Staff Development, Curriculum Specialists, TRTs and TCW/STEP/MHS staff	Stipends for teachers and consultants to deliver workshops and training	Documentation of staff development workshops and coaching sessions
Create a body of lesson plans that model innovative ideas for technology integration	TRT Coordinator, Curriculum Specialists, TC/STEP/MH Administrators and teachers	Stipends for lesson plan development	Completed lesson plans
Ensure <u>universal staff proficiency</u> with laptop operation to include the exchange of student work through the “folder” system	TRT Coordinator, TC/STEP/MH TRTs, building Administrators	No additional resources needed.	Monitoring and evaluation of teacher performance
Ensure <u>universal staff proficiency</u> in using SASI to record attendance, create reports, retrieve and manage achievement data to support instructional decision making	TC/STEP/MH Administrators, TRT Coordinator, building level TRTs	No additional resources needed.	Monitoring/evaluation of teacher performance process

Train teachers in grades 9-12 on access, utility and protocols of “finditva.com” and comparable research databases	Curriculum Specialist for Library/Media Services, TC/STEP/MH Library Media Specialists and MH TRT	No additional resources needed.	Documentation of training sessions with sign in sheets
Train teachers to use online tools such as United Streaming and the Adventures of the American Mind to bring primary resource documents and real time video clips into classroom lessons	TRT Coordinator, building level TRTs, Curriculum Specialists, Department Chairs	Adventures of the American Mind Grant resources	Documentation of training sessions with sign in sheets
Introduce teachers to online collaborative professional learning communities such as tappedin.org	TRT Coordinator, building level TRTs, TC/STEP/MH Administrators, Department Chairs	No additional resources needed	Documentation of training/coaching sessions
Train teachers in legal and appropriate use of email correspondence with students and parents	TC/STEP/MH Administrators, TRTs, building level staff development councils	Funding for professional development consultant	Documentation of training for teachers
Train teachers to evaluate websites and search engines for validity, appropriateness, and currency of information	TRT Coordinator, building level TRTs, Department Chairs	Classroom Connect Consultants	Documentation of training sessions
Negotiate the inclusion of online textbooks and resources with each new textbook adoption	Curriculum Specialists, Textbook Adoption Committee members	Included with funds for new textbook adoptions	Textbook adoption agreements and orders
Administer SOL tests online	Office of Monitoring and Evaluation, TC/STEP/MH Administrators and test Coordinators	No additional resources needed	Documentation of successful online test administration in grades 9-12

2005 - 2006 School Year

Continue 2004-2005 activities as appropriate			
Revise and deliver annual student instruction in the ethical and responsible use of technology	T.C. Williams Staff Development Council, TRTs and TRT Coordinator	Legal review Plan development	Documentation of training sessions
Ensure universal staff proficiency and consistent utilization of <i>IntegradePro</i> as the site for recording student progress	Building level TRTs, Department Chairs, TC/STEP/MH Administrators	No additional resources needed.	Monitoring/performance evaluation process
Support teachers in the development of high quality rigorous lessons that use laptop technology to maximize student learning	TRT Coordinator, Curriculum Specialists, Department Chairs, TRTs	Stipends to develop lesson plans teachers can use across content areas	Lesson plans
Continue emphasis on differentiated approach to staff development; identify, encourage and support teachers who are ready to move from “automation” to “innovation”	TRT Coordinator, Curriculum Specialists, Department Chairs, TC/STEP/MH Administrators	Fees for consultants and coaches	Lesson plans and instructional unit designs

Investigate opportunities for increasing student and teacher participation in distance learning courses in collaboration with colleges and universities, to include online courses leading to industry certification/licensure	Asst Supt for Curriculum and Instruction, Executive Director of Secondary Programs, Curriculum Specialists, Director of CTE, Monitoring & Evaluation, ITS, EMS staff	Funding for online course registrations	Documentation of online, distance learning courses and student participants
Provide content-specific training that focuses on the integration of technology and its utility as a tool for differentiating instruction	Asst Supt for Curriculum and Instruction, Executive Director of Secondary Programs, Curriculum Specialists, TRT Coordinator, building level TRTs, TC/STEP/MH Administrators, Department Chairs	Fees for consultants and coaches	Documentation of training sessions
Convene student focus groups to learn the student perspective of how they want to use technology to learn	Building level TRTs, Department Chairs, Curriculum Specialists, TC/STEP/MH Administrators	No additional resources needed.	Notes/Minutes taken from focus group discussions
Explore opportunities for more collaborative and integrated project based learning within the smaller learning communities environment	Teachers, TRT coordinator, building level TRTs, Department Chairs, Curriculum Specialists, TC/STEP/MH Administrators	Possible consultant/coaching fees	Lesson plans and unit designs
Train building administrators and department chairs on the characteristics of effective integration of technology into instructional delivery	TRT coordinator, Director of Staff Development	Possible consultant fees	Performance evaluation documentation

Provide training to staff and students on the use of an electronic agenda to post assignments and facilitate communication between home and school	TRT coordinator, building level TRTs, ITS staff,	Possible trainer/consultant fees; Electronic agenda software	Documentation of training sessions and implementation of electronic agenda
Explore possibility of administering selected final exams online	TRT Coordinator, building level TRTs, TC/STEP/MH Administrators, Department Chairs	Possible fees for additional technicians to assist with reissuing laptops to students after SOL test administrations	Online final exams
Design and implement a process for identifying and “vetting” appropriate course specific software and other online resources	TRT Coordinator, building level TRTs, ITS staff, TC/STEP/MH Administrators, Department Chairs, Curriculum Specialists	No additional resources needed	Written guidelines for vetting software
2006 - 2007 School Year			
Continue 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 activities as appropriate			
Provide ongoing and differentiated training and support for innovative teaching with technology	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Executive Director of Secondary Programs, Director of Staff Development, TRT Coordinator, building level TRTs, Curriculum Specialists, Department Chairs, TC/STEP/MH Administrators	Possible consultant/trainer fees	Documentation of training; lesson plans and project descriptions
Implement revised technology SOLs throughout the 9-12 instructional program	TRT Coordinator, building level TRTs, TC/STEP/MH Administrators, Department Chairs	Stipends to integrate revised technology SOLs with pacing guides in selected courses	Revised Pacing Guides
Expand online learning opportunities to include additional industry-specific certification courses	TRT Coordinator, Director CTE, ITS, Department Chairs	Funding for online course registrations	Sign-in sheets, training agendas Number of online courses offered; Number of SS enrolled and passing

2007 - 2008 School Year

Ensure use of laptops to differentiate instruction in all 9-12 classrooms and courses	Teachers, administrators, PEP specialists, Curriculum Specialists, TRT Coordinator, TRTs	No additional funding required	Observations, evaluations, lesson plans
Ensure full integration of technology into the 9-12 instructional program	Teachers, administrators, PEP specialists, Curriculum Specialists, TRT Coordinator, TRTs	No additional funding required	Performance Evaluation Program documentation
Increase, encourage innovative project based learning	TRT Coordinator, building level TRTs, Curriculum Specialists, teachers, building administrators	To be determined	Lesson plans and unit designs

2. Topic: Laptop Customization

DESIRED STATE:

Each student will be provided a laptop enabled with instructional and personal productivity software and applications appropriate to his/her specific academic strengths and needs. Laptop technology will support individual student program planning, in collaboration with teachers, counselors and parents.

CURRENT STATUS:

ITS downloads software to selected student laptops as requested by teachers to meet specific differentiation goals and IEP accommodations. Students have access to released end-of course SOL test items, SAT prep programs and writing tools that provide immediate feedback on the quality of essay writing.

DISCUSSION:

Technology plays a vital role in our efforts to personalize the high school program and enhance the life options for each student. The laptop initiative puts ACPS in the position of accelerating ubiquitous one-to-one computing. This means that staff will create and/or provide the tools necessary for differentiated instructional applications, for personal high school and post-secondary planning, and for increased student direction of his or her own learning.

- Differentiated instructional applications should occur by objective, by lesson, by student, and by course.
- Personal high school and post-secondary planning should occur in the areas of learning about post-secondary opportunities; increasing dialog among counselors, teachers, students and their families regarding recommendations for course selection strategies; raising awareness of co-curricular, extra-curricular, employment and internship opportunities; and increasing awareness of available community support and financial aid resources.
- Efforts to increase the high school student's self-direction of his/her learning should result in increased motivation and engagement; improved attendance; improved achievement; enriched academic experiences through meaningful collaboration; improved research and presentation skills; and improved critical thinking and decision making skills.

2. WORK PLAN: Laptop Customization

2004 - 2005 School Year			
ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES NEEDED	EVIDENCE OF COMPLETION
Train teachers in content specific software with an emphasis on differentiated applications.	Curriculum specialists, TRTs, teachers, external trainers.	Funds for development of training materials.	Training agendas, attendance sign-in sheets, PEP observations of implementation.
Provide students and teachers with access to released end-of-course SOL test items, SAT prep programs and the Criterion Writing program.	ITS, M&E, Curriculum specialists, school administrators	Funds form Secondary Programs budget.	Student and staff use of each program.
2005 - 2006 School Year			
Enhance classroom instruction with the use of publishers' software aligned with course texts.	Curriculum specialists, TRTs, teachers, external trainers	Staff development contract time.	Textbook software in use. Training agendas and sign-in sheets. PEP observations of implementation.
Continue course-specific training in using software to differentiate instruction.	Curriculum specialists, TRTs and teachers.	Stipends for developing training materials.	Training agendas and sign-in sheets. PEP observations of implementation.
Pilot The College Summit partnership to address college access, college readiness, the application process and financial aid information.	ITS, TC administrators, counselors, students, parents and representatives from The College Summit.	Start-up funds from the Secondary Programs budget.	Implementation of pilot program with 50 students in the Class of 2006.

Use The College Summit Pilot as a vehicle for developing electronic communication of student progress to student, parents and staff.	ITS staff, TC administrators, counselors, students, parents and representatives from The College Summit.	Development of additional features in the student information system.	Implementation of the pilot; use of electronic communication features.
Explore online course registration.	ITS, registrars and guidance staff.	None at this time.	Recommendation from ITS.
Research learning portal options for students, parents and staff.	ITS, TRTs	Some travel funds may be necessary.	Recommendation from ITS and TRTs.
Increase communication between high school students and university professors / researchers.	Teachers and students.	Training stipends.	PEP observations and student work products.
Explore Virtual High Schools, online AP courses and online dual enrollment courses.	Curriculum Specialists and department chairs.	None anticipated.	Recommendations from Curriculum Department and the secondary schools.
2006 - 2007 School Year			
Implement online course registration, if warranted.	ITS, TRTs, registrars, guidance counselors, students and parents.	To be determined	Successful registration and master schedule.
Expand The College Summit pilot, if warranted.	ITS, school administrators, counselors, students, parents and representatives from The College Summit.	Funds to be provided by The College Summit.	Activities embedded into the high school schedule.
Develop appropriate links between online IEP information and students' personal progress plans.	ITS, Student Services, curriculum specialists, students and parents.	To be determined.	Pilot use of these informational modules to instruct and guide students more effectively.
Pilot an appropriate version of a learning portal or e-learning community.	ITS, TRTs, students, staff and parents.	To be determined.	Evaluation of the utility of this portal or e-learning community.
Validate use of effective differentiated instructional strategies through the PEP model.	Curriculum specialists, school administrators, students, parents and staff.	Funds for parent and student e-surveys.	PEP evaluations and survey results.

Fully implement The College Summit program, if warranted.	ITS, school administrators, counselors, students, parents and representatives from The College Summit.	Funding to be provided by The College Summit.	Evaluation supervised by the Office of Monitoring and Evaluation.
Fully implement links between IEP data and students' personal progress plans.	ITS, Student Services, curriculum specialists, school administrators, students and parents.	To be determined.	PEP evaluations
Develop electronic supports for an advisory program for grades 9-11 to support the goals of The College Summit.	ITS, school administrators, counselors, students, staff and parents.	To be determined.	Implementation of electronic components of an effective advisory program.

3. Topic: Offsite Internet Access

DESIRED STATE:

Provide high speed, filtered, internet service to all ACPS 9th – 12th grade students from school and home locations.

CURRENT STATUS:

Limited (1 hour per night) dial-in access is provided to Minnie Howard School students.

DISCUSSION:

Two issues provide the framework for discussion of at-home internet access via student laptops: protective filters for student access and the security of our networks.

Through the use of a Virtual Private Network (VPN), student internet traffic using their home internet service provider could be sent through the ACPS filters. Loosening the current controls on the laptops by either enabling ethernet transmission or using wireless technology would permit a certain number of students to work their way around ACPS filters. The ACPS Acceptable Use Policy would provide sufficient legal protection for the school system. However, students could then lose the current levels of protection offered to them by ACPS filter.

With respect to the security of our networks, an open Ethernet port or current wireless technology could provide access to unprotected ports with susceptibility to viruses or worms. Once a worm has been contracted by even a single computer, it could render the student network inoperable within minutes of reconnecting to the school network.

Until we determine that the technology allows us to more thoroughly guard against such infections, we will limit internet access to dial-up methodologies or after school locations not in the home.

3. WORK PLAN: Offsite Internet Access

2004 - 2005 School Year			
ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES NEEDED	EVIDENCE OF COMPLETION
Determine feasibility of expanding dial-in service to T.C. Williams/STEP	ITS staff	If usage at TC/STEP follows the same rate as at MH this year, no additional phone lines would be required. However, increased usage of dial-up access would require additional telephone lines and network hardware	TC/STEP dial-up access is ready for implementation in the 2005-2006 school year
Research use of virtual private networks (VPN) or wireless technology for monitored internet access from home	ITS staff	No additional resource needed	Research to date has not provided a solution to the significant security issues associated with the use of virtual private networks.
Ensure logical separation of student administrative networks	ITS staff	No additional resources needed. ACPS network design is flexible enough to accommodate this	Completed September 2004
2005 - 2006 School Year			
Provide evening internet access at GWMS and T.C. Williams media centers	ITS staff	Cost of supervisory personnel working evening hours in the two media centers	Access Monday through Thursday evening; view sign-in log
Provide all students in grades 9-12 with free dial-up internet access	ITS staff	If usage rates at TC/STEP approximate usage rates at MH during 04-05 school year, little or no additional equipment will be required. If usage rate exceeds MH rate additional hardware will be required.	Verified Access
Consider providing internet access through City reaction centers contiguous to school sites	ITS staff	There would be little cost involved in doing this, but the atmosphere may not be conducive for completing school work	

Continue to research solutions for increasing			
2006 – 2007 School Year			
Implement full internet access solution as determined in 2005-2006	ITS staff	Cost is dependent upon solution selected	Full internet access to students
2007 - 2008 School Year			
Continue to seek new and improved ways to provide out of school internet access to students	ITS staff	To be determined	

4. Topic: Printing Access

DESIRED STATE:

All 9th – 12th grade ACPS students have free and timely access to printing from their laptops.

CURRENT STATUS:

A centralized system is in place at T.C. Williams/STEP and the printer is scheduled for installation at Minnie Howard in February 2005.

DISCUSSION:

Our goal is to maximize the electronic exchange of information and minimize the need for extensive printing resources. With additional staff development and experience, we expect increased electronic submission and grading of assignments.

Opening the USB port to enable students to print on home printers would render the laptops completely unprotected against worms and viruses, thereby severely jeopardizing our ability to support on-line SOL testing.

4. WORK PLAN: Printing Access

2004 - 2005 School Year			
ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES NEEDED	EVIDENCE OF COMPLETION
Provide centralized free printing to students at TC and STEP	ITS staff	Expendables (e.g. paper, toner, cartridges)	Log of print jobs
Install centralized printer at Minnie Howard	ITS staff	Funds taken from current ITS budget	Installation of printer
2005 – 2006 School Year			
Provide free centralized printing at TC/STEP and MH	ITS staff and TC clerical staff	No additional resources needed	Log of print jobs
Provide capability for students to send jobs to the centralized printer when dialed in from home or other off-site locations	ITS staff	Expendables (e.g., paper, toner cartridges)	Log of print jobs
Provide students with individual IDs to make centralized printing more efficient and user friendly	ITS staff	No additional resources needed	Roster of student ID numbers
Continue to train and encourage teachers to use online grading and other “paperless” strategies	TRT Coordinator, building TRTs, Department Chairs	Stipends for trainers	Documentation of training sessions
2006 - 2007 School Year			
Continue to explore avenues to create a more paperless learning environment	ITS staff, building TRTs, TRT Coordinator	To be determined	To be determined

5. Topic: E-mail Access

DESIRED STATE:

Provide, with parental permission, ACPS e-mail accounts for students in grades 9-12.

CURRENT STATUS:

Limited use of “protected” e-mail (via Think.Com) is provided to Minnie Howard students.

DISCUSSION:

Our analysis of e-mail alternatives for students concluded that the additional overhead in supporting “protected” e-mail accounts does not result in a concomitant benefit. We intend to expand the scope of our monitoring tools and techniques to provide a satisfactory level of supervision of student e-mail accounts. The accounts will be provided to students only with the consent of their parents.

Providing students with ACPS e-mail accounts will not significantly increase risks to our network. However, there is always the possibility that students could send and receive objectionable material through these accounts. We will monitor closely the use of these accounts during 2005-2006, while we simultaneously research the benefits of online collaborative systems.

While individual email accounts can bring instructional benefits to our students, the implementation of a collaborative online system such as Blackboard or Moodle may subsume those benefits within their larger capabilities. If this proves to be the case, we will replace ACPS student email accounts with those provided by the collaborative system adopted.

5. WORK PLAN: Email Access

2004 - 2005 School Year			
ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES NEEDED	EVIDENCE OF COMPLETION
Develop procedures and test software/hardware necessary to provide a satisfactory level of student email supervision	ITS staff	No additional resources needed	Monitoring tools and procedures
2005 - 2006 School Year			
With parental permission, provide monitored e-mail accounts for laptop initiative students	ITS staff	E-mail administrator	Working student e-mail accounts signed Parent permission forms flagged in student information system
2006 - 2007 School Year			
<u>Possibly</u> replace email accounts with a phased implementation of an online collaborative system			

6. Topic: Collaborative, On-Line Systems

DESIRED STATE:

A collaborative online community, delivering targeted content to students, teachers and parents is fully implemented in support of the goals of the high school smaller learning communities initiative.

CURRENT STATUS:

A limited pilot is underway at the Minnie Howard School using Think.com.

DISCUSSION:

A fully implemented collaborative learning system addresses many of the goals of the laptop initiative. The exchange of the information between students, faculty, parents, and the larger community, as well as the delivery of instructional content can be facilitated through such a system.

These collaborative systems are accessible via the internet. Families with home internet access can take much more advantage of the system than families without such access. Collaborative learning can provide a range of services even within the school building.

Blackboard, the most prominent of the collaborative suites, describes itself as a “Networked Learning Environment.” With a wide variety of participating vendors, Blackboard provides a structure for “accessing any learning resource at any time from any place.” A wide variety of course cartridges, from all major education publishers, education publishers, are available in the Blackboard format, with additional readings, updated information and question pools.

Discussion boards provide opportunities for on-line collaborative work. These environments also provide a structure for enhanced professional development opportunities, parent-teacher communication, and a vehicle communication of assignments, grades, etc.

These collaborative environments provide an extremely attractive complement to the Laptop Initiative, assuming that the implementation is carefully planned and integrated with other features of the initiative. By their nature, these environments are modular, and the components can be mixed and matched as appropriate to the ACPS environment.

6. WORK PLAN: Collaborative, Online Systems

2004 - 2005 School Year			
ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES NEEDED	EVIDENCE OF COMPLETION
Conduct a thorough study of available collaborative systems	ITS staff Curriculum school staff school based TRTs	No additional resourced needed	Statement of pros and cons for available collaborative systems
2005 - 2006 School Year			
Prepare an implementation plan and budget for a selected collaborative system	ITS staff, TRT Coordinator, building TRTs, Department Chairs, Curriculum Specialists, TC/STEP/MH Administrators	No additional resources needed	Budget recommendation with supporting details
Conduct pilot programs of selected collaborative systems at TC/STEP and MH. Focus initial efforts on student/class collaborative activities	ITS staff, TRT Coordinator, building TRTs, Department Chairs, selected Curriculum Specialists, TC/STEP/MH Administrators	Funds for licenses and user fees for selected online collaborative system	Pilot program results
2006 - 2007 School Year			
Begin phased implementation of the selected online collaborative system, with continued focus on teacher and student/class collaboration	ITS staff, TRT Coordinator, building TRTs, Department Chairs, Curriculum Specialists, TC/STEP/MH Administrators	Funds for licenses and user fees for selected online collaborative system	

2007 - 2008 School Year

2007 - 2008 School Year			
Complete full implementation of the online academic community, to include the parent involvement component	ITS staff, TRT Coordinator building TRTs, Department Chairs, Curriculum Specialists, TC/STEP/MH Administrators	Funds for licenses and user fees for selected online collaborative system	

7. Topic: Family Involvement

DESIRED STATE:

Laptops will be used as an integral communication tool between home and school in grades 9-12.

CURRENT STATUS:

Laptop use is limited to students and teachers at the current time. Parents attended general orientation meetings in August and September prior to the distribution of laptops to students.

DISCUSSION:

Parental involvement is critical to a student's academic success. Technology provides us the necessary tools to ensure that communication between home and school occurs on a consistent basis. The implementation of student email accounts, dial up internet access, and online collaborative communities will enable all parents to communicate electronically with their child's teachers and administrators. These tools, coupled with parent education and training, mark a major milestone in our drive to close the digital divide for our students and their families.

7. WORK PLAN: Family Involvement

2004 - 2005 School Year			
ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES NEEDED	EVIDENCE OF COMPLETION
Conduct parent laptop orientation meetings to review the purpose of the laptop initiative, the Acceptable Use Policy and regulations, and the bailment agreement	TC/STEP/MH building administrators	No additional resources needed	Sign in sheets of parent attendance. Signed bailment agreements
2005 - 2006 School Year			
Conduct parent laptop orientation meetings to review the purpose of the laptop initiative, the Acceptable Use Policy and regulations, and the bailment agreement	TC/STEP/MH building administrators	No additional resources needed	Sign in sheets of parent attendance. Signed bailment agreements
Provide training to parents on laptop operation, email and internet access	ITS staff, TRT Coordinator, building level TRTs, TC/MH/STEP administrators	Stipends to trainers	Documentation of training sessions
Conduct parent/community information programs to demonstrate innovative teaching occurring with laptop computers	TRT Coordinator, building level TRTs, Curriculum Specialists, TC/STEP/MH administrators	No additional resources needed.	Documentation of parent programs
Publicize examples of innovative teaching occurring with laptop computers on TC/STEP/MH and ACPS websites and parent newsletters	Executive Director for Information and Outreach, TC/STEP/MH administrators, Curriculum Specialists, TRT coordinator, building level TRTs	No additional resources needed.	Websites and newsletters

Design process for online course registration for grades 9-12	ITS staff, Executive Director for Secondary Programs, TC/STEP/MH counselors and administrators	To be determined	Online registration protocol
Research alternatives for providing online access to student grades/ performance/attendance data to parents	ITS staff, Executive Director for Secondary Programs, TC/STEP/MH counselors and administrators	To be determined	Summaries of research
2006 - 2007 School Year			
Continue all activities conducted in '04-'05 05-'06 school years as appropriate			
Provide training to selected parents on the use of online collaborative community to post assignments and facilitate communication between home and school	TRT coordinator, building level TRTs, ITS staff,	Possible trainer/consultant fees; Electronic agenda software	Documentation of training sessions and implementation of electronic agenda
If warranted, conduct online course registration at the ninth grade level	ITS staff, Executive Director for Secondary Programs, TC/STEP/MH counselors and administrators	To be determined	Online registrations
Determine appropriate vendor/methodology for online parental access to student information; if approved, include funding in '07-08 budget proposal	ITS staff, Executive Director for Secondary Programs, TC/STEP/MH counselors, administrators, and TRTs	To be determined	Budget proposal

2007 - 2008 School Year

2007 - 2008 School Year			
Continue '04-'05, '05-'06, and '06-'07 activities as appropriate			
Implement selected online collaborative community to enhance school and home communication; provide training to parents	ITS staff, TRT Coordinator, building level TRTs,	Technology and training costs to be determined	
If approved, provide training to parents in accessing student information online	ITS staff, Executive Director for Secondary Programs, TC/STEP/MH counselors, administrators, and TRTs	Technology and training costs to be determined	
Expand online course registration as appropriate	ITS staff, Executive Director for Secondary Programs, TC/STEP/MH counselors and administrators	Technology cost to be determined	

Topic: Evaluation

DESIRED STATE:

Performance measures and other indicators will be instituted and monitored on a continual basis in order to maximize the benefits of the Laptop Initiative, with particular regard to student technological capabilities and the integration of technology into classroom instruction.

CURRENT STATUS:

Student Laptop Post-Survey (end of school year) has been implemented; 2005 student data collection is complete. Teacher Laptop Survey has been activated and is in progress. Parent Laptop Survey is completed and the 2005 mail out is scheduled for mid-July. Literature review is being conducted on one-to-one computing initiatives at other school systems. Quality Assurance measures are under discussion. Monitoring and Evaluation conducted formalized observations of classroom laptop usage at TC, STEP and Minnie Howard between April 26 and May 24, 2005. Instructional Technology Needs Assessment has been developed. Student Laptop Pre-Survey (beginning of laptop rollout) was implemented in October 2004; data collection was completed in November 2004. Minnie Howard instituted a survey of students and a survey of teachers in April 2004. TC and MH staff members were given LoTI (Levels of Technology Implementation) survey in April 2004; results and possible goals were prepared by Learning Quest.

DISCUSSION:

To assure that students and teachers get the most out of their laptops, it is imperative to identify, implement and evaluate indicators of the benefits and costs of the Laptop Initiative. Such measures include surveys of students, their parents, and ACPS staff; quality assurance, in order to minimize technological problems; evaluation of the specific uses of the laptops; and monitoring of all other components of the Laptop Implementation Plan.

Many elements require collaboration among Monitoring and Evaluation, ITS, Technology Resource Teachers, help desk staff, Staff Development, curriculum staff, principals and teachers. Evaluation of the Laptop Initiative will be a multiyear effort.

8. WORK PLAN: Evaluation

2004 - 2005 School Year

ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES NEEDED	EVIDENCE
Begin analysis of SOL results, student grades, and quality of homework/research as they apply to laptop usage.	Monitoring and Evaluation, teachers.		Test results written
Implement annual Student Laptop Pre-Survey, to gauge students' computer usage patterns.	Monitoring and Evaluation.		Online survey November
Implement annual Student Laptop Post-Survey (Web-based), to gauge students' opinions and uses of the laptops, and compare usage habits at end of school year to habits at beginning of rollout period.	Monitoring and Evaluation.		Online survey 2005.
Implement annual Teacher Laptop Survey (Web-based), to gauge teachers' level of comfort with technology, level of curricular integration, training needs, and observations regarding student usage.	Monitoring and Evaluation.		Online survey will end
Implement annual Parent Laptop Survey (mail out), to gauge MH/STEP/ TCW parents' opinions regarding the Initiative and their children's laptop usage.	Monitoring and Evaluation.	Postage; data entry intern.	Completed at ACP
Directly observe laptop usage in classrooms.	Monitoring and Evaluation.		Database observa
Continue review of the implementation and analysis of other school laptop initiatives throughout the U.S.	Monitoring and Evaluation, tech staff, Curriculum Specialists.		Table of ferences
Analyze laptop functionality and operability, including replacement and damage costs.	Monitoring and Evaluation, ITS, school help desks.		Help desk vey resu
Evaluate staff training and development. (Level, needs, and effectiveness).	Monitoring and Evaluation, Staff Development office, TRT Coordinator.		Staff De Survey TIE rec
Monitor compliance with TSIP requirements.	Staff Development office.		Staff De
Assess whether students in the school division are attaining a level of information literacy skills that include one or more of the following characteristics: student is able to (1) conduct research to locate, collect, organize, and evaluate information; (2) electronically exchange information; and (3) collaborate with others outside the classroom.	Monitoring and Evaluation, TRTs.		Network plans, T
Assess whether the "Digital Divide" is being narrowed.	Monitoring and Evaluation.		Test data sults.
Measure and enhance the technology literacy of parents and family of students.	Monitoring and Evaluation.		Survey

2005 - 2006 School Year

ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES NEEDED	EVIDENCE
Analyze and report results from 2004-2005 surveys.	Monitoring and Evaluation.		Forthcoming
Continue annual surveys with modifications as warranted.	Monitoring and Evaluation.		Reports
Conduct focus groups of teachers, students and parents.	Monitoring and Evaluation.		Reports
Develop and implement appropriate quality assurance measures (e.g. length of time for teachers to read/respond to e-mails; frequency/type of problems that result in computer inoperability; average network downtime; time to resolution of problems)	Monitoring and Evaluation, in conjunction with ITS, school-based help desks, Staff Development office.	Databases on Intranet or server drive for data entry and reporting, with accessibility to all appropriate personnel.	Periodic
Develop and implement appropriate measures to gauge costs/benefits/ effectiveness of academic components (e.g. online SOLs; amount of inappropriate laptop usage by students).	Monitoring and Evaluation.		Periodic
Conduct additional classroom observations.	Monitoring and Evaluation.		Observations
Increase association with academic technology organizations (e.g. North TIER Partnership; SRI's Ubiquitous Computing Evaluation Consortium).	TRT Coordinator.		Records and communication
Evaluate level of printing access.	Monitoring and Evaluation, ITS.		Help desk records,
Evaluate costs and benefits of expanded network access.	Monitoring and Evaluation, ITS.		Sign-in survey records, documents
Monitor and evaluate costs and benefits of student e-mail access.	Monitoring and Evaluation, ITS.		E-mail access results, mission
Align technology-related staff development offerings with data from needs assessment surveys and other sources of data.	Monitoring and Evaluation, Staff Development office, TRT Coordinator.		Survey records.

2006 - 2007 School Year

ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES NEEDED	EVIDENCE
Evaluate curricular compliance with new Grade 9-12 technology SOLs.	Monitoring and Evaluation.		Pacing
Evaluate online learning opportunities such as industry-specific certification courses.	Monitoring and Evaluation, Director CTE.		Sign-in number
Evaluate implementation of the collaborative online system.	Monitoring and Evaluation, ITS, Curriculum Staff.		Survey
Develop a review and approval process for all instructional software and hardware.	Monitoring and Evaluation, ITS, Curriculum Staff.		Lesson
Continue surveys of students, teachers, and parents.	Monitoring and Evaluation.		Survey
Continue to monitor quality, cost, and benefit measures.	Monitoring and Evaluation, in conjunction with ITS, school-based help desks, Staff Development office.		Periodic
Continue to modify evaluation measures as warranted.	Monitoring and Evaluation.		

2007 - 2008 School Year			
ACTIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES NEEDED	EVIDENCE
Evaluate level to which instruction is differentiated in all 9-12 classrooms and courses.	Monitoring and Evaluation, Curriculum Specialists.		Classroom plans.
Evaluate amount and quality of innovative project based learning.	Monitoring and Evaluation, Curriculum Specialists.		Classroom plans.
Determine and implement assessment tools and standards to be used on all levels of administration and support staff.	Staff Development.		Staff Development plans.
Continue annual surveys of students, teachers, and parents.	Monitoring and Evaluation.		Survey reports.
Continue to monitor quality, cost, and benefit measures.	Monitoring and Evaluation, in conjunction with ITS, school-based help desks, Staff Development office.		Periodic reports.
Continue to modify evaluation measures as warranted.	Monitoring and Evaluation.		

WORKING DRAFT

June 2004

*To be reviewed and revised by the leadership team of
T. C. Williams High School*

Building the Future: The New TC! Redesigning the High School Educational Program

“When it comes to encouraging student engagement with school and a willingness to work hard to achieve academic goals, the extent to which a secondary school environment is a personal one matters more than any single factor.”

1994 McLaughlin, M. W. **Somebody Knows My Name.**
“Issues in Restructuring Schools,” Issue 2, pages 9-12

In the fall of 2001 Superintendent Rebecca Perry identified the design and construction of a new high school as a singular opportunity to reframe the educational program options for our students. Time, space, scheduling, technology infusion, 21st century career preparation, expanded academic choices and improved services to students and families were just some of the factors to be considered.

Community and staff forums were held to develop consensus regarding what our high school should look like and how it should function, both physically and educationally. The compelling student achievement data that underlies the smaller learning communities research convinced the T. C. Williams High School community that smaller units within the comprehensive high school would serve us well in the near- and long-term future.

Over the next four years Principal John Porter has led the school and the larger community towards a better understanding about how the physical design of the building will enhance our ability to deliver a great educational program for every student. The new school construction is well underway and so is the design and implementation of the new educational program.

Why change?

To improve the educational outcomes for every student.

To encourage each student to improve performance through personal motivation and academic effort.

To assist each student in making connections to school activities, community opportunities and support services.

To collaborate more effectively with students, staff and families.

To create flexibility in the programs and structures available to students as they strive to complete high school successfully.

Every child should receive a consistent message that he or she can learn and perform at high levels, and that his or her achievement matters to the community as much as to the individual student and his or her family. That message should be conveyed by every adult in the school community and by students to their peers.

Program decisions should be based on shared principles and carried out through organizational structures that build strong interpersonal relationships based on respect, accountability and the celebration of each student's and staff member's talents and potential. Staff should lead students to focus on content and skill mastery, while developing self-reliance, collaboration skills and reflective practice.

The T. C. Williams High School educational program will be structured to provide each student with strong academic preparation, life skills, leadership training, greater self-understanding, preparation for post-secondary education, career preparation, and an understanding of the importance of civic responsibility. Data-informed decisions will be made within the context of the guiding principles and research framework developed by the school community during the 2002-03 and 2003-04 school years. Those guiding principles are:

- To establish smaller learning communities so that every student enjoys the support of at least one teacher advocate.
- To foster effective working relationships by ensuring that all teachers enjoy the opportunity to collaborate on instruction.
- To ensure a flexible, student-centered educational program that recognizes the individual learning styles of each student.
- To recognize and celebrate the talents of each individual, as well as the rich diversity of the entire school community.
- To guarantee that every student graduates with a diploma indicating preparations for post-secondary educational and career options that support lifelong learning.
- To assist students in developing effective technical skills that support and enhance all aspects of the curriculum.
- To ensure that every student is connected to the community as a part of his or her high school experience.
- To implement family involvement initiatives that encourage collaboration and positive student outcomes.

The smaller learning communities research presented at this spring's community forum and the response to the Board's strategic plan (response 1.8) provide thorough summaries of both the rationale for changing the high

school educational program and the steps that have been taken over the past four years to build a strong foundation for changes in our organizational structures and program practices.

Survey data taken from parents, family members, students and staff over the past four years have consistently confirmed what matters most to our community in terms of changes to the high school program. Student priorities mirror those of the larger community and, therefore, drive our planning and decision making. These priorities include:

- linking staff more directly with students, including a plan for grouping administrators, staff and students for the purposes of providing more effective support of students and their families
- maintaining and enhancing the diversity of the T. C. experience
- ensuring equal educational opportunities within and across the smaller learning communities while maintaining a unified TC
- avoiding isolation and tracking
- integrating technology effectively into all aspects of the program
- integrating Career and Technical Education into every instructional program and supporting industry certifications
- ensuring that every student graduates
- providing flexible choices for students so that they can study multiple academic concentrations
- increasing the rigor in all classes
- encouraging enrollment in honors and college-level courses
- keeping sports, clubs and activities school-wide
- building more flexibility into the hours of the school day, the master schedule and alternative means for earning diploma requirements
- keeping the instructional spaces flexible to accommodate future changes in technology and program offerings

What will the smaller learning communities look like?

How will students be assigned to smaller learning communities?

How will staff be assigned to smaller learning communities?

Based on the priorities set by the community, the high school's guiding principles, existing pilot programs and best practices research in the area of improving educational outcomes for high school students, the T. C. Williams High School community will spend the next two years transitioning into smaller learning communities, what their leadership team has chosen to call "academies". It is expected that the school community will develop into an organization driven by reflective practice and a commitment to continuous improvement, frequently asking at least these three questions: *Why are we doing what we are doing? Is it working? How can we do it better?*

August 2004 Establish a smaller learning communities pilot at T. C. Williams High School and learn from the successful strategies implemented at the Secondary Training and Education Program, Minnie Howard School, and schools around the country that we visited in 2003-04.

August 2005 Conduct T. C. Williams High School staff leadership academy.

Conduct full staff training, to include Breaking Ranks II research.

Add two more smaller learning communities pilots.

Continue the current pilot.

Align administrators, counselors, school support team members, teachers, support staff and students into five academies, with the Secondary Training and Education Program as the foundation for the academy that houses alternative programs.

Each of the four larger academies will serve up to 550 students. Each will include an administrator, a secretary, two guidance counselors, a social worker or psychologist, and up to 50 staff members.

Staff members will be assigned to academies based on balancing instructional experience and professional diversity.

Each academy will be served by core and elective teachers, as well as support staff.

Seniors will be assigned to the academy that is served by their current guidance counselor. Tenth and eleventh grade students will be assigned to the four standard academies using the demographic characteristics of the school as a whole, including ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, enrollment in honors programs, ESL identification, IDEIA identification, and TAG identification.

Efforts this year will focus on three areas:

- developing professional collaboration within and across academies
- improving instructional practice through technology integration and training in differentiated instruction
- learning how to personalize the high school experience for students and families more effectively [The College Summit pilot and the advisory pilot currently under development].

With the exception of the pilot programs, students will not be assigned to classes based on their academy assignment. Those complicated changes to the master schedule will be developed during the 2005-06 school year and implemented in the 2006-07 school year.

2005-06

Discuss the new T. C. Williams High School Educational Program with each school's PTA, with other community stakeholder groups, and at large community gatherings such as Titan Expo, Art on the Avenue, the Project Discovery Walk-a-thon, etc.

Develop structures to ensure departmental monitoring of course content, expectations, delivery and achievement across the five academies.

Develop structures to ensure departmental monitoring of delivery of effective guidance and student services across all five academies.

Expand parent training through a variety of partnerships, including the ACPS Department of Family Involvement and Community Outreach, The College Summit, the Center for Multicultural Human Services, Bienvenidos, the Tenants and Workers Committee, related city agencies, area universities and current TC partners.

Complete Guidance and Student Services Strategic Plan.

Complete Career and Technical Education Strategic Plan.

Consider conducting a "School Academic Rigor and Support Self Assessment Tool" to students, staff and families.

Improve support staff professional development.

Modify the school calendar once in September and once in January to allow time for total staff planning for the 2006-07 academy implementation.

Focus on developing effective professional learning communities.

Pilot the College Summit senior advisory program and study other successful advisory programs for students in grades 9-11.

Take advantage of laptop technology to further customize instructional support.

Offer a flexible schedule, perhaps 12 noon to 6:00 pm, for a limited number of students and staff.

Work through content area vertical committees to improve the acquisition of prerequisite skills for success in upper level courses.

Work through curriculum specialists to consider new course offerings for 2006-07.

Develop a career pathways curriculum that would improve student course selection decisions.

Consider up to six site visits by staff and students.

2006-07

Continue academy structure.

Continue professional development in the areas of collaborative leadership / professional learning communities; personalizing your school environment; and curriculum, instruction and assessment.

Provide a master schedule that accommodates most core subjects within each academy, thereby transitioning to a structure where teachers can get to know their students better and customize instruction more completely.

After evaluation of the pilot program, consider expanding The College Summit to the entire senior class.

Implement a complementary advisory program for students in grades 10 and 11.

Discuss the new T. C. Williams High School Educational Program with each school's PTA, with other community stakeholder groups, and at large community gatherings such as Titan Expo, Art on the Avenue, the Project Discovery Walk-a-thon, etc.

Continue moving towards full implementation of smaller learning communities best practices, based on the priorities outlined by the T. C. Williams High School leadership team, in conjunction with the larger school community.

How will the high school experience be different when T. C. Williams High School is organized into smaller learning communities?

Listed below are just a few of the benefits.

Students will:

- be able to build deeper and more meaningful relationships with staff and peers
- gain better access to student services, community resources, and post-secondary opportunities
- become more accountable for their efforts
- benefit from a teacher advocate focused on his or her overall achievement and success
- benefit from opportunities to serve as mentors and peer tutors
- continue to enjoy the diversity of the TC community
- gain improved guidance regarding career pathways and post-secondary opportunities
- learn to work independently and collaboratively
- ...
- ...
- ...

Staff will:

- be able to build deeper and more meaningful professional relationships with colleagues and with students

- learn effective strategies through lesson sharing and professional collaboration
- enjoy improved administrative and guidance support
- get to know some students much better and be better prepared to identify and address their needs
- become more expert at monitoring student progress and communicating about it with students, families and colleagues to provide essential support and enrichment
- develop more interdisciplinary course content and strategies
- ...
- ...
- ...

Families will:

- enjoy better access to teachers, school support team members and administrators
- benefit from the continuity of their child having a guidance and administrative team of support
- become more involved in their child’s education, activities, and planning for the future
- feel more welcome in a smaller learning community
- receive more comprehensive feedback regarding their child’s successes and needs
- receive more comprehensive information regarding available City services, school division services and opportunities for involving their child in the community service, the work place and higher education.
- ...
- ...
- ...

Once the new leadership team is in place at T. C. Williams High School, this work-in-process will be reviewed and revised as appropriate.

For further information, please contact:

John Porter
Principal
T. C. Williams High School
703 824 6810
jporter@acps.k12.va.us

Margee Walsh
Executive Director
Secondary Programs
703 824 1531
mwalsh@acps.k12.va.us

Rebecca Perry
Superintendent
703 824 6610
rebecca.perry@acps.k12.va.us