GET A HANDLE ON YOUR IT "STUFF" DESPITE LACK OF STAFF

TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS
# Table of Contents:

Section I: IT Departments face large asset growth with lack of resources .................................................. 3

Section II: Improve transparency between your department and end users.................................................... 4

Section III: Better coordinate management of help desk tickets between department and staff ................... 5

Section IV: Streamline costs with progress and expense tracking .............................................................. 6

Section V: Improve management of assets with reliable asset inventory .................................................. 7

Section VI: Ensure your school is adequately prepared for online assessments ........................................ 8

Conclusion: Long-term benefits for the IT Department .............................................................................. 9
Introduction

All schools are facing a growth in technology. While a positive for student learning and trends in teaching, it certainly puts an additional burden on IT departments.

John Bramham can relate to this common scenario. He is the IT director at his school, but is short-staffed with a lot on his team’s plate, especially with increasing expectations of customers and the rapid growth in technology his school is seeing. John has been hoping to decrease the ratio of IT assets to IT staff, but every year the school gets more and more computers. While John hopes to meet the goal of 1:1 computing soon, the various types of hardware and software require a lot of regular maintenance, both reactive help desk tickets and proactive, scheduled checks. Additionally, customers have increasing expectations of the IT department. They expect fast customer response to technical questions and quick servicing on new and old computers. John is witnessing a continuing gap between customer expectations and service levels his team can provide given their resources. He’s been trying to assess alternatives to better meet the technology explosion in his school.

2012-2013 IT Benchmark Survey Report shows IT departments do not have enough staff to:

- Integrate technology into the classroom: 70%
- Implement new technology: 72%
- Plan for new technology: 57%
- Maintain IT applications: 44%
- Install IT applications: 38%
- Maintain network systems adequately: 51%
- Meet your department’s yearly objectives: 57%
- Effectively support the needs of the district/school: 66%

Automated, web-based technology management is a way John and other IT departments can meet these needs without additional budget and resource increases. The following eBook outlines the benefits of implementing a web-based technology management system to help manage asset growth.
SECTION I:
IT Departments face large asset growth with lack of resources

In school districts, colleges and universities across America, technology plays an increasingly important role in both the learning environment and overall school operations. A growing body of evidence shows that schools with strong technology infrastructures are seen as drivers of progress and student achievement, bridging divides to help every student reach his or her potential. As a result, Information Technology professionals who manage and administer the use of technology in schools play a significant role in student success. As the role of technology has increased, the infrastructure needed to support students and their schools has increased as well. The addition of new networks, additional computers, tablets, mobile devices, interactive whiteboards and other equipment has necessitated additional technical and human support and resources. Often though, the availability of those resources lags behind the demand. Simply put, there are often more things to be done than there are people and funding to do them—“too much stuff, not enough staff.”

According to the January 2013 survey conducted by SchoolDude and the Consortium for School Networking, there are 1,998 students for every technician in US schools. Seventy-two percent of respondents indicated they did not have enough IT staff to implement new technology and 70 percent didn’t have enough staff to integrate technology into the classroom. Meanwhile, calls for budget reductions continue, further stretching overburdened technology departments. Along with the lack of resources, the “on-demand” expectations of today’s internet-driven society have led to a dramatic mismatch between customer expectations and the delivery capabilities of the typical IT department.

In light of the overwhelming need for more technology staffing and faster customer response, automating technical support and asset inventory processes can provide tremendous benefits for your current IT staff. To help manage technology growth and IT processes, many districts are implementing online solutions.

Automating technical support and asset inventory helps:

- Improve transparency in the technology department, resulting in better customer service
- Improve coordination within your department and with other school staff members, resulting in help desk tickets handled with greater efficiency
- Track department progress and expenses giving you more control over costs
- Establish a reliable system for storing support records and asset information, providing instant access to detailed information while minimizing loss and duplication of efforts
- Prepare for Technology Readiness mandates by maintaining an accurate device and systems inventory and managing equipment needed to perform online common core assessments
SECTION II:
Improve transparency between your department and end users

A web-based technology management solution allows IT requests to be more transparent and streamlined, allowing faculty and administrators to monitor the status of their requests. Web-based systems eliminate the need for your IT department to keep track of paper request forms and eliminate duplication of requests.

Customers in need of support can use a web-based incident management system to monitor the status of their requests at any time and stay abreast of any reasons for delay, such as delivery status of parts. In addition, they can see the amount of time, materials and effort involved in fulfilling their request, providing a more complete picture of the service they are receiving. This leads to better communication and understanding of why certain requests may not be fulfilled or take longer to complete.

Supervisors can prioritize and assign support requests to appropriate personnel as soon as they are received. Eliminating paper work orders and manual data entry of requests increase technicians’ efficiency. This efficiency leads to improved response time, greater overall productivity within the department, and most importantly, increased customer satisfaction.

With a web-based system, technicians and their supervisors have the ability to see what work is outstanding and the age of incident requests. It’s even possible for technicians and other staff to receive updates and new requests through their smartphones or other mobile devices, allowing technicians to stay up-to-date on their workload while in the field. Not having to go back to the office for new support requests increases productivity, accountability among your staff, and more favorable response times and completion rates.

“We went from an undependable IT help system to a very streamlined product. It’s more efficient and gives us credibility with our customers.”

Ryan Adkins
Director of Technology,
Yorkville Community Unit School District 115, IL
SECTION III:
Better coordinate management of help desk tickets between department and staff

A system which integrates technology help desk with IT asset and inventory management will result in better coordination between the technology department and school staff. As support requests are processed, automatic notifications are generated to the staff members designated by you and your team. This automated coordination leads to prompt resolution of requests.

A web-based system allows supervisors to review the workloads of individual technicians and staff members, making adjustments as circumstances dictate to improve load balance. Staff can monitor their assignments, adding information and details when needed, such as items or issues that increase the complexity of a repair procedure. Additionally, end-users and requesters can be notified of any changes to original estimates of work completion if complexities arise.

“Streamlining the department was critical with a 9% decrease in funding for our department and an increase in expectations placed on my staff related to BYOD, high stakes testing and additional devices…”

James Brames
Director of Technology,
Avon Community Schools, IN

The increased communication that web-based systems offer will provide better coordination between your technicians and staff, improving organization and efficiency.

- Save 30 minutes per incident or support request
- Reduce time spent on phone calls, e-mails, and data entry
- Immediately access help desk tickets
- Automatically route requests to the proper individuals for approval and quickly assign to staff
- Notify end-users immediately and automatically when work is completed
SECTION IV:
Streamline costs with progress and expense trackings

A web-based system like SchoolDude’s ITDirect improves tracking the progress of requests for technology assistance and the expenses incurred to meet them. A robust and easily searchable database allows help desk tickets to be easily organized using a wide variety of criteria. Your team’s workload can be accurately monitored using numerous reporting options. The ability to closely monitor workflow and quickly generate reports allows you to:

- Prioritize assignments and ensure high-priority assignments receive the appropriate level of attention
- Quickly answer questions from administrators
- Easily determine the true costs of a particular ticket or incident request
- Demonstrate realized cost savings by performing work in-house vs. outsourcing

Along with tracking and reporting important data around help desk tickets, web-based technology management systems like SchoolDude’s ITAMDirect also allow your department to track, monitor and audit IT assets in schools. Quickly report on results of IT audits, determine where additional hardware assets or software licenses are needed and where you can reduce excess hardware and software licenses that are not used. With organized, granular reports on this information, you can analyze the data to determine excess costs and save money. Your department can also use data, reports, reviews of past requests and IT inventory for budget projections. Project upcoming needs and highlight areas which need additional attention when doing budget projections for the upcoming year.
SECTION V:
Improve management of assets with reliable asset inventory

Web-based IT asset management systems standardize asset monitoring for schools. You can use such systems to manage all types of hardware, including PC’s, MAC’s, and mobile devices. Automate asset discovery, monitoring and reporting and quickly respond to audits. An automated asset management tool provides several benefits, including:

- Eliminating the need for physical walkthroughs, saving technician time
- Decreasing time of audits by 17 minutes per computer
- Saving up to $24 per computer *

Software license management is another key component that falls under the responsibility of IT departments; web-based systems provide increase visibility into license use. Armed with this data, your department can determine license use to:

- Uninstall unused software licenses, providing cost savings for your schools
- Manage software installs to know immediately if unauthorized downloads take place

Web-based asset monitoring systems increase asset security by quickly identifying missing equipment and acting as a deterrent to theft. Identification and quick action on lost or stolen IT equipment can save schools up to $80,000\textsuperscript{+} per year. IT asset management automatically monitors equipment, triggers alarms if equipment goes missing and locates equipment if that device is connected to the Internet at any location.

“It was easy to demonstrate that we were being compliant.”

Don Gerlach
Director of Technology/CIO,
Susquehanna Valley Central School District, NY

Asset management can help your IT department save time on audits, save money by eliminating unused or under-used licenses or equipment, and reduce lost or stolen equipment. Additionally, your departments and supervisors can use this data to determine upgrade costs and needs. Use web-based asset solutions to better plan for your school and students’ future technology needs.

* According to Gartner Research, the average cost for a walk-around audit is $25 per computer

\textsuperscript{+} Based on national averages of district loss in one year
SECTION VI:
Ensure your school is adequately prepared for online assessments

For K-12 education, online student assessment is replacing traditional pencil-and-paper tools for measuring student achievement. The development and widespread implementation of the Common Core curriculum is accelerating the pace of change and advancing the definition of technology readiness. IT departments are under pressure to develop and support the technology infrastructure needed to facilitate this change, as you probably feel as well.

Under these circumstances, it’s crucial to have the ability to assess and evaluate the quality and quantity of IT assets in the most efficient way possible. An online technology management solution makes it possible to generate a report of network-enabled hardware and software with just a few mouse clicks.

Schools will need to ensure that they can implement and administer Common Core assessments which will be delivered online. Having an online system to manage IT resources simplifies the process of evaluating and determining technology and infrastructure upgrades needed to deliver these new online assessments. For longer-term planning, an online IT asset management system will help facilitate planning and development of equipment refresh cycles to support future assessments.

The Tech Readiness Tool supports school district efforts to plan their transition to the upcoming assessments. It also assesses the district’s current technology capacity and compares it to the level of capacity that will be needed to administer these assessments in four different areas:

- Devices
- Device to tester ratio
- Network infrastructure
- Staff and personnel

Along with the ability to organize and manage your school’s equipment and system inventory, a tremendous benefit of an online IT asset management system is that its data can easily be exported into the tech readiness tool. **Monitor the progress of your tech readiness** as equipment is added and replaced. A web-based asset management system makes it possible for you to manage and track the equipment necessary for online assessments and testing and eliminates redundancies as your IT department prepares for common online assessments.
CONCLUSION:

Long-term benefits for the IT Department

A reliable, accessible system for managing incident requests and IT assets is an essential element of today’s successful IT department. Such systems offer significant benefits, including greater transparency of help desk and asset management processes; improved coordination among departmental staff and more efficient work processes; improved expense and budget tracking; a reliable source of workflow and asset information available from virtually any location; and rapid assessment of your school’s current technology readiness and identification of short- and long-term needs.

A web-based system for IT management can streamline your department and provide improved service for your customers. Eliminating paper processes and their inherent inefficiencies, establishing greater control over expenditures, improving accountability, delivering faster turnaround on help desk tickets, and quickly auditing your IT assets will maximize the efforts of your staff. With the ability to maintain greater control of your costs and resources, the constant struggle to meet the heightened expectations of students, school staff and administrators becomes more manageable and realistic.

Read more about SchoolDude solutions for technology management and how it can benefit your educational institution at http://www.schooldude.com/suites/itmanagement