Technology Director
Board Report
September 27, 2011

Web Filter
Last spring we installed a new web filtering solution for our network. We purchased and installed the Barracuda Web Filter 410 from Barracuda networks. This system is significantly different than the previous solution (squidGuard) in that it is in-line rather than functioning as a proxy. The significance of having it in-line is that it now intercepts all network traffic (not just web page requests) that go in and out of the network. This in-line configuration will help tighten security as well as providing a higher level of reporting about our network traffic.

With these new features comes the opportunity for us to continue our life-long learning. There is an abundance of new tools and reporting available which were not previously available. As we learn how to understand and modify these controls, we should see opportunities for more effectively managing what is going on within the network.

lacenterschools.org webmail
We have expanded significantly our use of the features within lacenterschools.org's Google Apps for Education account. We have begun to provide online management of some shared resources so that teachers can find open times and reserve the computer lab all from a web page. This will replace the three ring binder system that has been in place for so many years. The speed and convenience of the online reservations system should be quite an improvement.

We have rolled out student accounts on Google Apps so they can take advantage of the myriad tools found there. The most significant of those are probably the availability of communication, creating and managing documents, and the use of the calendaring system.

I was very pleased to find out that Google has included access to Postini, an email retention interface. Access to this service has saved us many thousands of dollars which would have normally been spent purchasing the hardware/ software solution for an email retention system as mandated by the CORE Retention Schedule.

iPads
The introduction of iPads into the district is also a very big change presenting a significant number of challenges. Joel Shaw (Technology Support Specialist) has been in charge of this project and has done a wonderful job getting these systems ready for distribution to staff and students. This is all brand new territory in the area of technology and there is no general consensus for any “best practice” with these in an educational setting. As an example, Joel had warned me that printing was going to be one of the thorns in our paw with iPads. Luckily, Tanna Colwell (the ESD person who provided the initial training for these devices) did me a huge favor without my even asking. At the initial training, she said something along the lines of “Now I'm sure you'll all come to the point where there's something on your iPad you'd like to print. My advice? Forget it. It isn't going to happen.”

SuccessMaker Enterprise
Dave Holmes, Scott Lincoln and Colleen Wing have really stepped up their integration of SuccessMaker into the learning environment. Scott was able to secure the funding needed to expand the number of computers and licenses we have for this year by nine. Josh Soske did the legwork to identify notebooks that would meet the requirements with an eye toward minizing costs. He put me in touch with the vendor and the computers are being shipped now. Josh, Scott, Dave, and Colleen have all worked extremely hard to make this project a success.