



**Date:** October 25, 2023 **Agenda Item:** 7.8

**To:** Board of Trustees

**From:** Shawna Warren, Superintendent

**Originator(s):** Jonathan Konrad, Deputy Superintendent, Education Services  
Robert Litchfield, Director, Technology Services

**Governance Policy:** [Policy 700: Superintendent of Schools](#)

**Additional Reference:** [AP865: Information and Communication Technology](#)

**Assurance Domain:** Learning Supports  
Governance

**Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS)**

SLQS Competencies ([SLQS](#) / [Board Policy 700](#)):

Building Effective Relationships  
Visionary Leadership  
School Authority Operations and Resources

**Subject:** **Technology Services Report - October 2023**

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**Purpose:**

For information.

**Background:**

In the Technical Report, the technology team emphasizes its dedication to providing essential services and products to schools for optimal performance. The report focuses on three key areas: Technical Debt, Standard Maintenance and Future Planning.

- The team is actively addressing Technical Debt by implementing Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) and streamlining iPad management.
- Standard Maintenance is facilitated through the Evergreen program, ensuring that staff computers, student Chromebooks and mobile devices are updated and supported.
- Future Planning includes enhancing security measures and exploring the possibility of standardizing on a single technology environment, aligning with industry standards. This commitment ensures that Technology Services continues to support the mission of schools effectively.

Administration is prepared to respond to questions at the October 25, 2023, Public Board meeting.



**Attachment(s):**

1. Technology Services Report - October 2023



# Technology Services Report - October 2023

The technology team continues to strive to provide the necessary services and products to schools to ensure their effectiveness in their roles. In this report, the focus will be on three specific areas: Technical Debt, Standard Maintenance and Future Planning and Improvements.

## Technical Debt

Similar to financial debt, which can burden individuals as it accumulates, technical debt can have equally detrimental effects. Technical debt is the implied cost incurred when organizations do not address issues that will impact them in the future. Allowing technical debt to accumulate leads to the worsening of existing problems, making them costlier to resolve over time.

The technical team must constantly consider the future needs of the Division while managing the technical debt, bearing in mind the budget and time constraints. The current focus of attention is on several areas of technical debt:

### Multi Factor Authentication (MFA)

MFA enhances security by requiring users to provide at least two different authentication factors during the login process. The team is implementing MFA across the organization to adhere to security best practices and guidelines. A pilot group is already in place, and the plan is to roll this out division-wide by the December holiday break.

### iPad Management

The team has recognized the need to streamline the management of iPads, which are crucial learning tools for students. The team conducted a thorough inventory and identified devices that needed replacement. A budget has been approved as part of the Evergreen program. The team is collaborating with the Education Planning team to deploy standardized software and improve support processes.

## Standard Maintenance

The technical team is responsible for maintaining and securing the equipment used within the Division. This involves various mechanisms, with the primary budget allocation going to the Evergreen program.

### Evergreen Program

The Evergreen program ensures that staff computers, student Chromebooks and mobile devices remain up-to-date and supported by vendors. This year, the team is deploying approximately:

- 110 computers for staff, approximately 15% of the fleet
- 496 Chromebooks for students, approximately 20% of the fleet





- 300 iPads for younger students and those with specific needs, approximately 60% of the fleet

Please note that the number of iPads is higher this year due to outdated equipment in need of replacement. Future years will see more manageable numbers as this technical debt is resolved.

### Help Desk Support

A help desk plays a crucial role in any organization, and its smooth operation is vital for maintaining productivity. It serves as a central point of contact for employees or users who encounter technical issues, questions, or need assistance with various IT-related matters.

The technical team has adjusted operating hours to align more closely with schools, offering support from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on school days.

## Future Planning and Improvements

Planning for the future is critical to minimizing technical debt and maintaining systems for the long term. Two key areas have been identified for future planning:

### Enhancing Security

Over the next year, the team will improve the security of computers and the network, establish robust onboarding/offboarding processes, implement additional monitoring and testing practices and educate staff on cybersecurity's importance.

For context, there have been approximately 30,000 attempts a day on the network by outside bad actors. The antivirus, installed on all computers, stops approximately 30 threats per month. Over the last month, the Microsoft email system has quarantined 25 ransomware and phishing emails.

### Standardizing on a Single Environment

The team currently supports both Microsoft and Google technologies for email and support systems. To reduce complexity and costs, the department is exploring the possibility of supporting a single system while retiring the other. This involves research, consultation with schools and departments, and a detailed deployment plan. This multi-year process will align the Division with industry standards.

### Empowering Staff Through Technology

Technology has been shown to increase the engagement and effectiveness of staff when deployed effectively. The Educational Assistant team has been using shared devices for many years, and through research and discussion with school staff, it was discovered that they could be far more effective if they had their own devices.





As their computing needs are straightforward and the department wanted to ensure that it kept the additional cost and support reasonable, it was decided to deploy an additional fleet of Chromebooks to this population.

A plan has been developed, and a budget approved to start the deployment in November. The team is very excited to see how this technology will improve the Educational Assistant team's effectiveness and engagement with the staff and students.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Technology Services' commitment to managing technical debt, maintaining equipment, and planning for the future ensures that the department continues to support the mission of schools effectively.

