



**Date:** March 20, 2024 **Agenda Item:** 8.3

**To:** Board of Trustees

**From:** Shawna Warren, Superintendent

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

**Governance Policy:** [Policy 225: Role of the Board](#)  
[Policy 700: Superintendent of Schools](#)

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

**Assurance Domain:** Local & Societal Context

**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**

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**Purpose:**  
For information.

**Background:**  
Working together with all departments and educators, Technology Services is committed to providing the needs of Sturgeon Public School Division, ultimately creating 21st century learning environments for enduring success. The use of technology within Sturgeon Public Schools is aligned in support of the Three Year Education Plan.

Administration is prepared to respond to questions at the March 20, 2024, Public Board meeting.

**Attachment(s):**

1. Technology Services Report Spring 2024



# Technology Services Report, Spring 2024

In the October 2023 report, the critical challenge of mitigating the accumulated technical debt was underscored, emphasizing the need for concerted efforts across the technical team and collaborative departments. This current report extends that narrative, highlighting ongoing efforts and significant advancements made towards addressing this issue.

Since the last report, the Technical team has successfully implemented Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA), encompassing all staff members. This initiative reflects a commitment to enhancing security measures to safeguard the digital infrastructure and reduce overall technical debt.

## Enterprise ID Standardization

Authentication plays a crucial role in maintaining security by serving as the primary defense, ensuring only authorized users access sensitive information. It verifies user identities, blocks unauthorized access, and is key to safeguarding against attacks. Additionally, it facilitates user accountability and activity monitoring within systems, critical for detecting and addressing security incidents.

The Division will transition away from the @edu.sturgeon.ab.ca ID, consolidating all staff and student accounts under the @sturgeon.ab.ca ID. This change will also apply to Google Suite product usage. Furthermore, the aim is to integrate Single Sign-On (SSO) technologies, linking all major systems, including PowerSchool SIS, to this unified ID and password framework.

Implementation planning is underway, focusing on technical execution and communication with staff. The transition is scheduled for the weekend of August 10, 2024, to minimize disruption during the staff's summer break.

## Standardized Collaboration Platform

Standardizing on a single collaboration platform, such as Google Workspace, provides several key advantages. Firstly, it ensures consistency within the Division, allowing everyone to work with the same set of tools and software. This consistency can significantly reduce confusion and increase overall productivity.

Standardization enhances interoperability, making it easier to integrate different software components and applications seamlessly. This simplifies the often complex process of ensuring that all tools work well together, saving valuable time and effort.





Security, compliance, and data integration are essential considerations. Standardization plays a vital role in ensuring security and compliance since it's easier to manage policies and updates when dealing with a single platform.

### **Email Transition**

The Division is transitioning from Microsoft Email to Google Workspace for all email and meeting management needs. Google Gmail will become the primary email client within the Division. Technical support for Outlook will continue, albeit on a limited basis, for users who choose to connect it with Google Email.

### **Document Storage Update**

SharePoint sites currently in use will be phased out, with all their content being migrated to Google Workspace. Additionally, all local storage solutions will be discontinued, and their contents will be transferred to Google Workspace to streamline the document storage approach, both for individual and shared resources.

### **Online Meetings and Instant Messaging**

For online meetings and instant messaging, support for both Google Meet and Microsoft Teams will continue. However, Google Meet will be the preferred and integrated tool within Google Workspace. It is anticipated that support for Microsoft Teams may eventually be phased out due to diminished usage as the consolidation of communication tools within the Google Workspace ecosystem progresses.

In conjunction with the Single ID implementation, the current plan is for the conversion to take place over the weekend of August 10/11.

## **Network Modernization**

Between 2021 and 2023, the Technical team undertook a significant initiative to enhance wireless network coverage across the Division, a strategic move aimed at addressing existing technology debt while simultaneously elevating the security infrastructure. The Technical team managed this expansive project, modernizing infrastructure in selected schools and reallocating some of the older devices to others, optimizing coverage and resource utilization.

Currently, the Division oversees the operation of over 500 WiFi access points distributed across various locations, with the majority having undergone modernization. However, 115 devices remain outdated and require upgrading to align with modern, secure, and efficient network standards. This discrepancy has necessitated a division of locations into specific zones for more effective device management. Due to compatibility issues between older and newer devices, some schools operate on a singular WiFi technology, rendering them outside the central management console and requiring manual oversight.





The WiFi modernization initiative aims to encompass Bon Accord, Gibbons, and Sturgeon Heights schools. Looking ahead, this initiative represents a crucial next step in tackling technical debt and enhancing the security posture. Discussions have already started to explore this requirement in greater detail.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this report outlines ongoing efforts to mitigate technical debt and strengthen cybersecurity infrastructure across the Division. By implementing Multi-Factor Authentication, launching a Single ID system, and migrating communication and document storage to Google Workspace, security, efficiency, and cohesion within the digital landscape are enhanced.

The planned network modernization, through WiFi upgrades in selected schools, underscores the commitment to proactively overcoming existing challenges and equipping for upcoming demands.

As these initiatives advance, the priority is to ensure minimal disruption while significantly improving the robustness and performance of the technological framework.

