

Maine School Administrative District #75 Community and Parental Involvement

“ . . . a description of how the applicant will use technology effectively to promote parental involvement and increase communication with parents, including a description of how parents will be informed of the technology used.”

Introduction. This document serves as a means for the District to evaluate how technology is, and can be, used to help foster community and parental involvement. For K-12 institutions, this involvement is a challenge much broader than technology. The District has made a strong, effective effort to involve the community in the planning for, as well as the deployment and utilization of, educational technology.

Goal. Technology will assist in bringing about a sense, in all community members, that the schools are theirs, that their programs and facilities are a shared community resource of value to all citizens, and their staff members are accessible and responsive members of the wider community. This document serves as an outline of the steps the District Technology Department is taking to involve and communicate technology planning with the community and parents of students in the school district.

1. Involving the community in the planning process.

- a. **Technology Advisory Committee.** This committee is made up from District representatives- Administration, Technology and Staff, members of the business community, parents and board members. The main function is to advise on technology decisions, process and direction of the district. The final decisions will still be made and the responsibility of the District Technology Director.
- b. **School Board Meetings.** All community members/parents are welcome and encouraged to attend these meetings. Agendas will be posted on the Districts Web Site, communicating when technology issues will be discussed. The District Web Site will be maintained by the District Webmaster.
- c. **Technology Meetings.** Technology meetings are currently held at Mt. Ararat Middle School for parents and students involved in the MLTI project. These meetings will be expanded to include other district projects.

2. Increasing communication with parents/community.

- a. **District information through web site.** The District web site will be maintained by the District Webmaster. Any calendars will be maintained with accurate dates and information that the community will have access to. Important dates will be highlighted consistently on the website and through newsletters. Individual school web sites may be maintained by various staff under the supervision of the district web master. Visit: <http://www.link75.org>
- b. **Electronic Newsletters.** Parents will have the option to subscribe to an electronic newsletter from their particular school. All newsletters will also be posted on the Districts web site as well, with active links, to and from the school website- managed by the District Web Master.
- c. **Technology Pages.** Community members will have access to the posted information contained in the quarterly newsletters, as well as other tech pages as deemed necessary by the Information Director.

- d. **ATM Room.** Community members have access to the state-sponsored ATM room for additional communication and learning opportunities. The classroom provides video conferencing and multi-media projection across the state ATM network. Management will be through the District Office and Merrymeeting Adult Education.
- e. **Teacher Maintained Web Information.** Web pages are available for all teachers to post basic information for parents and public. Dramatic examples exist of teachers using these opportunities, but their use is only beginning. Educators need to see electronic posting as a routine responsibility, no more intimidating than sending notes or flyers home to parents.
- f. **Teacher Web.** Schools will maintain accurate and up to date homework pages- on their individual websites, updated by specific teachers having access within the school. The school websites and all active links will be managed by the District Web Master.
- g. **Online Curriculum Web Site.** As partners, the District, parents and guardians can educate students to achieve at high levels. Our role is to communicate clearly to students and parents what students should be learning and to help them achieve by supporting their efforts at school and at home. As parents, you can take an active role in your children's learning by discussing their learning with them, setting high expectations, and communicating regularly with school. Visit:
http://www.link75.org/curriculum/CurriculumHomepage_files/Curriculumhomepage.htm

3. **Current Status**

- a. From the beginning of the technology planning process in the District, community members have been present on the committees.
- b. Every staff member maintains an email account to communicate with the community and parents as well as colleagues.
- c. Middle School teachers utilize online resource to communicate homework assignments with parents and students.
- d. Online and dynamic calendars provide detailed information regarding school activities and functions, food service lunch calendar.
- e. Community members were instrumental in envisioning, developing and writing the successful Community of Learners Network grant. This NSF funded NIE grant brought \$960K to the District and Brunswick to build, support and train educators and community in the use of a high-speed intranet and Internet connection.
- f. In order to make sure all the District schools were ready to take advantage of the Wide Area Network and Internet connectivity would deliver, community members were called on to help deploy LANs. Net Day activities were held in several schools, and community support came from both individuals and corporate sources. Since 1993, citizen volunteers have assisted in wiring the district's schools, and as a result of this, virtually every instructional space has a network connection.
- g. As technology has become a part of the way classrooms access resources, both locally and over the Internet, community involvement has brought volunteers into labs and classrooms to support both student and teacher use of technology.

- h. The District technology staff and classroom teachers are sought after presenters on all issues surrounding educational technology.
- i. Each of the District elementary schools, along with the Mt. Ararat Middle and High Schools maintains a Web site, which connects the entire school community of students, teachers, parents and the general community to each other for improved communication. There is a significant difference in the way buildings approach their Web site, reflecting the individual natures of each school community. There is also a district Web presence for the sharing of district wide information.