

DMEA Tempo

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Des Moines Schools Technology Plan: A Black Hole or a Shining Star?

By Paul Mann

Many of us have been anxiously waiting for an opportunity to move into the promising technological vision of the future that we all know is out there, just beyond our reach due to financial limitations. We know that the workplace has changed and that we can not afford to graduate students who are technologically illiterate. We have glimpsed the exciting possibilities of the Internet, E-mail and news groups. We know that each day that goes by, we are falling further behind our neighboring school districts that already have made the first great leaps into the technological future.

I know that many of you have been waiting for the district to develop a technology plan that significantly improves our ability to meet the learning needs of our students. The time is now at hand!

Since last fall, over 80 district educators, parents, students and community representatives have worked on four subcommittees to develop standards, Internet access, curriculum/evaluation parameters, and an overall technology plan and budget for our district. We are nearing the end of our work, and I would like to summarize our current thinking, seek your input, and ask for your support of the concepts that are guiding our work.

The State Technology Plan and Budget subcommittee that I co-chair has developed the following: Our task is to develop a 5 year plan that equitably distributes \$2.5 million of technology money annually in a timely fashion to meet the instructional needs of DMPS students and staff in ways that can be evaluated for success, are based on assessed needs, and that provide adequate technical support, staff development, support for curriculum adoptions, and ownership and flexibility for site-based decision making in buildings.

We hope to deliver a recommendation to the school board by April 1 that includes the following concepts:

By May 1, 1997 we will have allocated enough money to the buildings to allow the purchase and implementation of over 1000 teaching and learning stations, enough to equip over half of all elementary and secondary classrooms with a new \$3,000 teaching and learning station by January 1, 1998.

In the next two years, funds will allow for new teaching and learning stations for the remaining half of the elementary and secondary classrooms. Buildings could decide to use some of this money to establish a local area network (LAN) for their staff.

A \$3,000 teaching and learning station may include, as an example, a new computer, a modem, a TV monitor, and some software. Variations will be allowed to meet building/classroom needs.

Of the \$2.5 million available this year, we recommend that \$300,000 be used to complete the wide area network to the 40 elementary schools remaining to be networked. (All secondary schools are already connected to the WAN.)

There are a thousand details to be explained and worked out yet, but can you begin to see the "shining star" on your horizon? Can you feel the excitement?

We have a great opportunity to demonstrate to the community that we can get our technological act together and work cooperatively and competently to better meet the needs of staff and students. We dare not "blow this one", or DSM schools will become a technological "black hole" from which nothing can escape!

In April of 1997 elementary schools, which have greater unmet technology needs than secondary schools, will be allocated \$1.5 million on a per pupil basis. This

will allow within certain guidelines, the purchase of new technology for each building, which could include teaching and learning stations for about half of all elementary classrooms, library media centers, support for curriculum adoptions, any combination of the above or other innovations. Most of this technology should arrive in buildings before fall to allow summer training sessions.

In October of 1997, secondary schools will be allocated an equal amount with delivery to occur before January 1, 1998. About \$700,000 will be used for each of the next two years to purchase technical support, and to hire, train, equip, and support about ten new positions called instructional support personnel. These people will be carefully selected for their knowledge of curriculum, good communication and technological skills and their human relations abilities. They will be coaxed from the ranks of current employees, if possible, given training this spring, and each assigned to about 4 elementary schools to provide assistance, training, and "troubleshooting" services beginning this summer. In the following year, they will provide similar assistance to secondary schools.

What does this mean to you? Begin now to assess your own technology needs. You will need to help your building use site-based decision making to develop a "vision" which will guide your decisions about how to best meet diverse student and staff needs. "Who goes first" and who will need to wait for a year or two for a new teaching and learning station will need to be worked out cooperatively. Hopefully, that decision will be based partially on the needs of staff and partially on the willingness of staff to use the new computer system to restructure instruction to provide better student learning opportunities. Building staff will have to demonstrate willingness to provide adequate training through Phase III or other building funds.

CORRECTION

The February Faculty Rep meeting date was printed incorrectly in the first January TEMPO.

The correct date is February 13th!

Election News

by Arthur Long

A ballot containing the names of those who want to be State Delegates to the NEA Rep Assembly will appear in the February issue of the ISEA COMMUNIQUE.

Remember every DMEA and DMEA-R member can vote for Delegates At Large Categories 1 & 2!

The Ballot must be returned to ISEA with the address label from the COMMUNIQUE.

If you have any questions, call Arthur Long at 285-2465 or Carol Schmacker at 277-6271.

REMEMBER TO VOTE!



DMEA Awarded Urban Grant from NEA

At the National Council of Urban Education Associations Fall Conference, DMEA leaders Paul Mann, Kevan Mulder, and Kris Mesicek learned that the DMEA urban grant application, *Creating a Learning Organization to Support Quality Education*, had been approved by NEA. NEA President Bob Chase presented Paul a check for \$4,000.

The grant will focus on continuous improvement of DMEA in providing services to members, long-term organizational development, and increased effectiveness in interacting with the Des Moines Public Schools. Association members will have opportunities to acquire background information in the concepts and leadership skills put forth by Peter Senge, Stephen Covey, and W. Edward Deming. The goals and activities of the grant center on the five areas of the Learning Organization as defined by Peter Senge.

- Systems Thinking
- Shared Vision
- Mental Models
- Personal Mastery
- Team Learning

The first step in implementing the grant will be the creation of a Steering Committee and the development of a Leadership Institute. This is an exciting opportunity for our Association to assist members in their own professional growth and the development of DMEA as an organization. DMEA members who are interested in participating in these activities may contact Paul Mann for additional information.

DMEA NURSES MEETINGS

By Marilyn Reese

The January 30th meeting for the DMEA Department of Nurses is canceled!

From this date on, the DMEA Nurses will meet immediately following each regularly scheduled District School Nurses meeting.

The next scheduled meeting is February 13th at Samuelson in Room 114.



MEETING WITH LEGISLATORS

When Wednesday, February 5 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Where North High Cafeteria

Sponsor Jointly by the DMEA, PTA, AFSCME, School Administrators, DM School Board

Subjects

- At Risk and Special Ed funding
- Infrastructure needs and funding
- Tuition Tax Credits for Private Schools
- Others as time permits

Who Everyone - each building should bring a team

Why This is your chance to impact legislation that affects education.

