

**POWAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

**DATE:** July 15, 2015  
**TO:** **Members of the Board of Education**  
**FROM:** John Collins, Superintendent  
**SUBJECT:** **Information Technology (IT) Department Review**

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In November, 2014 I commissioned an external review of our District's Information Technology Department. I did this for several reasons, chief among them the need to ensure that our IT Department keeps pace with the exponential changes in technology and learning.

Technology-infused teaching and learning – where students are engaged in high levels of inquiry, critical thinking, and application of their learning to relevant, real world problems – is at the heart of helping our teachers meet the goal of creating personalized learning opportunities for all of our students.

An external review of this kind is commissioned with the following bedrock assumptions:

- ✓ The evaluator will be thorough and unbiased in his/her research and comprehensive in seeking a range of stakeholder input;
- ✓ The results of the research will be accurate, verifiable, and actionable;
- ✓ The recommended actions will be reviewed and vetted in an equally thorough and unbiased manner;
- ✓ Actions will be taken to improve areas that may be outlined in the report.

During December, 2014 and January, 2015, Bob Moore, of RJM Strategies, LCC, conducted interviews with approximately 100 stakeholders, including District administrators, IT staff, support staff, principals, and teachers. Mr. Moore also reviewed a large amount of documentation and held separate, extended meetings with Bob Gravina and Rich Newman.

Yesterday, Mr. Moore submitted his final report which contains the following recommendations:

**PUSD System**

**Finding #1 (Budget) - Recommendations:**

- Increase budget and provide adequate resources for IT training and Professional Development
- If a budget increase is not possible, limit the number and type of new technology purchases and initiatives.

**Finding #2 (Decision-Making Structure) - Recommendations:**

- Develop a clear vision for how technology can be used in instruction and learning
- Develop a map of technology experiences and skills every student should have
- Set district-wide performance standards and purchasing procedures for devices, peripherals, and software (including mobile apps)

- Design a process for taking into account industry data and research, as well as stakeholder input

**Finding #3 (Culture) - Recommendations:**

- Design a deliberate, systemic approach to looking critically at the IT Department's decisions, programs and initiatives.
- Look externally to identify programs and initiatives from which IT can learn

**Finding #4 (Leadership) – Recommendations:**

- IT CIO should be a cabinet-level position reporting directly to the Superintendent
- Have IT operations and education technology report to the Chief Information Officer (CIO)

**IT Department**

**Finding #1 (Leadership) - Recommendations:**

- District leadership needs to take a hard look at IT leadership, specifically the CTO, and the negative perceptions that exist, as well as why those perceptions came to be

**Finding #2 (Culture) - Recommendations:**

- PUSD needs to implement a stakeholder governance structure for IT. A technology committee that provides input and that is involved in decision-making regarding key initiatives would go a long way toward developing a process for collaboration
- Clear lines should be defined as to which decisions are to be made at the district-level and which are made at school sites
- IT should consider applying costs to certain efforts, such as custom application development

**Finding #3 (Organization and Staffing) - Recommendations:**

- Add IT staff, including LANS and one additional Helpdesk employee
- Identify and require IT industry certifications for all applicable IT positions
- Budget funds to ensure staff stay current with those certifications
- Design a training and development plan for all IT staff

**Finding #4 (Process & Practices) – Recommendations:**

- Incorporating the input of end-users, clearly define, communicate and apply processes for IT support and problem-solving
- Hold District administrators as well as IT staff accountable for following these processes
- Develop self-service capabilities for end-users
- Research alternatives to the Track-it helpdesk application

At the conclusion of his report, Mr. Moore noted "...the recommendations included in this report are actionable. Some could be implemented with relative ease and other(s) will require some significant system change."

The following are recommended changes currently in process of implementation:

- ✓ Robert Gravina will be on special assignment, reporting to Malliga Tholandi. Robert will be responsible for the implementation of the new MITI system from SDCOE. This project includes the preparation, start up, and implementation of PeopleSoft as the new software for all operations with SDCOE including: finance, payroll, purchasing, and personnel. This will include coordination of training for our staff in each of these

departments as well as staff at each of the school sites. This is an enormous undertaking that will require Robert's full time and attention for at least one year and probably more. As such, Robert will no longer have any responsibilities regarding the day to day operation of the IT department.

- ✓ Rich Newman, Director of Innovation, will be overseeing the IT department and engaging in a transition process to bring innovation and change to the department in identified areas. Rich will be a member of Extended Cabinet, reporting directly to the Superintendent, to ensure that IT decisions are integrated into the work of all departments. He will be coordinating the work of IT with Dawn Kale, the Director of Technology.
- ✓ Dawn Kale, will be working directly with Rich Newman and will have responsibility for supervising the day to day operations of the IT department. She has the technical background required to do this work and has already been doing so for the past few months. Dawn will also be doing the evaluation and transition work outlined in Mr. Moore's report. Dawn will also be playing a key role in the Design Thinking transition process and making recommendations for changes to the department as identified in that process.
- ✓ The report identifies the need for stakeholders "to develop a clear vision for how technology can be used in instruction and learning." As part of the Rethink process, a road map has been developed which ensures each site undertakes a clearly defined process to develop a precise, actionable vision for the implementation of any technology. This includes engaging stakeholders and working closely with District staff to support the implementation of technology. This process will be used going forward with all technology purchases.
- ✓ The report identifies the "need to develop a map of technology experiences and skills that every student should have." In the fall, Rich will be convening a group of stakeholders to evaluate the technology skills each student should develop by grade level and prepare a final draft for LSS approval.
- ✓ The report identifies the need "to implement a stakeholder governance structure for IT." In August, 2015 an IT Department Leadership and Advisory Team comprised of various stakeholders will be developed to ensure that a variety of input is provided on key IT decisions.
- ✓ The report identifies that "clear lines should be defined as to what decisions are to be made at the district and which are made at the local school." BSS has outlined that all site-based purchases must be vetted with the IT department and that specs and specific technology items will be purchased in collaboration with the IT department.
- ✓ The report identifies the need for "additional staff" to support technology implementation. A proposal to increase LAN support from 10 ½ month positions to 11 month positions has been presented to the Board of Education for approval. While this is a small step toward increasing staffing, I expect there will be additional recommendations for reorganizing and increasing the human resources necessary to ensure a strong support system for administrators, teachers, and students as technology continues to grow as an integral aspect of the teaching, learning, and business operations of PUSD.