

Meaningful Information Kindling Enlightenment's Message #8 – Technology

The recommendations of the MBUSD technology committee are going to the Board for discussion (not approval) on Wednesday, May 4th. I think you will all agree that the recommendations are bold, forward-thinking, and if implemented, could truly change teaching and learning in MBUSD. I'd like to write about some of the committee's ideas and get your feedback.

Committee members conducted a technology survey with staff – the following were clear results of the survey:

- Do whatever it takes to keep technology working and properly updated;
- Bring wireless to the schools and the classrooms;
- In the elementary school, make SMARTBoards a priority;
- Provide laptops and/or iPads for teachers that are fast and reliable;
- Provide iPads or tablets for students.

Technology's potential is only growing. One of my favorite videos out there is the YouTube video on Salman Khan at the TED Conference. It's a game changer, and it's something we can do. [I hope you check it out at this link.](#)

One of the recommendations of the committee is that every classroom should, at the very least, have a highly functional computer that no more than four years old, a reliable Internet connection, a SMARTBoard or LCD projector, and a document camera. The recommendation from the committee is to have this minimum standard in every classroom at the beginning of the 2011-12 school year.

Committee members have visited schools that use iPads or iPods in the classroom, as well as schools using a variety of digital curricula. There are some exciting ideas out there. Everyone who has visited one of these campuses comes back here knowing that this is a technology strategy that results in extraordinary student engagement.

Those of you who have iPads know what they can do. In technology circles, nothing is being discussed with more excitement and potential than iPads. People believe iPads are going to change how we teach and how students learn. It won't be long until all textbooks will be available on an iPad. If you look at our students, they are certainly growing up with handheld computer devices as an integral part of their lives. They are ready.

So what is the Technology Committee discussing?

- We *are* discussing a pilot program next year bringing iPads to a few classrooms in every school.
- We *are* discussing getting iPads in the hands of interested teachers as soon as possible.
- We *are* discussing the idea of providing professional development that will help us to know what iPads can do in the classroom.

- We are *not* discussing any kind of full implementation of any program without truly researching it and trying it in some of our classrooms. *If it is approved by the Board at a future meeting, it will only be a pilot.*

As I have visited classrooms and listened to our employees this year, technology has been a constant source of discussion, frustration and hope. There's so much that can be done, but there are so many obstacles. In these financially challenging times, it's difficult to talk about fixing something if it involves money. If it is the right thing to do for our students, I believe we can find a way. We are the #3 school district in the state, and *Forbes Magazine* just ranked us as the #6 school district in the nation! ([See link here!](#)) Wow. We should be leading the way in technology too.

You can find the Board agenda item on this matter [here](#). I would love your comments, feedback and suggestions on these proposals, and if you would like for me to come discuss these ideas with a few of you, please let me know.

For most of you, I know you will be involved heavily in the testing season that is now upon us. Thanks for all the work you've done to prepare our students, and thanks for making the best possible testing environment for them.

Thanks for all you do,

Mike

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