

Appendix B – Focus Group Participants and Summaries

West Cluster

Jillian Konsor,
Barksdale Elementary

Andrea Fox,
Beaty Early Childhood

Dennise Schuler,
Brinker Elementary

Matt Gomez,
Centennial Elementary

Suzanne Drotman,
Daffron Elementary

Sally Ray, Pam Rzyman,
Frankford Middle School

Kathy Yonts,
Gulledge Elementary

Anthony Peri,
Haggard Elementary

Julia Johnson,
Haun Elementary

Lynda Jennings,
Hightower Elementary

Theresa Hoffman,
Huffman Elementary

Alicia Robertson,
Jackson Elementary

Catherine Golden, Deborah Kilgore,
Jasper High School

Carla Vogel,
Mitchell Elementary

Jerry Grizzle, Tracy Ishman,
PWSH

Nancy Saari, Baxter Taylor,
Renner Middle School

Kathleen Rice, Cynthia Wilson,
Robinson Middle School

Michael Collier, Laura Veal,
Shepton High School

East Cluster

Darrell Cauldwell, Steve Seymour
Armstrong Middle School

Jennifer Zepeda,
Barron Early Childhood

Joelle Garcia,
Beverly Elementary

Keith Steele,
Bogges Elementary

Ryan Baumbardner, Katie Vermillion,
Bowman Middle School

Simone Griffin, Vicki Knox,
Carpenter Middle School

Ruth Tice,
Christie Elementary School

Gabe Fain, Sheri Storer,
Clark High School

Kristen Frankovich,
Dooley Elementary

Kelly Womack,
Forman Elementary

Elaine Copeland,
Harrington Elementary

James Duval,
Hedgcoxe Elementary

Misty Milburn, Elaine Templeton,
Hendrick Middle School

Peggy Billingsley,
Hickey Elementary

Karen Kuhlmann,
Meadows Elementary

Anglea Blankenship,
Memorial Elementary

Lisa Coolbaugh Smith,
Mendenhall Elementary

Linda Bryant,
Miller Elementary

Carolyn Sinor, Sharon Williams,
PESH

Missy Billman,
Razor Elementary

Traci Schilling,
Stinson Elementary

Susan Dobrow,
Thomas Elementary

Denise Kersteller, Dr. Curtis Ray,
Williams High School

Central Cluster

Marie Andrews,
Aldridge Elementary

Hani Hess,
Andrews Elementary

Joyce Ewaniak Paul,
Bethany Elementary

Chris Dunkle,
Carlisle Elementary

Erin Graham,
Davis Elementary

Colleen Lantor, Jennifer Wilson,
Haggard Middle School

Abbey Burns,
Hughston Elementary School

Stacy Tompkins,
Mathews Elementary

Tina Davenport,
Pearson Early Childhood

Scott Fenney, Tina Verri,
PSHS

Jenny Fudicker, Rondi Lawrence,
Rice Middle School

Marie Harroff,
Saigling Elementary School

Angie Kendrick, Terri Richards,
Schimelpfenig Middle School

Angela Montgomery,
Shepard Elementary School

Kathi Adams,
Sigler Elementary

Michele Kovsky,
Skaggs Elementary

Kevin Sowell, Hector Villanueva,
Special Programs

Audrey Futrell, Terri Silver,
Vines High School

Dany Fleming,
Weatherford Elementary

Suzanne Snyder,
Wells Elementary

Mary Long, Stephen Salle,
Wilson Middle School

Janet Anders,
Wyatt Elementary



Administrative Services

Dan Armstrong,
Technical Support Services

Peggy Blair,
Human Resources

Kary Cooper,
Human Resources

Vangie Cortez,
Multilingual Education

Bill Couzyne,
Maintenance

Janice Crane,
Human Resources

Dan Downs,
Warehouse

Kathy Dry,
Student Records

Rose Ann Dukes,
Transportation

Linda Flack,
Curriculum

Sam Foster,
Security

Kris Gentz,
Security

Bill Gilkinson,
Communications

Mary Gorden,
Communications

Carl Herrmann,
Special Academic Services

Nikki James,
Risk Management

Linda Keese,
Special Education

Priscilla Kimery,
Research and Assessment

Bettie LaCrone,
Records Management

Jean McDaniel,
Student Records

David Moss,
Construction

Alison Mungai,
FANS

Kathy Nichols,
Financial Services

Peggy Preston,
Office Manager-Vines High
School

Gary Robinson,
Professional Development

Margaret Smith,
Payroll

Pat Steele

Office Manager-Stinson
Elementary

Debbie Volkening,
Office Manager-Rice Middle
School

Joel Wasinger,
Purchasing

Ray Weaver,
Purchasing

Gary Wilson,
Student Services

Marlene Williams,
Curriculum

Ron Winkelman,
Career Education

Sherry Wise,
Counselor

Becky Wussow,
Human Resources

Parent/Community Groups

October Town Hall Meeting

Council of PTAs

Presidents' Council

Multi-Ethnic Committee

Key Communicators



Input from Focus Group Discussions

The focus groups discussed the following three questions and had the opportunity to share their single greatest enthusiasm for technology use within PISD as well as their single greatest concern.

1. What works well in your current classroom or office environment?
2. In terms of existing technology uses, which areas could be improved?
3. What would you like to accomplish in your classroom or office that's not currently possible?

What follows are summaries of those discussions as well as a representative sample of responses to enthusiasms and concerns. Complete notes of the focus groups discussions can be found at <http://k-12.pisd.edu/techplan/>.

Technology Focus Group-Question #1: "Building on Our Strengths: What's working well in our current work environment?"

The focus groups generally responded with comments that fall into these categories:

Equipment – the wide variety of technology devices available to enhance the learning environment. Participants were well aware of equipment that spanned grade level and content areas such as computers, digital cameras, video image display devices, presentation equipment and video broadcast equipment. Most importantly, the focus groups recognized that replacement and updating of technology resources must be a high priority.

Software – although no individual focus group participant could be aware of the over 480 instructional software applications that are provided for student use, they commented that the ability to provide software upgrades is important throughout the district. There were many comments on the use of presentation software in classrooms and its use by students and staff members as an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

Remote Access – participants recognized that having the ability to access network resources from sites outside of school has helped productivity and provided more complete use of network resources. Having access to files stored on network servers as well as our grade and attendance software were mentioned often.

Email – the continued emergence of email as a consistent source of communications throughout the district and the community (parents) was widely hailed as providing closer ties between our schools and homes.



Telephone system – having access in each classroom, the web-based phone directory, access to conferencing capabilities and the widespread use of voice mail were noted as communications improvements that contribute to efficient information sharing.

Information systems – all groups generally felt that our current systems allowed accurate reporting of information, but do so in a dated manner.

Electronic grading and attendance – consistent classroom tools that provide reporting capability for all teachers.

Digital video – the emergence of video streaming has allowed teachers and students to make more efficient use of video resources and has made integrating video into lessons more convenient.

Internet access – all groups noted that the ease and speed of Internet access from all student and staff computer systems is an important component of our overall district effectiveness. Our content management system assists in the monitoring of student appropriate use.

EdSoft – the recent upgrade in our student assessment and mastery tracking system was noted by all focus groups for ease of use and ability to retrieve student information more quickly.

Web-based applications – those applications that have been designed to operate via a browser application were all noted. These include our curriculum planners, library resources, risk management, vendor catalogs, course requests, ePay, employment applications, eClassroom Center and many more.

Network upgrade – the private fiber optic network and the increased capacity of Internet access along with the multitude of PISD web-based information resources for internal and external use were noted.

Distance learning – the video conferencing capabilities have proven to be effective in providing alternatives to low enrollment courses and collaborative projects.

eSchool – high school classes available online have provided needed options for students in taking courses for credit.

Training and support – the access to documentation via internal web sites, campus technology assistants, on-site availability of sessions and capable Help Desk operation were noted.



Technology Focus Group - Question #2: "Strengthening Our Technology Uses: What areas need improvement?"

The focus groups generally responded with comments that fall into these categories:

Equipment – participants advised that continued expansion of wireless networks and devices should be a priority to allow for the maximum in flexibility of use by students and staff. Group projection devices are essential to the operation of all classrooms and the desire to convert existing large screen TV/scan converter combinations to DLP projection systems was evident in all groups. The technical advantages of video image display devices (VIDs) make them preferable to standard overhead projectors. As more classroom activities and assessment tools move to an online format, wireless laptop mobile carts may ease the need to provide 1:1 computing for each student. Printing continues to be a challenge in the new IP environment as control over print jobs resides with the individual user – printer management applications, along with enhanced printing options, such as two-sided and color, are desired.

Software – the process of updating computers to newer operating systems invariably leads to a loss of legacy software applications and the need to replace those programs should be a priority. The approval process for new software adoption, although widely understood, needs to quicken the pace in which software becomes available for use in classrooms. Software applications that allow remote control of student computers by teachers was identified as a desire by most groups.

Email – the need to provide unified messaging between our existing email and voice mail systems was noted. Unsolicited email is a growing concern and automated methods of controlling spam are needed.

Telephone system – groups noted that name dialing is an efficient way to contact staff members and would like to see the process implemented on a campus-wide directory in addition to the current district-wide directory. Notification of waiting voice mail messages could be improved.

Information systems – our current applications need to be updated to a series of web-based applications that provide a more intuitive user interface and closer integration among all of our databases for real-time access. Forms for data entry should be available in online applications – systems should have automated notification capability.

Internet access – the current content management system is characterized as too restrictive for adult groups. Consideration should be given to providing more alternative filtering levels for different groups.

Electronic grading and attendance – improvements needed included more options in the seating chart component, automated notification to staff based on certain thresholds



and closer integration with other systems needing information contained in the current system.

Digital video – continue to provide greater resolution of stored video to allow for higher quality full screen viewing.

EdSoft – the initial implementation demonstrated the need for ongoing staff training and consideration of options for data input and integration with existing information systems such as grading and curriculum planners.

Security – student password management is an ongoing challenge. Alternative methods of secure logins need consideration. Multiple passwords are currently required for different system access – a single logon could be more efficient. Length of time needed for the login process is too long in some instances. Some participants noted the need for multiple, simultaneous logins.

Online applications – all groups noted a need for more online application development including training options, ordering, curriculum activities and more.

Training and support – continued and expanded campus support by campus technology assistants was noted, particularly when student enrollment and number of technology resources determines availability for assistance. More complete communication to staff members regarding technology initiatives and the impact on classrooms is desired. Ongoing awareness in the form of improved communications to staff will assist in making the best use of available technology resources.

After working on the plan in the discussion group I felt a sense of belonging to the organization and the technology team. However, after reading this document, I realized how much more involved people need to be in helping the tech team. This is one of the most impressive pieces of work assimilated in such a short time period. I really appreciate you keeping the focus groups in the loop and involving us in the process. – Focus Group participant



Technology Focus Group - Question #3 “Imagineering the ‘Impossible’: What would you like to accomplish in your classroom or office that's not currently possible, and how can technology help?”

The focus groups generally responded with comments that fall into these categories:

Equipment – focus group participants envisioned that each student would have their own wireless device for use at school and home. This device might take different forms, but would have all of the capability of existing laptops with the addition of handwriting and voice recognition. Special needs students would have additional, assistive devices to enable more complete access to resources. Classrooms would have interactive whiteboards that allowed connections from all devices and served as high quality projection systems. Universal remote controls would communicate among all classroom resources.

Software – participants generally agreed that software applications would progress to the degree that all activities would become more individualized and interactive. In particular, software would “auto-differentiate” based on student use and would self-translate into needed languages for students and parents. Speech synthesis would be built-in, programs would generate assessments for students and interface directly to information systems for reporting purposes.

Online applications – textbooks, tutorials, parent/student forms, electronic school stores, teacher access to all resources, collaborative virtual classrooms, all business systems would all be available for immediate access according to our focus group participants.

Virtual classrooms – participants noted that classrooms will become more collaborative through the use of electronic field trips, remote science experiments, mentoring possibilities and partnerships with higher education entities.

Communications systems – a universal in-box will handle all email and voice mail messages and notify the user when messages need attention. Communications will be available at all times via wireless devices. Students will participate in these new communications systems.

Information systems – future data systems will be “smart” to alert users to information available to them in their areas of need or interest. Systems will be fully interactive with each other and allow for a variety of input means and reporting structures.

Security – focus group participants feel that biometric and/or card swipe technologies will provide more secure user authentication.

Video conferencing – participants predict more use of video conferencing will emerge as classes experience the power of collaborative thinking. This increased use will foster the creation of lesson libraries to be used by students as tutorials and class make-up



when absent. Finally, the current technology will evolve into 3-D or holographic video conferencing.

Training and support – will occur “just-in-time” at the work location and also be available remotely and in video format.

Access – all students and staff will be able to access necessary district resources remotely. Students will have the use of computing devices at all times.

I see a network where a parents, students, and teachers can access to find out what is going on in the school district, find out what was taught in the classroom for that day and what homework if any has been assigned, parental access to a student's grades and behavior comments about how the child is behaving in class, student access to online encyclopedias, science, math and other content area books, online access to worksheets and any material students are responsible for and examples of class discussions. – teacher survey comment



Technology Focus Group: Enthusiasms and Concerns “Considering the current and future uses of technology in PISD to support instruction, my single greatest enthusiasm is...”

- District support of the most advanced technology sources available.
- Benefits are offered to all students and opportunities are being sought to continually improve.
- That technology will tie us together globally and equalize access to the global community.
- It is getting more user-friendly with each new software/hardware generation.
- My greatest enthusiasm is that there is so much technology available to students and teachers to explore our world.
- Visionaries willing to think out of the box and work toward providing the resources necessary to personalizing learning.
- Two-way interactive communication with our parents, students, citizens.
- To participate in the actual implementation of future technology.
- Technology helping to individualize teaching/reinforcing for every student.
- My greatest enthusiasm is the possibilities that are possible and PISD’s commitment to achieving the dreams!
- Technology can make instruction more current, more vital, and more relevant to the student.
- Using all of the available technology to improve & individualize education.
- Interactive modes of learning.
- Technology allows a student (children & adults) to move as rapidly or slowly as needed, to read, see, or hear information depending upon personal style, to create, and to have access to the world.
- Technology is exciting! Preparing these kids to use the same types of technology they’ll use in the future is something that will be invaluable to them. I also think it will help us reach many of these kids who need interactive modes of learning.
- Increased and enriched communication between teachers, students and parents.



Technology Focus Group: Enthusiasms and Concerns “My single greatest concern for the future use of technology in PISD is...”

- My single greatest concern is that no ethics are taught in relation to computer Internet search: plagiarism, copying ethics.
- Able to keep up customer service if technology does not keep up with demands.
- Time for staff to use technology effectively and to have training in/on technology.
- Space - where are we supposed to put all this stuff?
- My greatest concern is that as teachers we are not aware of all that is available to us.
- Communication and working together as one team.
- How will security/privacy of user be addressed.
- Time and commitment by teachers to help them more adequately use current technology and emerging technology with ease and comfort.
- To find the time to utilize the resources that are available.
- My single greatest concern is that we continue to develop technology and it's uses throughout all grade levels.
- Lack of funding restricts our creativity.
- Is the training going to keep up with technology? It is a constant upgrade, which means constant learning.
- Technology advances occur so quickly it is difficult financially to keep up.
- What concerns me the most about is the access to acquire training for all the technologies our district currently possesses. We need more training than what is occurring.
- Sometimes, technology can limit personal interaction - can dehumanize, communication. I think there's a delicate balance that must be maintained between being leaders in the integration of technology and continuing to make education a human, face-to-face process.
- That there will be too much technology that does not get used or it not used to its potential.
- My major concern is that there are teachers that are unwilling to move forward and use different forms of technology in their rooms.

