



Excellence in Education

MEMORANDUM

Date: 14 June 2011

To: Board of Trustees

From: Tim Monds, Superintendent

Originator: Emilie Keane, Associate Superintendent

Resource: Nicole Lakusta, Education Technology Facilitator

Subject: **Supporting Leaders in Integrating Technology (SLITech)**

Recommendation:

That the Board of Trustees receives as information the Year Two Report for the Enhancing Educational Technology Leadership Capacity grant (SLITech Project) for Parkland School Division as presented at the Regular Meeting of 14 June 2011.

Background:

The SLITech Project is a two-year Alberta Education grant focused on building the technology leadership capacity of divisional and school-based leaders for the purpose of enhancing the integration of technology in the teaching/learning processes.

Administration would be pleased to respond to questions.

Emilie Keane

EK:jlf



Supporting Leaders in Integrating Technology
PARKLAND SCHOOL DIVISION No. 70
Progress Report

Presented to Board of Trustees June 14, 2011
By Nicole Lakusta, Educational Technology Facilitator
Resource Persons: Parkland School Division Lead Team,
Learning Services Department

REPORTING PERIOD: September 2010 – June 2011

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Parkland School Division senior executives and school-based administrators have key roles in ensuring effective and quality-filled educational programming and services to our students. Responsibility also lies with them in providing capacity building professional development for staff. Therefore, the SLItech – Supporting Leaders in Integrating Technology - Project concentrated on two main goals:

- 1) All administrators and lead teachers will feel supported, be confident and be effective in leading technology integration at their sites.
- 2) The effective and appropriate integration of technology will support staff and student learning.

The Year 2 SLItech Team of 72 participants continued to develop leadership capacity while increasingly using the *insidePSD* portal, web 2.0 tools, software and hardware tools to share, discuss and organize information such as integration strategies, resources, best practices and divisional learning. Team members were also expected to combine their technology integration experiences and leadership skills to support their entire staff in enhancing technology integration.

This report summarizes how PSD SLItech Team members have developed an effective technology integration vision, and promoted and supported learning with technology at their school sites.

IMPACT OF THE SLItech PROJECT

Over the course of the two years of this project, nine strategies were established through the workshops, discussions, reflections, sessions and meetings that SLItech Team members participated in.

The following information highlights how each of the nine strategies supports PSD's SLItech Team in their quest to become more comfortable, confident and effective in integrating technology at their school sites.

- 1) **ACTION RESEARCH** – The ability to investigate the impact of technology use in student/teacher learning is easier; therefore planning relevant PD is easier. Use of web 2.0 for real-time collaboration allows development of collegial networks.
- 2) **IMMERSION** - Barriers of time and location are being conquered by using technology. Use of videoconferencing, Google Talk web chat, email, *insidePSD* portal, Skype, Bridgit provides access to colleagues, mentors and experts.
- 3) **INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING** - Administrative guidance and support for administrator, student and teacher use of *technology for learning* is important.
- 4) **MENTORING** - Observation and discussion with other administrators cultivates growth and understanding of the role that technology plays in 21st century skill development.
- 5) **MODELING** - To be effective leaders for the 21st century, administrators must ensure that instructional needs, the expertise of teachers, and the ultimate needs of students are considered. Administrators also model use of technology to improve teacher learning in the same way they expect teachers and students to do so.



- 6) **NETWORKING** - Powerful support for administrators comes from a combination of different technologies and personnel. The use of email, discussion boards, forums, listservs, twitter, blogs, wikis, the portal (*insidePSD*) and an Educational Technology Facilitator offer convenience and almost instantaneous feedback.
- 7) **PEER COACHING** - Journaling, blogging, observation and discussion of specific practices allow administrators to reflect, change and renew their thoughts and demonstrations of technology integration.
- 8) **REFLECTIVE PRACTICE** - Reflective practice using technology frees up time to think about what needs to be thought about. Time is needed to spend on the thoughts, insights and action plans all stored electronically in the form of a blog, a discussion form on the portal, a wiki, a graphic organizer, a mind map, an e-portfolio, in Microsoft OneNote or Word.
- 9) **WORKSHOPS** - Basic skill development for technology integration has been offered in workshops. As well, an emphasis on best learning practices (such as TPACK and H.E.A.T.) have a more lasting effective on the development of technological knowledge.

UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS

Year 2 has presented itself with a number of unforgettable moments and successes for the SLItech Team members. This section is dedicated to the collaborative and individual accomplishments that occurred this year.



- Working with the local business community, parents, students, teachers, support staff, administrators, senior executives during the SLItech visioning process
- Seeing, on a weekly basis, 225+ views (hits) on the [SLItech blog](#) linked from the ONLINE newsletter
- Watching administrators engage their staff, students and parents with digital tools for feedback, discussion and reflection
- Hearing from other Learning Services facilitators that SLItech discussions, tools and Book Studies are being shared during other PD opportunities with various participants
- The importance of taking time to share the great things happening at school sites
- Through modeling and support, administrators have grown in their comfort level with using digital tools professionally and personally. This has allowed staff to further develop their capacity.
- Reading various PSD blogs with administrators and teachers and documenting their learning, their students' progress and growth, has increased staff engagement
- Having outside agencies, organizations and other educational personnel comment on the technology integration strategies being utilized in the division
- Continuing to grow the list and access of resources found on *insidePSD*, at [psdtechpd](#) and at school sites
- Using social networks to gain insight provincially, nationally and globally
- Being able to provide PSD staff, students with a variety of options to demonstrate their learning digitally
- Having an Educational Technology Facilitator working side by side, modeling, and supporting was key to further use of technology with administrators and lead teachers at school sites. This also reduced stress levels for staff
- Connecting the SLItech work with curriculum, AISI, differentiation and citizenship has been important to show that these pieces interconnect and are not extra nor separate from each other
- Real-time learning now means face to face, webinars, videoconferencing, Skypeing, conference calling, voice recording
- Students voices are being heard via Student Advisory, school surveys and Speakup 2010

	Online student reflections, audio aids during summative work and using new digital tools.		School-based and Tri-School professional learning communities have encourage and supported technological innovation.
	Staff collaboration and sharing through blogging. Technology at the point of instruction and learning.		Individualized programming for each student.
	Engaging parents and students in using technology.		Telling the Spruce Grove story digitally and sharing learning experiences via blogging.
	Student-created eportfolios and staff reflection and sharing through blogging.		Discussion, collaboration on how to implement technology strategies and time to use it in a guided setting is key.
	Creating professional technology learning communities which provide mentorship, modeling and support.		Use of <i>insideKeepHills</i> as a place for staff to collaborate, read the admin blog and review events/resources increases the infusion of technology.
	Professional Learning Communities assist in sharing, reflecting and demonstrating effective uses of available technology.		Communication of the learning through online blogs, and newsletters. Document cameras in all classrooms.
	Setting direction and providing feedback through collaboration and active representation.		Being purposeful in using the technology and building capacity.
	Increase in student engagement and in deeper thinking through use of technology.		Linking the Flexibility Project with interactive and authentic technology experiences. Opening of Wi-Fi allows students to access information anytime, anywhere in the building.
	Engaging staff, students and parents via social networks, collaboration and interactive technologies		Giving students a variety of ways to communicate what they know.
	Staff have increased confidence and knowledge in meeting student needs and improving communication with digital resources.		Networking with others to share thoughts, best practices and tools to engage staff and student learning with technology.

CHALLENGES

As SLItech Team members work towards implementing effective technology integration practices, they are faced with the following issues:

- Balancing the needs and wants of technology in a school building is extremely difficult
- Thinking about leading and teaching in a different manner (guiding rather than being an expert) is a paradigm shift that takes dedicated time, professional development, effort and vision
- Creating a safe but risk-taking environment is a delicate balance that administrators take on a daily basis in the digital world
- The smaller the school, the less time for administrators and teachers to collaborate and to find money for technology
- Keeping abreast of all the digital resources that can be used in an educational manner
- Implementing emerging, adaptive and assistive technology resources

SUSTAINABILITY

This initiative has focused on learning and building leadership capacity. As our capacity across the School Division increased, so did our ability to sustain the learning into the future. Our SLItech Team members have become more knowledgeable and confident in leading technology integration activities at their sites and are better positioned to build staff capacity amongst more staff in their schools.

As the *insidePSD* portal is implemented, it is providing an increasingly important and accessible environment where administrators and teachers are collaborating and sharing information, strategies and best practices to promote continued integration of technology into the learning environment.

The long-term plan is that *insidePSD* will be the primary avenue for administrators and staff, as well as students and parents, to access, share and collaborate. The portal will provide 'one stop shopping' for staff in many areas of our educational system including technology integration and resources.

We see that advances in technology will continue to impact the delivery of education and as a result we see the need for an Educational Technology facilitator to become a key member of the Learning Services team within our Division. The work will be to continue to support staff in the appropriate use and integration of new technologies.

FINAL THOUGHTS

This second year of SLItech – Supporting Leaders in Integrating Technology – in PSD has been filled with showcasing continual improvement, leadership and innovation regarding effective technology support and facilitation by leaders.

PSD's challenge is to integrate learning into the digital-age arena where students, administrators, teachers, parents and communities are active, engaged and motivated to connect with each other daily.



PARKLAND SCHOOL DIVISION

is a responsive learning culture that empowers innovative spirit, engages self-directed learners and develops ethical global citizens.