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Critique of KWCPS's Educational Technology Plan

King William County Public Schools spent the 2010-2011 school year updated and

revising their current Educational Technology Plan. As required by the Virginia Department of

Education, King William County must have a plan that helps the "school division identify

resources and strategies to promote the most effective uses of technology to enhance instruction

and learning" ("Technology in education," 2011). King Williams Ed. Tech plan will be current

for six school years, starting in 2011 and ending in 2016. King William's current plan is divided

into thirteen sections, these include: an executive summary, division goals, a needs assessment,

six county goals and four appendixes. The remainder of this critique will focus on these thirteen

sections, their strengths and weaknesses and the overall development of the plan.

Section 1: Executive Summary and Division Goals

King William's plan states that, "We must prepare our students for a world in which

technology is not something that they "do" but an essential part of how they think." As a

division they have decided upon twenty "major" technology goals for the next five years. These

range in level of difficulty and varying costs. Some of these goals are as simple as updating

certain hardware pieces, testing online for state assessments and constantly evaluation our

technologies and their benefit on student achievement. Other require much more time, effort and

monies such as providing appropriate professional development and upgrading to a district wide

wireless network.

Section 2: Technology Advisory Committee

This plan was not developed alone but assembled by various employees of KWCPS. Members of the Technology Advisory Committee represent all areas, including division Leadership, IT staff, curriculum specialists, teachers, parents, and community members. This committee met bi-monthly with task and goals outlined for each meeting. This helped keep the committee on task and help them complete this plan in time for approval by the board.

Section 3: Technology Needs Assessment

King William's plan does an excellent job explaining their basis and outcomes based on a needs assessment. Teachers were surveyed hoping to create a snapshot of the current technologies being used and establish benchmarks for the future. 82% of the teachers completely this survey allowing for large quantities of feedback. It was determined that teachers were comfortable with computer usage but that professional development would help them see the potential these tools have.

Section 4-9: Action Plan/Goals 1-6

After a needs assessment helped determine areas of weakness as well as areas of strength the committees' next step was identify and act upon growth opportunities. King William decided upon six obtainable goals for the next six years. These include:

- Goal 1: Provide a safe, flexible, and effective learning environment for all students.

- Goal 2: Engage students in meaningful curricular content through the purposeful and effective use of technology.

- Goal 3: Afford students with opportunities to apply technology effectively to gain knowledge, develop skills, and create and distribute artifacts that reflect their understandings.

- Goal 4: Provide students with access to authentic and appropriate tools to gain knowledge, develop skills, extend capabilities, and create and disseminate artifacts that demonstrate their understandings.

- Goal 5: Use technology to support a culture of data-driven decision making that relies upon data to evaluate and improve teaching and learning.

- Goal 6: Improve community support and rapport through technology.

Each goal was followed up with numerous objectives that also had a strategy and evaluation to help successfully achieve this goal. Each goal was also measureable and obtainable with specific strategies to ensure success.

Section 10-13: Appendixes 1-4

The four appendixes found within the plan include the Initiatives Budget, the Division AUP, the Internet Safety Program and the Technology Survey administered to all county teachers. These appendixes all help to better understand the goals and objectives found within the plan.

Strengths found within the plan

I will admit I am very impressed with the plan set forth by King William County Public Schools. I was fortunate to find many strengths within the plan. The first strength is that each goal is clearly stated and measureable. We are all guilty of dreaming big and setting goals that simply can't be reached. This plan sets forth obtainable goals. In addition to these goals there are also reasoning and rationales for how these goals will be reached. It helps decrease the chances for errors and oversights.

A second strength would be the attached appendixes. It is much easier to understand what you are reading when you can see first hand what is being described. Lastly, the plan is

organized in such a way that is flows in a sequence. This helps the reader and committee members sort through the plan with little to no difficulty.

Weaknesses found within the plan

In addition to these great strengths the plan also has a few weaknesses. One weakness would be the lack of a timeline. As mentioned each goal is clearly stated, and the plan is current for the next six years, however there is no specific timeline as to when these goals will be implemented. Obviously before the end of six years but specific dates would help keep the committee on track and held accountable.

The plan also spoke of professional development and the survey asked for specific topics but no additional details were mentioned regarding PD. Lastly, some of the goals seemed mixed up-the plan could benefit from being organized by each goal as well as each school within our small county.

Checklist: Are the following found within KWCPS Educational Technology Plan?

Are the objectives:	Yes	No	Rationale
Specific	X		Each goal and objective are clearly found within the plan. Each objective also correlates with a specific goal making the connection clearly visible.
Measureable	X		Each objective also has a clear rational for achievement. This helps the objectives to remain measureable.
Achievable	X	X	All objectives can easily be achieved if funds and effort remain high. Some objectives will remain on the fence until funds are available.
Realistic/Reasonable	X		For the most part the goals seem realistic. However our technology department isn't overflowing with staff and therefore some objectives will take extra hands and forces.
Timebound		X	This is the area that appears lacking. No specific timeframes are given. This would certainly help with accountablility.

Resources

(2011). *King William County Public Schools Technology Plan 2011-2016.* Retrieved from King
    William County Public Schools website: www.kwcps.k12.va.us

Technology in education. (2011). Retrieved from:
    http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/technology/edtech_plan/index.shtml