Proposed Annual Technology Expenditures:

- 30% = Professional/staff development
- 28% = Technical support
- 22% = Hardware (new equipment or upgrades)
- 8% = Software (new or updated, licenses)
- 7% = Infrastructure
- 5% = Maintenance/replacement costs

Professional/Staff Development

The U.S. Department of Education has recommended that school districts set aside 30 percent of their technology budgets for staff training and development, (Taking TCO, n.d., Professional development section, para. 2). “When teachers are aware of the types of technology and applications available we can begin to show them how to integrate technology into the curriculum, to help them teach what they are teaching now, only more efficiently and effectively.” (See, 1992, Staff development section, para. 3)

Technical Support

In recognizing the importance of a full time technical support staff member, but realizing the high costs of hiring someone full time, a proposal of a part-time tech. support staff member will help alleviate the responsibilities of teaching staff to take on the additional work load, while providing a great benefit of professional skills on a frequent basis (such as the ability to troubleshoot networked computers). According to existing research, having 1 full-time support staff member is considerably more than what is typically provided for the number of computers in the building at SERS (Taking TCO, n.d., Support section, para. 15), therefore, to have a part-time tech. is reasonable and cost-effective for a small rural school.

Hardware & Software

“In a 1995 school technology guide, the Massachusetts Software Council pointed out that many businesses match every dollar they spend on computer hardware or software with another dollar for training” (Taking TCO, n.d., Professional development section, para. 3). Business models are rarely implemented in public schools due to costs; however, to implement this philosophy is highly supported by research as worthwhile.

“In a RAND Corp. study of eight pioneering high-tech schools, software costs ranged from 4 to 10 percent of their technology budgets, and averaged about 8 percent across the schools.” (Taking TCO, n.d., Software section, para. 1)

Infrastructure

Supporting research suggests ongoing connectivity costs average 7% of the overall tech. budget (Taking TCO, n.d., Connectivity section, para. 2). Additionally, remote area schools qualify for E-rate discounts, helping to pay for telecommunication services. Thus the overall infrastructure costs are relatively low in comparison to other expenditures.

Maintenance/Replacement Costs

In establishing a substantial technical support budget, the needs for many repairs and replacements should be small. Additionally, with new equipment accounted for in the Hardware portion of the budget, new purchases each year will replace older or outdated equipment on a regular basis.

Windfall Budget Proposal for SERS

Proposed $25,000 Windfall expenditures:

- 57% = 15 new iBook G4 wireless computers
- 36% = teachers’ technology budget
- 3% = 1 new wireless hp printer & 1 scanner
- 2% = wireless airport and printer server
- 2% = computer cart & misc.
While SERS’ existing computer lab is not ideal, as research supports each classroom and student having direct and immediate access to individual computers (something not always obtainable with an external lab shared by several classes), the Windfall money is not adequate to provide replacement computers (including teachers’) and up-to-date software package purchases for each classroom, therefore I recommend SERS maintain the present computer lab, improving it by adding the existing teachers’ older iMacs to the lab (as there is plenty of room), thus increasing the older iMac numbers to 21. This way, each student in a class has individual access to his/her own computer for traditional computing purposes (typing & word-processing skills, basic internet access).

I propose a significant portion of the Windfall money be spent on iBook G4 computers. Each teacher will receive a new iBook (9 iBooks total), and 6 iBooks will be contained on a cart for use by all classrooms, using a check-out system. The new iBooks can support current software and new hardware (digital cameras, digital video editing, etc.) and will be shared among the school via a portable cart. The iBooks will be networked together and access a wireless network printer and scanner (see budget items), thus alleviating most wiring issues/problems.

Teachers require new computers (iBooks), in order to support innovative technologies they choose to purchase with their allotted money. This way, when the portable iBook computer lab is being used in a particular classroom (or elsewhere for that matter), the teacher’s iBook can also network with the student iBooks or act as yet another computer in addition to the existing 6 iBooks on the cart. Also, the portability of the iBooks is greatly appreciated by teachers who wish to take their workload with them (home, travel, etc.). While the traveling iBook computer lab does not provide every student in a class with access to his/her individual computer, it does provide access to innovative technology and supports project-based learning.

Each teacher receives $1000 to spend as he/she wishes, provided it will increase technology integration in his/her classroom and supports the school’s and district’s vision of learning. “A vision of learning is critical to the technology planning process. It should be the primary driver of all decisions concerning which technology is purchased and how it will be used.” (North Central, n.d., What is your vision section, para. 1)

The substantial amount of money each teacher will receive for his/her classroom will be adequate to purchase supporting hardware (such as digital still/video cameras, PDA probes), software, etc., of choice. Teachers may choose to combine their monies to purchase larger priced items to then share among classrooms, such as video projectors, a classroom computer & printer, etc.

All teacher expenditures will require approval by SERS tech plan committee (to ensure the monies are being spent on technology-related materials). Any monies not spent by a teacher will be available for spending proposals by any teacher on staff after the initial proposal deadline. The deadline is January 1st, 2005. The left-over money proposal(s) will require majority staff approval in addition to SERS tech plan committee approval.

A BRIEF written proposal is required from each teacher by January 1, 2005 to obtain approval for their individual Windfall money, which includes the following:

1) Item(s) cost sheet to include shipping, handling, etc. & total spending
2) State Technology Standard(s) supported by the technologies
3) How the purchase item(s) will support/enhance learning & teaching in his/her classroom

Because an elementary school has such a variety of learning ages, purchasing specialized school-wide software would not benefit all students or all teachers. Therefore, each teacher can utilize his/her money as it best fits his/her teaching styles, subject matter, and student age. Each teacher will implement his/her technology and thus increase technology integration in SERS, because he/she has personal “buy-in.”

This Windfall budget proposal will result in an increase in technology integration at SERS, supporting the learning of its students. Likewise, the recommendations made here for the revised technology plan will provide continued and improved support for technology integration.
References


