Atlantis Charter School

Technology Plan
2013-2017

Background

Atlantis Charter School, one of the longest-standing charter schools in Massachusetts, is currently in its 18th year of operation. The school serves 760 students in Kindergarten through eighth grade.

By taking a holistic approach to working with children and families (embodied best by the establishment of the school's Family Learning Center), Atlantis seeks to alleviate the social, emotional, and economic barriers to academic success that plague so many local children. A strong academic foundation built in the school's early grades leads to acceleration and enrichment opportunities as children progress through the school. As they graduate from Atlantis, our students are not only on track for further academic success, but also help form a pool of local citizens prepared for a 21st century economy.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Atlantis Charter School is to provide an education second to none yielding academic excellence and life-long learning skills.

Benchmark 1: Technology Vision and Implementation Strategy

As a charter school, the vision for technology usage is one of integration. At ACS, technology is viewed and used as a tool to make the learning environment more effective for the entire school community – teachers, students, and the greater ACS community. The goal for the use of technology in the classroom by teachers and students is to enhance the students' learning experience, to aid in the educational process and to augment the students' knowledge base. It is not to be a separate and distinct subject that does not connect to other areas of the curriculum; rather it is a means to further access and demonstrate teaching and learning. In circumstances where technology can be used to support continued learning outside of the school environment and generally strengthen the school, technology will be further leveraged.

A. Technology Goals and Implementation Strategies

1. Technology Goals and Strategies for Teachers

ACS teachers will know about and be able to teach their students about the technologies needed to succeed in our society. Staff will use information technology and other technology resources to support and/or improve instruction as well as to help the school run more effectively as a whole. Teachers will use technology as a tool to make knowledge more accessible, the learning environment fuller, and communications more effective. Strategies to ensure teachers are prepared to use and teach about the use of technology include the following:

- Provide staff with a technology rich environment that is appropriate to their students' grade level so as to promote skill development and practice with technology.

- Provide professional development to staff related to basic technological literacy, productivity and communication software, student data analysis, student applications, etc.
- Teach staff about ethical and responsible use of technology.
- Establish clear policies for technology use, especially as it relates to social media. Ensure that policies meet the most recent legal, regulatory, and best practice guidance
- Facilitate equitable access to technology resources for all students.

2. Technology Goals and Strategies for Students

ACS students will apply technology skills to conduct research, communicate, solve problems, and make decisions as appropriate for their grade level. ACS students will learn about and use a variety of technologies including computers, tablet devices, educational as well as productivity software, and various multimedia devices to support their acquisition and demonstration of learning. Strategies to ensure students learn and apply technology include the following:

- Ensure students have signed; understand and pledge to follow the school's Acceptable Use Policy for technology.
- Provide students with keyboard training software and the resources and time to practice with it.
- Teach about internet websites; their validity and their use as part of the research process.
- Teach about social media behavior and cyber bullying.
- Provide opportunities for students to use technology as a means of accessing knowledge and presenting learning.
- Teach and require practice of productivity software programs.
- Teach students how to use data and technology in decision-making and problem solving.

3. Greater ACS Community

Technology will be used to communicate with parents and the greater ACS community so they can better understand and support the school, their children and the classroom learning environment.

- Digital presentations will be used to communicate with prospective parents, legislators and other community members.
- ACS's website will provide critical information about the school, including enrollment and school activities, and will be a resource for parents and other ACS community members.
- ACS's website will provide parent access to student course and grade information.
- Email will be used to communicate with parents and the community.

- ACS's website will also be used to advertise job openings to the larger community.

B. Technology Needs Assessment

Current Resources & Future Needs

Students and staff currently have reliable access to desktop computers in the classroom and in computer labs at both school locations. Both schools are equipped with broadband internet access and network and guest Wi-Fi capabilities. Instructional and multimedia technologies (including SMART boards, projectors, and laptops) are available on a more limited basis and according to need.

Moving forward, the purchase and implementation of new technology cannot be considered a success, unless the teachers are able to feel comfortable and empowered with the tools. Second, the infrastructure must be in place that provides for adequate access to technology. To have technology for technology's sake, without adequate ability to use it appropriately and fully and without adequate resources to support the technology does not make sense. Network and server upgrades must be a focus on a yearly basis.

Future investments will include:

- Training resources for ACS staff and teachers
- Expanded rollout of successful pilot technologies
- Phased upgrades to network and server devices
- Limited rollout of tablet-based devices
- Transition from individual printers to grade level network printers
- Implement cloud based applications

C. Budget

The Technology Manager will solicit input for the technology budget in January of each year which will be included in ACS's total budget.

D. Evaluation

The successful use and implementation of technology for the school at large is overseen by the Technology Manager who gives input to the Executive Director. Through the monitoring of the progress made on student achievement goals outlined in ACS's Accountability Plan, the impact of technology use as it relates to data driven instruction can be ascertained. The belief is that improved student achievement occurs because ACS has quality data, coupled with a strong data culture and the capacity to ensure systemic data use.

For students, an annual, informal assessment by the classroom teacher will yield informal information about the use of technology. Further, the use of technology as students demonstrate their learning will serve to verify its understanding and application.

Benchmark 2: Technology Integration and Literacy

Technology integration, outside of teaching time, as defined as "the daily use of technology in some of the following areas: research, lesson planning, organization, administrative tasks, communications and collaboration" shall be identified to be in existence when at least 90% of teachers use technology every day. Technology integrations for teaching and learning, as defined as "the use of technology appropriately with students every day to improve student learning of the curriculum by at least 90% of teachers in some of the following activities: research, multimedia, simulations, data analysis, communications and collaboration.

Technology literacy is defined by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education exists when:

- 90% of eighth grade students show proficiency in the Massachusetts recommended Technology Literacy Standards and Expectations.
- 100% of teachers are working to meet the proficiency level in technology and 90% of teachers have mastered 90% of the skills in the Massachusetts Technology Self-Assessment Tool (TSAT)
- The school has district level technology director/coordinator
- The district will employ at least a .5 FTE instructional technology specialist to coach and model
- The school has staff specifically dedicated to data management and assessment.

At ACS, technological integration and literacy is further evidenced when:

- Our teachers share information about technology use for progress monitoring and assessment with their colleagues at their weekly collaborative meetings, and thus use it as a means to improve instruction; refer to formative assessment data in creating their weekly lesson plans; use the internet to research and leverage best practices posted by other teachers; use technology as a means of effective and efficient communication and for administrative responsibilities (attendance, family communications, etc.)
- All students use technology to improve, to access and/or to demonstrate student learning of the curriculum. Activities include some of the following: research, multimedia, simulations, data interpretation, communications, and collaboration.
- Staff members routinely use the software systems in place to manage student information (Special education, attendance, document sharing, e-newsletters, etc.).

Benchmark 3: Technology Professional Development

- Each year, every teacher will have participated in some form of technology professional development (coaching, modeling, mentoring, study groups and in-house or online PD, etc.)

- Administrators and teachers consider their own needs for technology professional development, using the technology self-assessment tools and relay this information to the Technology Manager directly or to their immediate supervisor.

Benchmark 4: Accessibility of Technology

Hardware Access
- Ratio of one high capacity internet connected computer for each student by 2015
- Technology rich classrooms
- Seven media carts shared among instructional and administrative staff
- Replacement cycle of three years or less

Internet Access
- High speed Internet connectivity for all
- External connection of 100 Mbps

Networking
- Wireless Network Access District Wide
- Servers for file sharing, backups, virtualization, and media streaming
- Cloud computing services

Staffing
- Staff or contract to ensure network functioning
- Resolve critical problems in 24 hours

Ongoing improvements will be undertaken to ensure ACS strives to meet the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's benchmarks for accessibility of technology including:

- Computer and internet to user ratios
- Introduction to emerging technologies
- Use of universally designed assistive technologies for general education
- Procurement policies
- Replacement plan/cycle
- Ability to participate in online assessments (PARCC)
- Networking
- Bandwidth recommendations for LAN/WAN
- Secure file sharing, backups, email, web publishing
- Access outside the school day
- Staffing for Technology Support
- Resolution within 24 hours

Benchmark 5: Virtual-Learning and Communications

ACS continues to seek out new educational resources available online. In 2011, ACS implemented cloud based email hosting. This is currently being used by all staff to improve school wide

communication and collaboration. ACS maintains and updates a website for the community. Parents and students can access the site to obtain necessary forms, view school calendars and general news. This resource has also been useful for spreading the word about ACS enrollment and lottery to families.

Benchmark 6: Safety, Security and Data Retention

ACS has a board-approved Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) regarding internet and network use. The policy is updated as needed to help ensure safe and ethical use of resources by teachers and students. The policy is shared with parents, students and staff annually as well as included in the Family and Staff Handbooks. Every student/parent is required to sign-off on the Acceptable Use policy each year before students will be assigned a user account. A copy of the current ACS Acceptable Use Policy is included in the appendix.

ACS currently has Technology Protection Measures in place to filter internet content. ACS will continue to analyze our Technology Protection Measures to ensure they are CIPA compliant. Electronic records, including e-mail, are retained through on-site and off-site backups. Retention policies are in place to ensure compliance with Massachusetts Public Record Retention Law and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Appendices

ACS Acceptable Use Policy

ATLANTIS CHARTER SCHOOL

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR STUDENT, FACULTY & STAFF USERS

Please read and review the following Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). When signed, **it becomes a legally binding contract. We must have your signature before we can provide you and/or your child with independent network access. Network access will be granted for one academic year.**

Introduction

The ATLANTIS CHARTER SCHOOL (ACS) strongly believes in the educational value of Internet resources. Our goal in providing this access is to support administration, enhance instruction and promote student learning.

Atlantis Charter School will provide access to various computerized information resources through the ACS District's computer network system consisting of software, hardware, networks, internet, other "on-line" services and electronic mail systems. It may include the opportunity to have independent access to the ACS network and/or electronic mail from their home and other remote locations.

User Responsibility

I understand and take complete responsibility for using the ACS computer network correctly in accordance with the ACS Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). General school rules and staff policies for behavior and communications apply. I will report to a network administrator activities on the computer network that I know are wrong or that make me feel uncomfortable.

Unacceptable Use

Network and Internet access is a privilege and requires a high level of personal responsibility and may be denied and/or revoked or be the subject of student discipline or employee reprimand/termination if abused. Inappropriate use shall include but not be limited to:

I will not:

- Use the ACS network illegally in ways that violate federal, state, or local laws or statutes.
- Share private information about self, other students, staff or school.
- Access, send or display offensive messages or pictures.
- Use obscene or inappropriate language.
- Harass, insult or attack others (Cyber Bullying).
- Damage or do anything that might damage computers, computer systems, computer networks, or data (for example, loading a file that may introduce a virus).
- Load or download any software on any district or ACS network computers.

- Post or distribute copyrighted material by violating copyright laws.
- Redistribute material gathered from the network without permission of the author.
- Use others' passwords or share my password or any other password.
- Attempt unauthorized access to computer systems, networks, or data.
- Buy, sell or advertise anything on the school network.
- Attempt to read, delete, copy or modify files of other system users.
- Circumvent security measures (hacking).
- Use chat rooms or instant messenger programs for non-academic use.
- Stream audio and/or video content without explicit instruction from a teacher.

I am aware that some inappropriate uses of the network can be a violation of local, state and federal laws and that I can be prosecuted for violating those laws.

Safety

To protect myself and others I will follow the following safety rules:

- I will never give out my or anyone else's password, last name, address, telephone number, password, or school name to any online source.
- I will not respond to any messages that make me feel uncomfortable. I will show such messages to a teacher, librarian or network administrator.
- I will not meet people in person that I have met on-line without district/parent permission.

Network Etiquette and Privacy

I understand that information accessed or stored on the network is NOT private. Network administrators or his/her designee has the right to access information stored in any user directory, hard drive, disk/flash memory, or electronic mail. Network management and monitoring software will be used for random access to individual accounts to review educational progress and for security proposes. Each computer keeps a history of programs and sites visited if that information is requested.

Privileges

The use of the network is a privilege, not a right. If I do not use it correctly, I will lose my access to the network. A teacher, librarian, technology support staff member, or administrator may request that my network access be revoked, suspended or denied at any time. Violations of the AUP, any district policies or procedures, or any federal or state law may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion/termination.

Services

The ATLANTIS CHARTER SCHOOL will not be responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged or unavailable due to technical, or other, difficulties. The district does not warrant that the functions and services performed by or the information or software contained in the educational technology resources will meet the system user's requirements or that the system will be uninterrupted or error-free, or that defects will be corrected. The districts system is provided on an "as is, as available" basis. ATLANTIS CHARTER SCHOOL assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of information obtained through the network.

Access to computers and sources throughout the world may provide potential exposure to material that is illegal, defamatory, inaccurate or offensive to some people. ATLANTIS CHARTER SCHOOL has taken steps to instruct faculty, staff and students on acceptable network use and proper network etiquette, to restrict access to inappropriate resources and information on the network, and to monitor faculty, staff and student use of the network. However, on a global network it is impossible to completely control and monitor access to data. The primary responsibility for access will rest with the end user. We believe that the benefits from access to the Internet exceed the disadvantages. (Ultimately, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using networked information sources.)

ATLANTIS CHARTER SCHOOL

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR STUDENT, FACULTY & STAFF USERS

Student User:

I have received and read the Acceptable Use Policy and contract, I understand my responsibilities while using the computer network, and will follow all rules in the Acceptable Use Policy, as well as school rules that may apply.

_____

Student Name (please print)
Teacher/Homeroom

_____

Signature   Date

Students under the age of 18 must also have the signature of a parent or guardian who has read this contract in order to have independent access to network resources such as the Internet.

Parent or Guardian:

As the parent or guardian of the minor student signing above, I have received and read the attached contract and grant permission for my child to access networked computer services including the Internet. I understand that some materials on the Internet may be considered objectionable, but I accept responsibility for guidance regarding Internet use - setting and conveying standards for my child to follow when selecting, sharing or exploring information and media. I accept full responsibility for supervision if and when my child's technology use is not in a school setting. I hereby give my permission to allow independent network access for my child and certify that the information contained on this form is correct.

Parent or Guardian Name (please print)

Signature   Date

Faculty & Staff User:

I have received and read the Acceptable Use Policy and contract, I understand my responsibilities while using the computer network, and will follow all rules in the Acceptable Use Policy, as well as school rules that may apply.

Faculty/ Staff Name (please print)

Signature   Date