

To: Board of Education

From: Terry McEwen, director assessment, research & accountability (ext. 2613)
Kirsten Wondra, assistant director learning and technology (ext. 2622)

Re: PowerSchool Update Report

Date: July 23, 2018

Background:

Board of Education Goals:

2015-16

V. Deliver quality programs and services.

1. Continue to enhance business and operations processes through integrated software management systems 2016-17

IV. Expand communication and community connections through increased engagement.

1. Evaluate district technology communication systems (e.g. Microsoft Office, Outlook, Google, SharePoint, Skyward, etc.) with consideration of modifications and enhancements.

A. Form stakeholder group of Skyward users to gather feedback/input on use of Skyward, needs and possible enhancements.

B. Investigate Skyward for alignment to district needs.

Members of the Superintendent's Leadership Team reported to the Board the progress made on these goals and a recommendation related to the integration of software management systems to better meet district needs, enhance efficiencies and improve the user experience for teachers, students and parents.

Rationale:

The Board of Education authorized the purchase of PowerSchool on September 25, 2017. Since that time, the following steps have been taken to implement a full Student Information System, along with the additional components associated with the system:

- The PowerSchool Project Team was established
 - This team meets at a minimum of once per week to work through the implementation processes
 - The Project Team brought in principal representatives to provide feedback on specific functions
 - The Project Team has a standing call with the PowerSchool Project Manager each Friday
- Created the 2017-18 school year within PowerSchool
- Imported all students, teachers, and parents/guardians
- Imported all extra-curricular activities (e.g. athletics, clubs) and co-curricular courses (e.g. band, choir)
- Imported all student schedules, attendance records, and discipline records

Next Steps:

Our next steps will include activation of the core data so end-users will be able to view the 2018-19 school year, ensuring each end user is set up with the appropriate permissions, and making certain all end-user groups will have appropriate training.

Training/Professional Development:

- Training for teacher groups began in February with the Learning Management System (replacement for Blackboard)
- “Train the trainer” sessions were held for teachers in June and July to prepare for the training of the complete staff on Aug. 9 and 10
- Training for principals is taking place in July
- Training for secondary counselors on the scheduling module will take place in July
- Full staff training will take place on Aug. 9 and 10
- Ongoing support and professional development will take place throughout the year

Parent and Student Portals:

- Students will be trained to access the student portal during their first weeks at school (differentiated based on grade level)
- Parent access will be communicated to all parents using various resources (news media, School Messenger, Website, etc.)

Challenges:

- The report will include some of the major challenges of implementing a complete Student Information System and associated modules.
- PowerSchool was selected because they are current with the needs of today's students and parents and are on the cutting edge of implementing improved enhancement such as the preferred name and preferred pronouns for students
 - While this is an asset, it has also been a challenge as PowerSchool works to integrate new ideas and modules for Lawrence Public Schools.
 - Many of these enhancements are not only new to LPS but new to PowerSchool.
- Despite some challenges, the PowerSchool Project Team has overcome many obstacles and can rely on product experts/project managers for support.