

Year 7 of the Tech Plan

1500 Computers get a new home: A third of the district's computers were moved in one of our busiest summers ever.

500 new or 1 year old Connections computers were placed in 8 schools.

500 displaced GX150 computers were used to replace older GX110 computers.

500 GX110 computers were removed from the classrooms (231 retired GX110's were sold to an enthusiastic public) The GX110's are the white computers with the 15 inch monitors that were bought in the first year of the Tech Plan. Of the 1000+ Dell Optiplex GX110 computers bought in Year 1 of the Tech Plan all but about 45 have been replaced. The Tech Plan is working to keep our technology up-to-date and relevant.

Others get a facelift: All remaining computers at Year 7 Tech Plan schools were re-imaged. They are now running Microsoft Windows XP and are fully functional. Newly imaged computers receive the same software they had before imaging.

Hardware Changes

Imaging Continued: Re-imaged multiple computer labs around the district – just to get everybody off to a fresh start.

New Email Servers: Installed a new group of servers to run Exchange/Outlook that combine to be one of our biggest. Whoever thought email would get to be so big?

Keeping the Internet Clean: New Internet filter hardware and software was installed. This new filter allows us greater control, giving us the ability to allow staff to access sites that students cannot.

Server Space search: Cleaned off disk space on school servers, moved files around to give staff and students more room for file storage.

New Server Rack: We've installed a new blade server rack with seven servers sharing a large common disk array. Three servers have been configured for the new APECS.net financial software and the other blades will be virtual servers to consolidate our existing old servers.

Uninterruptible Power Supply: We've struggled over the years with unreliable power at the borough building. The borough has installed a new uninterruptible power supply for the computer room in the borough building that is the hub of our network. So far it has worked flawlessly.

Software changes

Goodbye FirstClass, Hello Outlook: Microsoft Exchange using Outlook as an email client replaced our aging FirstClass email system. This was a major conversion effort with the primary responsibility going to programmer Eric Soderquist. This was done in coordination with a programming effort to take information from the district's mainframe Human Resources System and create network and email accounts automatically.

New KPBSD web presence: About 15 months after the new web site project began, the world got to see what we've been up to when the new KPBSD web site went live December 7, 2006. The entire site was rebuilt in EkTron's content management system. A quality, professional, consistent appearance, we'd put our website up against anybody's. Assistant Superintendent Glen Szymoniak provided the vision. Programmer Eric Soderquist and new Webmaster Jesse Glaves provided the labor.

Streamlining Software Installs: Virtually all software is installed via the network. Tony Mika revamped the whole process using Microsoft's Distributed File Services (DFS) to make our network software installation significantly more efficient.

New and Improved Universal Image: Once we had a standard computer image for each of the different Dell computer models. Tony Mika has created a single Universal Windows XP image that works on all our Dell models. This universal image also allows remote re-imaging of computers. This will allow us to get your computer fixed even when your Computer Tech is at a different school.

Post-Image (post config) changes: Reworked the imaging process to more easily accommodate computer replacements. This allows us to automatically assign all of the software that was installed on the old computer. No more missing software packages when you get a new computer.

Food Service Upgrade: Student Nutrition point of sale computer system software was upgraded.

Discovery Student Information Software: A new release of the Discovery student information system was installed.

Student Social Security Numbers: Once required by the state for our student records, social security numbers for students have been purged from the Discovery Student Information System and our Student Nutrition cafeteria point-of-sale systems.

Edline: Overdue books re-done to reflect current overdue status. Attendance data live on Edline – no nightly uploads. New report cards on Edline now live. We are pulling data directly from our in-house databases when someone requests information through Edline instead of posting static reports nightly to Edline's servers. We've made our own improvements to the Edline model.

GradeQuick 11.0 upgrade: Latest version of Gradequick grade book software installed. Additional features, is more localized, and we expect better performance for teachers at remote schools.

Scheduling software for Homer High: Homer High needed a way to allow students to sign up for weekly courses of interest and allow teachers to take attendance. Students sign up for a different course topic each week. David Henson developed web-enabled software to facilitate the process.

New AASA and KPSAA eligibility requirements: New eligibility requirements meant teachers would need to enter all grades for all secondary students every three weeks so it could be determined if students currently had a 2.0 GPA or better. David Henson found a way to grab the grades from each teacher's Gradequick grade book files and post the grades to Discovery saving the teachers the task of entering grades by hand into Discovery. Once the grades were in Discovery Patty Campbell wrote the eligibility report looking at the many requirements students must meet to remain eligible for extra curricular activities.

Student current grades go beyond the teacher: We've had many requests for other teaching professionals to have access to the student's current grade status. Counselors, coaches, special education teachers, principals, etc. have needed to monitor a student's progress but grade book security is limited to the classroom teacher. David Henson applied what he'd learned during the eligibility project to develop web pages showing student current grades to those with a need to know.

Current grades showing on the student's Windows desktop: When a student logs onto a computer their current grades from the teacher's grade book display on their Windows desktop. Soldotna Middle, Soldotna High, and Kenai Middle were early adopters.

District to move last of software off the Unisys mainframe: New financial and Human Resources software has been purchased and the long arduous task of conversion has begun. Programmer/Analyst Patty Campbell leads a multi-departmental team through this complex and difficult process.

Telecommunications Upgrades

Data Circuits changes:

- Port Graham satellite network connection upgraded
- Kenai Youth Facility moved from wireless to ACS data circuit
- 2 Seward T1 data circuits moved from vendor TelAlaska to Alascom
- Tyonek T1 data circuit moved from vendor TelAlaska to Alascom
- Kaleidoscope new mall classrooms connected to the KPBSD district network via ACS data circuit.

Wiring projects

Lots of wiring projects at multiple schools: Many in preparation for IP phone installations.

Local Mall gets wired: Kaleidoscope moved classrooms into the Willow Street Mall in Kenai. We were lucky enough to be able to get in while the walls were still being worked on so wiring was a snap.

Fixed wiring at the Paul Banks Connections portable.

Sterling Elementary re-wired over Christmas break in preparation of IP phone installation. Sterling was originally wired in

July 94 by the phone company before we took wiring projects in-house.

The vocational building at Seldovia was connected to the main school via a point-to-point wireless shot.

IP Telephones

Nifty new phones: Cisco Internet Protocol telephones are basically telephone devices that operate on an Ethernet (computer) data network. Over 700 IP phones have been placed in schools as part of a three year plan to replace the district's aging telephone infrastructure.

Seward – all three schools now complete
Soldotna Area – phones placed in 8 schools now complete
Homer Area – phones placed in 6 schools now complete
Next year – Nikiski and Kenai!

The IP phone project got off to a slow start with technical problems in Seward that threw us about a year off schedule. Thanks to Ted Notter, we're caught up. A job well done, Ted!

Expanded phone lines: Primary Rate Interface (PRI) circuits are T1 data circuits that can carry 23 simultaneous voice calls. We are moving to PRIs because this technology allows us to share telephone lines between sites, thus reducing our recurring monthly phone bills.

An additional PRI in Soldotna was interfaced into our Cisco phone system to carry the anticipated heavier voice traffic.

A Homer PRI, on order since December 2005, was installed in preparation for the Homer phase of the project (Homer phase is now complete).

Staff Development

Webex: Information Services is using Webex web conferencing software as a tool to train school staff. Webex is particularly well suited for training on software products. The school year started off with multiple Webex trainings on Discovery by Donna Lester, Gradequick and Edline trainings by David Henson, and Eric Soderquist trained hundreds of staff on basic Outlook use.

Check <https://kpbsd.webex.com> often for upcoming training opportunities.

Some Webex sessions have been recorded and placed on our web site. We are also creating short training video clips using Camtasia software. Our goal is to provide short, precise, effective software training for teachers on just the topics you need.

E-Rate

Updated Technology Plan: Completed district technology plan sent to state in March 2007.

Show me the money: Final E-Rate billing collected for 2005-2006 fiscal year came to \$532,359.49. That's money in the bank.

E-Rate funding for 2006-2007 approved at up to \$700,032.66. Appeal filed on small amount in dispute.

E-Rate funds requested but not yet approved for 2007-2008 up to \$831,987.46. Asking for some school servers and school Ethernet switches this year.

Connections computers and E-rate funding is what makes our technology plan self-sustaining.

No Child Left Behind

NCLB file prepared incorporating new requirements from the state

Beginning of school year

Student Accounts: All student computer accounts are deleted and new ones are created. This clears previous year's data. This also resets all passwords to their defaults (no need for students to remember their password from last year).

Edline: All Edline courses were deleted and new courses were uploaded. All old course materials are available to teachers under the 'Old Course Materials' link in Edline.

Gradequick: All 2005-2006 Grade books were archived. Two archives were made, one for KPBSD permanent records, the other for Teacher records. Teachers can access their old grade books through their 'archive' folders within their grade book home directories.

Staff Changes

Russ Wyatt resigns in May 2006: Russ was the Supervisor for all of our School Techs. He was also the primary support for District Office.

Casey Returns home: Casey Olson, who had left us for a brief stint with the City of Soldotna, started back with the district in July and we're glad to have him back.

School assignment changes: We have made some Computer Tech school assignment changes for this year:

Will Burnett will be serving Mountain View

Tina Stamer will be serving Nikiski-North Star

Casey Olson will be serving Soldotna High, and District Office

Building our own workforce: We now have four of our Information Services staff that originally worked for us as student techs and have chosen to make KPBSD Information Services their career.