

Educational Technology Management (ETM)

Discover how top school districts are advancing 21st century learning.



With Questeq's ETM or strategic staffing service, districts can advance use of technology to boost student achievement, regardless of budget or transformation starting point.



Central Valley School District is within its projected budget, successfully engaging over 2,500 students and educators in a 1:1 program with integrated district-created digital textbook-less curriculum.

The Original Vision

Central Valley's (CV's) vision is probably like the one your district has: Improve student engagement and outcomes with media rich curriculum. Also, provide more opportunities for all students so they are better prepared for college and career. But, the plan that CV embarked upon to realize their vision is unique and has lessons that may be useful to multiple districts.

Digital Curriculum Key to Funding

1:1 was the answer. And CV knew that it was not the devices that would drive better engagement, but a curriculum that fostered a media-rich learning environment. For CV this meant having its educators create a new digital curriculum that meets the high expectations set by the national Common Core Standards. This curriculum would enable CV to eliminate the expense of purchasing new text books every curriculum refresh cycle. Funding the 1:1 program depended upon eliminating annual textbook purchases—freeing up \$350,000 per year.

Central Valley School District

Current Enrollment: About 2,440 students with 30% on free or reduced lunch.

Interesting to note: The Central Valley School District (CV) represents the first voluntary merger of public school districts in Pennsylvania.

Behind the scenes is the story of how a superintendent and an aligned technology team have been working non-stop since 2011, patiently rolling out the unique collaborative solutions that answer these key questions:

- 1. How can a district transform to a digital-first culture and make the pedagogy changes to accomplish this with buy-in and support from administration, board, educators, students and parents?**
- 2. How does a school district fund a 1:1 program involving over 2,500 iPad units with relatively small, board-approved changes to overall budget?**

Outsourcing Technology Staffing Enables Building Technology Support Specialists

Right-sizing the technology team was another core decision in the process and CV looked to technology partner Questeq, to strategically staff a support team that would free up time for the visionary technology director to implement strategic initiatives. The technology team has only expanded in number from three to five as the student 1:1 rollout progressed to 1,300 devices. This enabled CV to have building specialists available for support in HS/MS. Outsourcing the new technology staff positions under the district's technology director put the right talent in place with significant employment cost savings.

Continued on page 2

Purchasing the Hardware and Cloud Service are the Easiest Steps

The technology team and a committee of teacher leaders looked at the size, demographics and culture of the district, and what they were trying to do with technology, and made the decision to move ahead to 1:1 with Apple products. A major factor was that iPads offered one of the best ways to deliver an audio and video infused media rich environment. After almost a year of analysis CV selected Google Apps for Education in order to enable a seamless collaboration between students and teachers.

The Culture Change Relies on Teacher Adoption of the Program

“The reality is that students are on another level with technology compared with the adults that are teaching them, and that made us realize that the key to transforming to a digital curriculum begins with engaging teachers in the program,” explains Nicholas Pery, Superintendent at Central Valley School District. “Our biggest challenge was changing the pedagogy and asking teachers to become comfortable truly using technology to deliver curriculum.”

Continuous Professional Development

“Successful professional development is not about device training. It’s about guiding teachers on how to leverage all technologies to create engaging learning environments,” explains CV Technology Director Edward Eimiller, a leader instrumental in the program’s success. CV put both Mac laptops and iPads in teachers’ hands a full year before they were given to students. Then the district embarked on continuous professional development delivered by the technology director, technology team and district educators. CV credits teachers for working within the confines of the collective bargaining agreement to make the training happen. Teachers are regularly freed from other responsibilities to share successful teaching and learning strategies peer-to-peer.

Six-Year Plan Where Teachers Develop Digital Curriculum

One of the most remarkable parts of the rollout plan is CV’s six-year commitment to develop its own digital curriculum. Each year for six years, an entire HS/MS department receives an additional common planning period for one full year to develop digital curriculum. In the subsequent years, a smaller team representing the department works together to make updates and improvements to the curriculum. After the six-year window each department will go live with its own continuously-improved textbook-free curriculum that truly aligns with the national Common Core outcomes. The process will likely become an on-going part of CV’s teaching and learning plan.

Milestones in the Rollout

The collaboration between technology director, technology team and all the stakeholders in the district followed a very patient and calculated schedule, ensuring that teachers were comfort with the program before engaging students:

2009-10 and 2010-11

- Center and Monaca districts merge and become Central Valley School District.

2011-12—Year One:

- Discussions regarding digital curriculum resources and devices begin as start of new textbook cycle approaches.
- CV makes its board paperless—delivering 40 page paper reports digitally on iPads.

2012-13—Year Two:

- 1:1 Math and Science classes are piloted at the secondary level.
- Board votes to move ahead with 1:1 and digital curriculum plan.

2013-14—Year Three:

- Teachers are given MacBooks and iPads (in summer, one full year before students). Intensive professional development begins.
- ELA and Social Studies classes are added to 1:1 pilots.

2014-15—Year Four:

- In summer before year four, 1,300 iPads are distributed to HS and MS students. Parents attend one of several offered sessions, where parent and student are educated on the program and the student’s iPad is made ready at a series of stations.
- English and Language Arts digital curriculum begins.
- Technology staff is expanded to support the secondary 1:1 program.

2015-16—Year Five:

- English and Language Arts curriculum transitions to live.
- Math digital content begins.
- 1:1 English and Language Arts classes are piloted at elementary level.
- Plan is finalized for rollout of 1,200 additional units to elementary schools.

2016-17—Year Six:

- iPads rollout to Elementary and Primary Schools.
- Math digital content transitions to live. Science digital content development begins.

Continued on page 3

Results

CV is within its projected and board-approved budget, successfully engaging its district in a 1:1 program and integrated a digital textbook-less curriculum. The program rollout patiently moved from nine Board members to 180 teachers and staff to 1,300 students to soon all the district's nearly 2,500 students. iPads will be refreshed every two years. MacBooks are refreshed every three years.

CV has undergone a major culture change. Educators are not just using technology as an add-on to the traditional curriculum, they're delivering a completely new media-rich curriculum that they were afforded time to create. The HS/MS departments created custom curriculum that aligns with national core instructional learning outcomes, and will enable CV to save \$350,000 in annual textbook costs.

Technology is very evident and totally integrated into students' school days. Student backpacks contain far fewer books. Workflow is completely digital from student to teacher and vice versa. The efficiency of digital sharing gives students more one-on-one time with teachers. Student collaboration is rising inside and outside the classroom, and increased engagement is creating better student work.

"We can't say that our 1:1 technology plan alone has raised assessments in our district," said Superintendent Nicholas Perry. "But, we can say that the combination of our technology director, technology department and the unbelievable efforts of our board and educators have changed our pedagogy and with it our ability to engage students. The district is moving up significantly in the local newspaper's ranking of districts, and through the IU other districts are asking us to share our approach."

