DIGITAL SCHOOL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The board of education is committed to providing an educational program that progressively integrates core academic content standards with the relevant and evolving teaching and learning strategies of a digital learning environment. The teaching and learning process across all school programs, grades and levels shall be enhanced with the technological capacity necessary to access information, personalize learning and support collaboration with the global digital community. The board believes that by providing diverse and relevant educational choices supported by research-based practices in the use of technology, students will be prepared for successful participation in secondary education programs and/or the careers of the 21st century.

The skill sets for college and career readiness in the 21st century higher education and employment environments will require our district students to:

A. Become digital citizens with ethical and responsible habits, actions, and consumption patterns that impact the ecology of digital content and communities[1];

B. Develop literacy in use of technology and the skills to learn and adapt quickly as the technological landscape advances;

C. Improve self-direction and self-sufficiency in the areas of critical thinking, problem solving, reasoning, analysis, interpretation, synthesizing information;

D. Access, organize and discern credible information from global internet sources;

E. Communicate in multiple medias including traditional writing methods, keyboarding and social media; adapting these skills to the diverse and evolving communication technologies available;

F. Possess a definitive understanding of the importance privacy rights, property rights, safety and security in all digital interactions including research, commerce and communication.

The board directs the chief school administrator and the business administrator to cultivate the district's digital learning environment according to the following guidelines.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

The chief school administrator in consultation with the supervisor of the curriculum shall research, implement and oversee curriculum and teaching strategies that provide students with digital learning choices and experiences in every class, as well as anywhere-anytime learning support through the school network. The district shall review the curriculum every five years (see board policy 6141 Curriculum Development) and in updating the district curriculum prioritize the selection of materials and courses of study that leverage technology and digital learning in the teaching and learning process, and in accordance with New Jersey Department of Education regulations.

A. The traditional classroom curriculum may include but not be limited to the following augmentations to support digital learning in the classroom:

   1. Library of curated digital instructional materials and tools such as e-textbooks, internet resources, digital presentation tools, document and project management software;
   2. Certification programs that credential students as experienced and trained in various computer skills (i.e. Microsoft certification);
   3. Collaborative workspace (physical and digital) within the classroom utilizing structured group projects and activities;

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[1] http://www.teachthought.com

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   4. Collaborative workspace outside the classroom allowing students to work with other classes and groups in remote locations through the internet;
   5. Electronic communication sites for teaching staff discussion, student discussion and teacher-student discussion;

   6. Multimedia production tools that provide students with a choice of technology options to apply to the completion of projects and assignments;
   7. Social media;

B. The school curriculum may provide students with the following learning options in addition to traditional classroom instruction including but not limited to:

   1. Blended learning – courses that offer both online and in person learning experiences;
   2. Anywhere, anytime learning options including:

      a. Synchronous tools that offer real time and in person digital connection to classes and subject related information;
      b. Asynchronous tools that offer digital and online learning that is not in real time or in person in which students learn from instruction methods such as prerecorded video lessons or game-based learning tasks that students complete on their own;

C. Curriculum options will include achievement measures and assessment using digital and online assessment systems that provide students and teachers with real-time feedback in ways that increase the rate and depth of learning, and that enable data-informed instructional decision making.

Use of Time

The principal and instructional supervisors shall work with teaching staff members to plan flexible instructional time and school schedules that provide students with extended time for projects and collaboration. Classroom instruction shall be supported by digital learning options that may be accessed by students any time of day, from home, school and/or the community. In general, staff will be encouraged to develop strategies that are competency-based and measured by performance and mastery and deemphasize "seat time" approaches to teaching that measure academic accomplishment by the amount of time spent on the topic, rather than a demonstration of what was learned.

Flexible classroom structures that creates personalized, student-centered learning may include but are not limited to:

A. Creating a physical environment in the classroom that supports group collaboration (shared work spaces, project stations, interactive media and technology);

B. Teacher structured small groups;

C. Independent and group learning activities using in and/or out of class time facilitated by online synchronous and asynchronous educational tools;

D. Structured and outcome oriented student led groups;

E. Performance based groups consisting of students with similar education needs and interests;

F. Whole class instruction to introduce new materials and concepts to the whole class.

A range of tools and technology options shall be available giving students and groups of students the opportunity to apply reasoning and critical thinking in the selection of the best tools to accomplish project outcomes. Whenever possible, educational topics and projects shall be relevant to real world contexts through the use of digital and in person community participation.

The board shall consider and approve scheduling adjustments and changes recommended by the chief school administrator that affect a class, grade or school (i.e. block scheduling, alternating day schedules, rotating schedules, and dropped schedules).

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The chief school administrator shall ensure that a team is assembled to oversee that appropriate Internet-ready technology devices and infrastructure are available to support teaching and learning in every classroom and school. A Technology plan and the implementation of technology goals and objectives should be implemented.

Data and Privacy

The chief school administrator in consultation with the IT director and members of the technology team shall ensure that the data systems, security measures, and support systems that protect the district network are in place, maintained and updated so that a range of accurate, reliable data sets and associated reports are available, on demand, to authorized users only. The chief school administrator or his or her designee may oversee the data and privacy of the district network by:

A. Obtaining feedback from staff and students regarding the implementation of digital learning in the classrooms including challenges and opportunities in transitioning to a culture of evidence-based reasoning (a data culture) using accurate, reliable, and accessible data;

B. Reviewing and evaluating policies, procedures, and practices that address the privacy and security of data, and the use of data, technologies, and the Internet that meet or exceed legal requirements and federal guidelines;

C. Educating all staff and students in the procedures and skills for accessing and using the district network according to the school policies and procedures for acceptable use;

D. Training staff on data analysis to inform instruction, curriculum, assessment, and professional practices;

E. Implementing educational programs for students and staff that teach internet safety and ethical and responsible digital citizenship.

Community Partnerships

The 21st century classroom includes expanding the educational program beyond the physical classroom and the school day and connecting staff, student, parents/guardians, members of the local community and the global digital community in an active partnership that supports student achievement. The board believes that student achievement is enhanced by a positive and widely recognizable district brand that communicates that the district schools and educational programs are a vigorous 21st century force connecting the lives of students with local and digital global communities. Community partnerships build global and cultural awareness in students and strengthen the connection of local residents by increasing accessibility to the schools as vital centers for community life.

The district and school information management systems and websites shall support the home-school-community connections that are essential to academic success. The district schools shall make the school communications technologies accessible through the district websites and other media in order to provide pathways for safe online peer-to-peer, student-teacher, student-expert and parent/guardian-to-teacher interactions.

Professional Learning

The chief school administrator or his or her designees shall oversee the development and implementation of plans to address the districts' professional development needs. The principal shall oversee the development and implementation of a plan for school-level professional development (see board policy 4131/4131.1 Professional Development). Professional development plans for the district and schools shall encourage shared ownership and shared responsibility for professional growth. Professional development plans shall include options for training and development related to the use of technology and 21st century teaching strategies that incorporate technology and digital learning in and out of the classroom. Professional development and staff training options may include the following:

A. Providing opportunities for staff involvement in professional learning communities that enable educators to collaborate, share best practices and integrate 21st century skills into classroom practice;

B. Incorporating options in the district professional development plan for alternative, personalized models of professional development enabled through technology and social media (i.e., EdCamps, Twitter Chats, etc.);

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C.   Soliciting teacher involvement in the evaluation and selection of teaching staff member evaluation tools that include self-assessment, goal setting, and professional collaboration. Evaluation tools shall be participatory and focused on metrics directly related to teaching strategies for 21st century skill sets (i.e. critical thinking, problem solving, reasoning, analysis, interpretation, synthesizing information) and digital learning;

D.   Utilize cross-generational staffing programs that pair experienced and novice educators for the benefit of both staff members' professional development. Newly educated teachers may be positioned to train seasoned staff members in strategies and techniques related to the use of modern technologies in the teaching process, while seasoned staff maintain the more traditional role as mentors.

Budget and Resources

The district budget shall provide for equitable access to quality learning tools, technologies, and resources for students and among the facilities of the district.

The business administrator in consultation with the IT director and members of the technology team shall direct the planning and decision making process for the selection and/or replacement of equipment, software, hardware, infrastructure and Internet service providers, and the regular review and maintenance of the district's or school's technology. The business administrator shall plan the funding for digital learning programs in the district's annual maintenance and operation budgets. District and school budgets shall include plans for digital learning justified and linked with consistent annual funding streams.

The board authorizes the business administrator to consider:

A.   Funding for short-term and long-term digital learning initiatives by leveraging business partnering, shared services, cooperative purchasing agreements, ERate, national and state-wide procurement models, community donations and special grants;

B.   Efficient and cost saving strategies to support systemic digital learning such as online courses or blended learning, cloud computing solutions, digital resources to replace textbooks, "going green", etc.

C.   One to one planning including allowing students to use privately owned equipment (BYOD) and school issued electronic devices.

Contracts, purchases and payments shall be board approved according to board policy (see policies 3320 Purchasing Procedures, 3326 Payment for Goods and Services, and 3327 Relations with Vendors).

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Key Words

Digital, Technology, Technological, 21st Century, Global Community

Legal References:	N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-60 et al.	Disclosure of juvenile information; penalties for disclosure
	N.J.S.A. 2A:38A-1 et seq.	Computer System
	N.J.S.A. 2C:20-25	Computer Related Theft
	N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-10	NJQSAC
	N.J.S.A. 18A:3619-	Pupil records; creation, maintenance and retention, security and access; regulations; nonliability
	N.J.S.A. 18A:36-35	School Internet websites; disclosure of certain student information prohibited

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N.J.S.A. 18A:36-39	Notification by school to certain persons using certain electronic devices; fine
N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq.	Examination and copies of public records (Open Public Records Act)
N.J.S.A. 47:315 -et seq.	Destruction of Public Records Law
N.J.A.C. 6A:30-1.1et seq.	Evaluation of the Performance of School Districts
N.J.A.C. 6A:32-2.1	Definitions
N.J.A.C. 6A:327.1 -et seq.	Student records

Possible
Cross References:

*1000/1010	Concepts and Roles in Community Relations
*1100	Communication with the Public; and
*1111	District Publications
*3000	Concepts and Roles in Business
*3100	Budget Planning Preparation and Adoption
*3300	Purchasing
*3510	Operation and Maintenance of Plant
*3600	Evaluation of Business and Noninstructional Operations
*3570	District records and reports
*5124	Reporting to parents/guardians
*4131/4131.1	Professional Development
*6141	Curriculum design and development
*9322	Public and executive sessions

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.