

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Statement of Belief

The Board of Education believes that all students in the Princeton Regional School District must develop competence in using and applying a broad range of technologies to support lifelong learning. Through their use, students can interact with vast information resources, participate in global communication, and access expanded curriculum resources. The Board also believes that technology can be used to foster equity among all students.

Educational technologies include hardware (e.g., computers, interactive video), software, network communications, and information resources. Technology-related programs use these systems and materials to support education, both as tools for individual learners and as tools for creating and enhancing instruction.

There are four educational considerations that require the use of technology in our schools: 1) the pervasive nature of technology makes us increasingly dependent on our ability to understand and use it effectively; 2) the availability of electronic media, on-line information and communication systems offer educational opportunities and challenges not available through traditional means; 3) the growing volume of electronic information increases the importance for students to develop critical thinking and research skills that will allow them to better organize, assess, and apply information; and 4) the rapidly evolving use of computers to solve problems shapes the way we think about problems as well as the kinds of problems we attempt to solve.

In addition, educators should be given opportunities to acquire, adapt, and develop materials that incorporate technology in the learning process and be encouraged to share these instructional resources and methodologies with others. The District should utilize technologies effectively to improve administrative services and to minimize costs whenever possible.

Implementation

In order to ensure that the above statement of belief is implemented and remains current, the Board directs the Superintendent to develop a technology plan with annual updates, which provides for the following:

1. Prepare a comprehensive professional development plan for teachers and administrators and provide ongoing support for the use of technology in education.
2. Develop a formal district-wide process for evaluating, funding, and acquiring the necessary resources (hardware, software, communications, support services, subscriptions, training, etc.).
3. Establish an Information Resource Operations Committee (IROC) involving various stakeholders who will serve as a resource to District staff concerning all issues relating to technologies.

The IROC will develop a formal district-wide process for assessing instructional materials and

technology-based tools to determine their benefits to the educational process. Major purchases or acquisitions of hardware or software need to be reviewed at the district level and approved by the Board.

4. Assure that technology is accessible to and usable by all in the school community, bearing in mind the importance of equity among schools.

5. Develop and enforce rules of conduct related to the ethical and legal use of technology.

Electronic information research skills are now fundamental to preparation of citizens and future employees. Access to the Internet enables students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, bulletin boards, and other resources while exchanging messages with people around the world. The District expects that faculty will blend thoughtful use of the Internet throughout the curriculum and will provide guidance and instruction to students in its use. As much as possible, access from school to Internet resources should be structured in ways which point students to those which have been evaluated prior to use. While students will be able to move beyond those resources to others that have not been previewed by staff, they shall be provided with guidelines and lists of resources particularly suited to learning objectives.

As with any student activity, students utilizing District-provided Internet access must first have the permission of and must be supervised by the Princeton Regional Schools' professional staff. Students utilizing school-provided Internet access are responsible for good behavior on-line just as they are in a classroom or other area of the school. The same general rules for behavior and communications apply.

The purpose of District-provided Internet access is to facilitate communications and information retrieval in support of research and education. To remain eligible as users, students' use must be in support of and consistent with the educational objectives of the Princeton Regional Schools. Access is a privilege, not a right. Access entails responsibility and may be denied in the event of improper behavior or irresponsible use.

Users should not expect that files stored on school-based computers will always be private. Electronic messages and files stored on school-based computers may be treated like school lockers. Administrators and faculty may review files and messages to maintain system integrity and insure that users are acting responsibly.

The use of school-provided Internet access at any time must not violate local, state, or federal requirements and must be consistent with the educational mission and purposes of the Princeton Regional Schools.

Disciplinary action resulting from a violation of the rules will be determined at the building level in keeping with existing procedures and practices regarding inappropriate language or behavior. When and where applicable, law enforcement agencies may be involved.

Princeton Regional Schools makes no warranties of any kind, neither expressed nor implied, for the Internet access it is providing. The District will not be responsible for any damages users may

suffer, including--but not limited to--loss of data resulting from delays or interruptions in service. The District will not be responsible for the accuracy, nature, or quality of information stored on District diskettes, hard drives, or servers; nor for the accuracy, nature, or quality of information gathered through District-provided Internet access. The District will not be responsible for personal property used to access District computers or networks or for District-provided Internet access. The District will not be responsible for unauthorized financial obligations resulting from District-provided access to the Internet. The District reserves the right to limit the use of personal electronic devices which disrupt the educational environment for students and/or staff.

Parents of students in the Princeton Regional Schools shall be provided with the following information:

The Internet is an electronic highway connecting hundreds of thousands of computers and millions of individual users all over the world. This computer technology will help propel our schools through the communication age by allowing students and staff to access and use resources from distant computers, communicate and collaborate with other individuals and groups around the world, and significantly expand their available information base. The Internet is a tool for lifelong learning.

While the district is required by federal regulations to employ Internet filtering software, and has done this, families should be aware that some material accessible via the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to some people. In addition, it is possible to purchase certain goods and services via the Internet which could result in unwanted financial obligations for which a student's parent or guardian would be liable.

While the District's intent is to make Internet access available in order to further educational goals and objectives, students may find ways to access other materials as well. Even should the District institute technical methods or systems to regulate students' Internet access, those methods could not guarantee compliance with the District's acceptable use policy. That notwithstanding, the District believes that the benefits to students of access to the Internet exceed any disadvantages. Ultimately, however, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources.

NOTICE: This policy and all its provisions are subordinate to local, state, and federal statutes.

Cross References:

Student Conduct Policy
Discipline Policy
Search and Seizure Policy

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