Tomball Independent School District
Technology, Capital Replacement & Transportation
Sub-Committee

October 30, 2012
Minutes

- **Introductions and Opening Remarks – Kristi Goodman**

Kristi Goodman called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm, and welcomed everyone attending. She introduced and thanked Tom Brawley for sharing his technology presentation.

- **Review Purpose of Sub-Committee – Kristi Goodman**

Mrs. Goodman stated the purpose of the committee: The Technology, Capital Replacement, and Transportation sub-committee shall focus their recommendation on the district wide needs in the areas of technology, capital replacement, and transportation. The recommendations shall support the district's continued effort to be technologically advanced, to maintain facilities in a manner that is supportive of students and staff and to be cost-effective, and to have a transportation system that is up to date with the capacity to support the continued growth of the district.

The Technology, Capital Replacement, Transportation sub-committee will base its recommendation on:

- Student growth projections

- Conditions and age of facilities

- Conditions and age of transportation fleet

- District wide technology plan

- District wide capital replacement plan

- Cost estimates of projects

Mrs. Goodman reviewed the agenda for tonight's meeting.   Director of Information Services Tom Brawley will have a fluid presentation, and so it was requested that questions be saved until the end.

- **Presentation of District-Wide Needs Assessment for Technology – Tom Brawley**

Mr. Brawley thanked the attendees for their interest in serving Tomball ISD on this committee. He will be presenting information on the district technology needs and recommendations for replacement and improvements to equipment. The goal is to make enhancements while staying relevant and reliable.

Mr. Brawley began his presentation with information about how much progress the district has made since 2005, when we had no wireless internet access, smart boards, document cameras, Nooks, laptop carts, handheld devices, and more. We have all of these now. The student to computer ratio has improved from 12:1 to 3:1. Our current software management for finance and student accounting is greatly enhanced.

Tom reviewed the district's current instructional computer inventory at each campus.

The Gartner Group places industry standard technology equipment into "Useful life" categories—primary and secondary. Primary Useful life refers to the period that technology can be used in the most efficient manner, being fully compatible with leading-edge applications and hardware. Secondary Useful life refers to continued functionality of equipment for most tasks but not all leading edge tasks. Cost of operation may force replacement.

Tom presented reasons to replace/increase technology. Since the district has recently put a lot of new technology out to teachers and staff, there is not a need for upgrades until 2014. He feels the focus at this time should be on what we have presently and becoming more comfortable with that integration into the classroom environment.

Tom continued with information regarding the schedule for specific equipment replacement, utilizing "requested," "desired," and "envisioned" cost plans. There is always effort in TISD to stretch the life of our equipment; for example, our desktops stretch to 8 years, and we are buying refurbished desktops and laptops with 5 year warranties instead of 3 for new.

Tom highlighted the needs for 2015 through 2019. By 2015, there will be different standards for greater speed. In 2016-2017, we will need to begin replacing smart boards. There will be fewer desktops to replace by 2017-2018, but increases for laptops, desktops, smart boards and Windows upgrades in 2018-2019.

The final slide showed an overall projection of expenses and Mr. Brawley noted the differences between requested, desired and envisioned needs.

- **Questions and Answers – Kristi Goodman and Chris Trotter**

Question: does this plan keep our district at same standards or better?

Yes, some enhancements are planned but the focus is on maintaining TISD's high standards. Our technology needs may change in future years (tablets instead of desktops).

Follow on question: Comparing to other districts, are we keeping up?

Yes, we are very comparable to other districts. We are moving to a BYOD system, and we will need to support the technology infrastructure to accommodate different devices.

Concern regarding sharing devices in classroom; how does the teacher instruct with so many differences in technology? Will a teacher who is not as comfortable with technology be able to support all the different devices?

Several examples of how this is working today were discussed. Curriculum for some classes now utilizes Google docs for classwork and homework assignments so that different devices can be used. Also, we have technology on campus that the students and staff can use. Students will also be able to help each other in the classroom as they have grown up with rapid technological changes. We need to focus on helping teachers become more comfortable with technology so they are more of a facilitator in a learning environment, not just a lecturer.

Question: How do we help make teachers more comfortable?

Teachers have training available on demand and on site, webinars, and after work training. District Content teachers help classroom teachers learn ways to utilize technology in the classroom; each campus also has an instructional technology specialist. The department of Curriculum & Instruction (C&I) requires tech proficiency for new teachers, and is bringing others up to speed. Summer staff development is offered in novice, mid-range and proficient levels. Campuses have weekly cadres for training and discussion of ways to integrate technology with curriculum.

Question: Businesses work on an all-electronic basis; with this proposal, are we going to a paperless system? Will there be accommodations for online homework?

Affidavits of residency and enrollments are now done online with minimal paper, and some curriculum-based-assessments (CBA's) are taken online with immediate scoring results. Google docs is already being used for homework in some classes. Many teachers are now taking written papers online.

Question: Are we considering a Learning Management System, such as Blackboard?

That is still a future possibility.

Question: How are we planning for disaster recovery? How much would this cost?

Student and finance data currently backup to disk and tape off the main server. We would like to set up another site with server and storage capability so we could still print checks, etc. in the event of a crash. Cost would be approximately $150K.

Question: Some districts are using tablets with a 1:1 ratio; should we be doing this?

Currently Ipod Touches are being used for 6th grade science and math. Any device has potential; however, what kind of replacement cycle do we want for these devices? We will have to plan for replacement. Many families already have these devices so do we need to purchase them for every student? The idea of BYOD is becoming more popular so students can use the device they are most comfortable with. Anything we look at must be instructionally sound; technology should not drive the curriculum.

Question: Many high school students are preparing for the workplace—how are we addressing this?

Our students have never had life without technology. They are comfortable already and receive instruction on keyboarding and applications from the very early grades.

Question: What are we doing about prohibited sites if the students bring their own devices?

Public school laws require us to filter our wireless network. Students and parents sign our district internet policy. Teachers monitor classwork and are facilitators for learning. There are natural consequences of exploration. There are expectations of following guidelines at all times. We are a realistic society and need to teach them before they leave home. Our filtering is not 100% but very good and constantly updating. We need to distinguish between evaluating websites and device operation, by showing students how to access information.

Question: Have there been usage studies on the equipment we have now? Has information been gathered? How is this making an impact?

We do have data reflected over time on the use of smart boards from classroom walkthroughs. There are 42 indicators of teacher evaluation; several are tech-related and it will be harder to get a proficient rating without using technology effectively. It is rare now not to see a teacher using a smart board and the

students are using it too. There are also smart board clubs at some campuses, where students are using applications with other students.

Question: What is the current capability for students to bring their own devices?

THS has 90 access points and TISD overall has over 500 access points for wireless coverage; the infrastructure is in place to have access. The teacher requests permission from administration for student devices, the principal approves and letters/rules go home to parents for signatures.

Question: The issue of school choice will likely come up in the next legislative session; will this plan keep us competitive with other districts?

Most other districts have purchased technology through bonds, so we are competitive with our current technology. Our test scores, financial stability, and technology will keep us competitive.

Question: Does City of Tomball have any public access?

We do not know. TISD has public access with no code, but it is separated from all critical information.

Question: Is our staffing keeping up with our needs?

We cannot fund salaries with bonds, but there is concern for keeping up with the personnel needs associated with growth. There is no standard for technology to staff ratio; however, the Gartner Group has some info on this and suggests 250-1k computers/tech personnel.   We have about 750 devices/1 tech.

Question: Are these costs all in?

These projections do not include personnel but all equipment is included and some contingency.

Question: What is not clear is how this is tied to curriculum—how does technology facilitate the learning process?

Chris Trotter and Dianne Tidwell will research this and present findings at the next meeting.

Question: Parents can't see how technology is used in classroom. It is so pervasive and important to have students be proficient with technology, but how do parents know how all this is being used with curriculum? Is this plan keeping us where we are now, and is that enough? Ohio has a general technology test to graduate; are we doing this?

There is implementation within our own structure to make students proficient ongoing from early grades, but we are not requiring a portfolio to graduate. There is an assessment for computer technology in 8th grade. It is more important to have technology facilitate the learning process.

Question: Will there be an online class requirement?

It is very possible that we will use more distance learning opportunities. Currently, 10th grade English classes are setting up online tutorials accounts through UT, which are more tailored to the individual student. Additionally, campuses are "skyping" with each other to have a teacher from one campus teaching a class at a different campus. We are looking into more distance learning opportunities.

Concern: Is data available on how technology is being used in regards to teacher evaluations and proficiency, development, etc.? We need to be on the cutting edge and not satisfied with the status quo.

- **Topics for Next Meeting – Transportation**

Kristi Goodman announced that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 6, at 6:30 pm at SDC 107. The first part of the meeting will address the question of the connection between curriculum and instruction with technology. Beverly Beisert from the Transportation Department will follow with her presentation.   Minutes from this meeting will be emailed to all committee members by Friday. Kristi requested members to email questions to her at thegoodmanfive@yahoo.com. She will forward those to Mr. Trotter and report back to the committee.

Mr. David Schuelke advised the committee that the presentation and notes from the meeting will be listed under "Resources" on the TISD website. Please also refer to tonight's handouts for more information.