



# Long-Range Educational Technology Plan 2019-2024



St. Mary Parish School Board

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# *St. Mary Parish Public School District*

SUPERINTENDENT  
Dr. Teresa Bagwell

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# *Long-Range Educational Technology Plan Overview*

## **Mission Statement**

It is the mission of St. Mary Parish School System to promote educational excellence by empowering stakeholders to become academically, culturally, and technologically literate.

## **Vision Statement**

It is our vision that through the collaboration of faculty, staff, administrators, parents and school board members, all students will be prepared to function as responsible, productive and caring citizens.

## **Technology Vision Statement**

St. Mary Parish School System seeks to effectively integrate technology throughout the school system to maximize student learning and teacher effectiveness. Students, faculty, staff, administrators, families, and community members will be empowered with the knowledge and skills necessary to survive and compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century through the utilization of technology.

## **Technology Plan Summary**

The St. Mary Parish Public School District Long-Range Educational Technology Plan for 2019-2024 outlines the district's vision for educational technology and includes four major action steps (objectives). While participation in the Universal Services E-Rate program no longer requires a formal technology plan, this plan will include elements that can guide future E-Rate applications.

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## *Action Steps*

Addressing the following four action steps will assist the district in developing technology integrated learning environments to support all stakeholders:

- **Action Step 1:** Strengthen Security Procedures
- **Action Step 2:** Improve Professional Development Opportunities
- **Action Step 3:** Codify Protocols for Effective Technology Use
- **Action Step 4:** Improve Access for Technology Use

While necessary revisions will occur during the life of this document, it is intended to serve as a guide and will be evaluated and revised as needed. The technology plan consists of the following sections:

1. Statement of the action step
2. Statement of the current status
3. Listing of benchmarks or targets for 2024
4. District strategies

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## *Action Step 1*

### *Strengthen Security Procedures*

#### **Statement**

The Technology Department will implement a variety of security procedures intended to support the protection of personal, student, and district data.

#### **Current Status**

1. The district provided employees with one-hour of face-to-face cybersecurity awareness training during the 2018-19 school year.
2. Technology Department personnel have applied state recommendations for network and device security.
3. Parents can opt-out of releasing personally identifiable information (PII) about their children to newspapers and websites.
4. Student passwords do not meet current recommendations for complexity.

#### **Targets for 2024**

1. Provide employees with access to current best-practices for personal and district security.
2. Remain current in state-advised security procedures by providing department redundancy.
3. Make lists of PII-approved websites and applications available to instructional personnel.
4. Increase complexity of passwords for students in Grade 6-12.

#### **District Strategies**

1. Purchase and deploy professionally prepared video instructional materials to provide information recognizing phishing and spam threats.
2. Train additional personnel on network maintenance and security procedures.
3. Create a document to be shared with district instructional personnel that lists websites and applications for which PII agreements have been approved.
4. Adjust student passwords to match current recommendations for complexity.

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## *Action Step 2*

### *Improve Professional Development Opportunities*

#### **Statement**

St. Mary Parish educators will have access to continuing professional development intended to support classroom technology integration and personal productivity.

#### **Current Status**

1. Professional development opportunities are delivered in both a face-to-face and online format.
2. There is no required professional development in technology for district employees.
3. There are an insufficient number of individuals available to provide assistance to classroom teachers for technology-dependent curriculum.

#### **Targets for 2024**

1. Provide additional avenues for teachers to receive professional development.
2. Certificated employees should complete at least two trainings per year.
3. Instructional support professionals will be able to provide technology support to teachers.

#### **District Strategies**

1. Research successful deliveries of professional development.
2. Set requirements for basic technology training.
3. Encourage participation through advertising, promotional giveaways and awards.
4. Instructional support professionals will receive training that allows them to master the technology-embedded curriculum (Train-the-Trainer Model).

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## *Action Step 3*

### *Codify Protocols for Effective Technology Use*

#### **Statement**

The Technology Department will document standard protocols for various procedures and issues and will encourage other departments to create and share similar documentation.

#### **Current Status**

1. Faculty and staff do not have a trackable method for requesting that a website or application be allowed or blocked.
2. The reasons behind and methods for creating accessible documents for district publication are understood and implemented by few employees.
3. New purchases of equipment, devices, and applications by other departments or schools are seldom reviewed by Technology Department staff.

#### **Targets for 2024**

1. Instructional personnel will understand how to request access to a blocked website/application or report an inappropriate website/application.
2. All documents posted online will meet WCAG 2.0 accessibility requirements.
3. All technology-related purchases will be reviewed by Technology Department staff before ordering.

#### **District Strategies**

1. Provide a form that allows instructional personnel to request access to websites/applications and report problem website/applications.
2. Create online documents that explain procedures for creating accessible documents and provide targeted professional development to district professionals.
3. Add Technology Department review field to purchase orders.

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## *Action Step 4*

### *Improve Access for Technology Use*

#### **Statement**

The district will seek to improve access to current computer hardware, classroom technology, high-speed Internet, and wireless connectivity for both employees and students.

#### **Current Status**

1. Wireless connectivity within school sites has been problematic, partially due to outdated or insufficient wireless access points, and legacy cabling.
2. Students in elementary grades have more access to computing devices than students at high schools or junior high schools.
3. Current content filtering appliance is outdated, suggesting the opportunity to evaluate other options.

#### **Targets for 2024**

1. Resolve wireless connectivity and Internet speed issues, ensuring wall-to-wall access for student and employee devices in schools.
2. Increase the number of computing devices available to students on a daily basis to reach 1-to-1 (one computer for each student) status.
3. Employ the services of a reliable content filter vendor who responds readily to issues and concerns.

#### **District Strategies**

1. Leverage E-rate funding to increase Internet speed and to purchase wireless access points that utilize current technology (802.11n). (District portion is 15% of total budget.)
  - a. \$283k available FY 2020-2021
  - b. \$1.6 million available FY 2021-2022
2. Utilize technology portion of proposed sales tax to purchase additional student devices for all grades until 1-to-1 status is reached.



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- a. Proposed sales tax revenue would provide new student laptops.
    - b. A reliable stream of dedicated funds would ensure 1-to-1 status with planned refreshes to maintain hardware updates.
  3. Replace existing content filter with a more robust system that corresponds to current needs.

## *Appendix A*

### *Needs Assessment Data*

| System's Strengths   | System's Weaknesses  |
|--|--|
| St. Mary Parish School Board has allocated yearly funding for the removal and/or updating of all outdated computer systems.  | St. Mary Parish lacks written guidelines for many vital operations, including hardware replacement and software acquisition.   |
| The district has provided lower-cost Windows laptop devices to many elementary classrooms.   | High schools and junior high schools lack sufficient portable devices that can be used in classrooms.  |
| All school libraries are equipped with computers for student use. Computer labs have been established on junior high and high school campuses.   | Libraries and computer labs are not readily available during testing times or when daily classes are assigned to them.   |
| A wide variety of professional development opportunities are available for St. Mary Parish educators. These include delivery using both traditional and online methods.                                  | St. Mary Parish needs additional professionals to provide support and assistance to teachers and students for integrating technology and for hardware/software troubleshooting.                            |
| The district has adopted many web-based applications and programs, including a comprehensive student information (SIS) and the state's prescribed curriculum, which utilized a host of online resources. | Technology skills are not mandatory qualifications for prospective employment in the district. No technology-specific helpdesk is available to provide just-in-time assistance from trained professionals. |
| The district has a program in place that is intended to educate students on topics related to cyberbullying and Internet safety.   | While well-intentioned, program lacks oversight and must be updated to meet new state requirements.  |
| Through the support of E-rate discounts and district funding, the St. Mary Parish Technology Department continues to upgrade district Internet access.   | Some schools still lack wall-to-wall Internet connectivity, partly due to aging switches and insufficient wireless access points.  |
| The district employs a variety of applications intended to protect student and employee data and to provide  | The Internet content filter prevents access by students and employees to sites that are not appropriate for school use, as   |

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| monitoring for increased safety and security. A process for requesting the review of blocked sites exists.           | determined by Technology Department staff. No formal protocols exist for allowing or blocking a site.                                |
| St. Mary Parish provides access to students and employees to purchased services including Office 365 and Blackboard. | Teachers are not always aware of purchased or approved applications and how to use them effectively.                                 |
| Many classrooms have been equipped with interactive whiteboards or large screen displays.                            | Most classrooms are ill-equipped for technology integration since they lack electric outlets, Ethernet jacks, and lighting controls. |

Data Source: District Speak Up Survey Results (October 2019)

**Summary:**

As predicted in past technology plans, technology use in St. Mary Parish has become ubiquitous. District employees and students rely on computers, databases, and network access to complete daily tasks. While St. Mary Parish has made great strides in providing increased fiber connectivity to schools, wireless access within classrooms, and devices for student and employee use, budgeting for upgrades will continue to be an issue as advancing technologies make existing hardware and capacities obsolete.

Support for technology use has become increasingly more important. The district’s adoption of the state’s curriculum resources, all of which are online, have highlighted the need to evaluate the Technology Department’s budget, its policies and practices, and its personnel in order to prepare for future growth. District teachers are required to use online tools and applications to support instruction, and students need regular access to computer technology in order to take advantage of these learning tools. Students also need guidance from knowledgeable adults in order to gain skills needed for their safe and effective navigation in the digital world.

Data indicate that district teachers in general seek out professional development to improve their classroom practice and to improve their technology proficiency. There is no longer a wall between technology and curriculum; as a result, district instructional specialists and district educational technology specialists must work together to blend

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professional development opportunities in order to promote classroom integration of technology as a seamless part of instruction.

The greatest potential for influencing student learning lies in providing adequate assistance to district classrooms. Without sufficient technical and instructional support, teachers and students will become frustrated with aging classroom equipment that no longer meets the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century students.