

Hello, my name is Russ Reid, and I am representing the excluded staff in the IT department for the School District.

We have worked with the district to provide the necessary tools to reduce day to day costs of running a business. Just one of these tools is the Parent Portal. This portal effectively eliminates reams of paper and ink that were previously used to print announcements, registrations and assessments. In addition, it helps communicate with parents and simplify many processes including providing parents the option to submit permission for field trips online. We regularly update the portal in an effort to have it meet the evolving needs of staff and parents alike. *What would happen if we could no longer add to or enhance this program to meet the ever changing needs of the district?* Our department also designed and manages the Emergency Contact List app which is installed on administrator cell phones; thus, saving time and improving communication in urgent and emergency situations. Both the Parent Portal and ECL App are software products that have the potential to be marketed to other school districts resulting in generated revenue for our district.

We are also positioning ourselves for future savings through technology implemented today. One example would be with the transition to VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) phone systems. When current contracts for analog service at our schools and facilities expire, we will be in a position to consolidate the multiple existing phone lines resulting in savings while continuing to provide effective communication for schools and their students. *[For example: Mike Murray joining us on Lync through VOIP services, supported by IT]*

As members of the excluded staff, we provide value to the District by being available during off hours to resolve unexpected IT issues. We are also able to schedule system upgrades during these off hours and minimize the impact on staff and students. Sometimes this involves working into the early morning or weekend hours to ensure services are back up and running for staff the next day. All without burdening the District with overtime costs.

Through an internal IT budget review process, we have found areas to meet the requested budget reduction while making every effort possible to see that the proposed cuts to our department will have the least amount of impact on our students.

It's easy to dismiss how essential a consistently available network with minimum disruptions is when students and staff are not experiencing the pain associated with a network that is not delivering services as required. As a teacher, you can reliably expect to come into your classroom, open your laptop, connect to the wireless and your projector and start teaching. Students can dependably expect to open up their laptops or start using their iPads that connect to the wireless and Office365 to begin working collaboratively with other students. How would a day in the classroom be different if this were not possible?

We thank you for your time and consideration as you make the tough decisions ahead of you.

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR THE BOARD:

SharePoint, the staff intranet, developed by the IT Department, hosts team sites to assist staff working directly with students. The IEP site, for instance, allows confidential documents to be organized and updated in a secure manner thereby removing sensitive data stored on laptops. Storing them online in further results in a reduced need for printed copies. Providing available staff and funding, there are many other areas of opportunity for cost savings by digitizing existing processes.

Without IT championing the cause to standardize the network so that there is consistency across the district, which involves coordinating and in some cases pressing PLNet to upgrade as many schools as possible, who would ensure this is happening. In cases where either extra bandwidth was needed or PLNet could not provide adequate bandwidth, then paying for augmented Internet connections from the IT budget.