Focusing on Technology --
A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

It can be difficult to develop a clear picture of the future of educational technology. The world is constantly changing, and the District serves a different student population today than a few years ago. The ever-changing 21st century world creates new challenges for educators and the teaching and learning process. Educational leaders have a responsibility to ensure that students are prepared.

As technology evolves, traditional teaching methods no longer fit today's student learning needs. The "M" generation, as they are referred to, is always wired to media, spend four hours each day in front of a video monitor, and spend nearly two hours per day with music. Nearly 70% have a TV in their bedroom and 31% have a computer. Educators frequently modify instructional techniques to fit the changing learning styles of students.

"There is clearly a need for educators to address the new 21st century skills that will help prepare students to be 'world class' in an ever-changing world," explained Jay Marino, Associate Superintendent of Organizational Effectiveness and Accountability. "These skills include information processing, information presentation, independent problem solving, and interdependent team-working."

The District is committed to developing competent teachers that are prepared to teach this new generation of learners.

What is the Technology Vision? The District technology vision incorporates input from multiple stakeholder groups, customers, and both District and community task force findings. The primary focus is on student achievement. To support the teaching of curriculum standards, there must be greater access to digital content, including online multimedia, virtual field trips, and a variety of distance learning opportunities for students.

"Students should be able to interact with other classrooms around the District, state, nation and world," Marino explained. "They need opportunities to interact with professionals in the working world and need real-life exposure. The electronic classroom we propose contains access to wireless mobile computing for just-in-time learning and the ability to project instruction to an interactive white board or screen in the classroom."

The technology vision also calls for an emphasis on the effective use of educational technology to ensure the focus on student learning remains primary. All staff will participate in technology training and demonstrate competency for using instructional technology. Training will take place in formal workshops and will also be available online for anytime learning to occur.

Components of the Technology Vision

- **Wireless laptop mobile computer labs for classroom use**
- **Electronic white boards**
- **Video conferencing units**
- **Ceiling-mounted computer projectors**
- **Technology training for all staff**
- **Access to digital content and electronic field trips**
- **Online and distance learning**
- **Data warehousing and management systems**
- **High speed network**

To ensure that data-driven decision-making becomes prominent in the school culture, the vision calls for data warehouse and reporting solutions. The proposed data systems will allow for data retrieval and reporting "on the fly" as specified by users, allowing for "drilling down and through" multiple data sources from one location. In an instant, users can filter, sort, aggregate, and disaggregate data according to their specific purpose and need.

"Staff members need to be able to access student achievement data at any time and as easily as possible," said Marino. "Immediate 'real time' access to data will need to be user friendly and simple."

The continued deployment of "parent portals" to provide parents immediate access to student progress and achievement information is also important. In addition, business functions in support services will be automated through the incorporation of software solutions to enhance efficiency and accuracy.

To support the proposed technology vision, a robust network upgrade is required. This network will allow for video conferencing, video streaming, fast data transfer, storage and retrieval and will support complete wireless access at all District sites. Most importantly, the network will allow effective digital content to be implemented in all classrooms.

This vision for educational technology, backed by stakeholder input, external recommendations, research, and best practices, demonstrates the District's visionary leadership and provides a foundation to accomplish the District mission of "developing world class learners" in this ever-changing world in which our students compete.