



## **River Valley SD Technology Survey Support, Infrastructure, and Equipment Findings and Recommendations**

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Completed by: Cooperative Educational Service Agency 5 (Portage, Wisconsin)

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## **Introduction**

### **Scope of the Project**

In the fall of 2024, the River Valley School District requested that CESA 5 conduct a technology and instructional material survey for the River Valley School District. Specifically, the project focused on surveying and compiling results for district technology support, infrastructure, equipment, and instructional resources in grades PK-12 and providing feedback and recommendations based on the survey results. This report specifically focuses on the aspects of the survey results, such as technology support, infrastructure, and equipment.

### **Description of CESA 5**

CESA 5 (Portage, WI) is one of Wisconsin's 12 Cooperative Educational Service Agencies. CESA 5 employs approximately 250 staff who provide educational staffing, training, and other services to its 35-member school districts throughout the state.

### **Notice**

This report and subsequent recommendations made by CESA 5 are based on survey results and the professional opinion of CESA 5 staff. Upon the completion of this review by CESA 5, further evaluation and action by your school district is required. Otherwise, the original intent of this project, which is to understand the technology support, infrastructure, and equipment used within the district, will not be realized. Thank you for choosing CESA 5 to assist your school district. Overview CESA 5 distributed a short survey to staff in November 2024. Staff were asked to submit data for each question. Data for each school, grade level, and subject area were compiled and analyzed.

## **Device Reliability**

**Findings:** Survey results show that the reliability of school-provided devices (laptops, tablets, projectors, interactive displays) is generally rated positively, with most respondents giving a rating of 4 out of 5.

### **Recommendations:**

- River Valley should continue investing in reliable devices and ensure they are updated and maintained. This includes providing adequate training and support to staff and students on using and caring for the devices.
- There should also be a plan for repairing or replacing devices that are not working. Do not use technology assets beyond their end-of-life date.

## **Technical Issues with School Devices**

**Findings:** While most respondents reported that they did not experience frequent technical issues with their school devices, some indicated that they did. Common problems cited by respondents included no internet connectivity and issues with interactive TVs.

### **Recommendations:**

- Internet issues can be common on wireless devices like laptops and Chromebooks if they are not shut down or restarted regularly. System policies can be implemented to do this to help with this issue. Devices are also available to monitor the wifi network for any issues and report them to the technology team.
- The technology team should have a process for quickly troubleshooting and resolving technical issues to minimize disruptions to teaching and learning. This could include providing on-site IT support, offering remote assistance, or contracting with a third-party provider.
- The technology team should also proactively maintain and update their devices to prevent technical issues from arising.
- The technology team should gather specific details and evidence to identify patterns that might provide insight or clues to recurring common problems.

## **Classroom Technology to Support Instructional Needs**

**Findings:** Nearly all respondents indicated that their classrooms were equipped with the technology needed to support their instructional needs.

### **Recommendations:**

- As technology changes, schools should regularly assess their classrooms to ensure they have the necessary technology to support teaching and learning. This may include surveying

teachers to gather feedback on their technology needs. Creating a group that meets regularly consisting of the IT team, teachers, and administrators can discuss future technology needs in the classroom and the district.

- Create and annually update a five-year technology plan that touches on updating and replacing technology, including devices like interactive televisions, computers, Chromebooks, and mobile devices.
- Establish one or two standards for classrooms for each level(elementary, middle, high), identifying what equipment is part of the standard and the classroom layout. Create a replacement plan to fund this standard.

### **School Infrastructure Reliability**

**Findings:** Most respondents indicated that their school's infrastructure (e.g., internet and WiFi connectivity) was reliable for supporting day-to-day teaching.

#### **Recommendations:**

- The district should continue to invest in and maintain their infrastructure. This includes ensuring that they have adequate bandwidth to support the use of digital devices and online resources.
- When infrastructure issues arise, schools should have a plan for addressing them quickly and efficiently.
- Infrastructure equipment should be included in the five-year plan to make sure it doesn't get outdated to the current needs of client devices.

### **Content Filter Access**

**Findings:** Most respondents indicated that the school's content filter allowed proper access to necessary resources. Some respondents mentioned that they feel that sometimes websites can be overblocked, making resources unavailable.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Content filters can make it difficult to maintain a good balance between keeping students and staff safe and having the necessary internet access. It is better to lean on the side of caution and unblock sites that are checked over first before approval. Staff should plan ahead of time when needing something unblocked for an upcoming lesson.
- The technology team should regularly review or update their content filters to ensure that they provide appropriate access to online resources while protecting students from harmful content.
- The technology team should also have a process in place for teachers to request that specific sites be unblocked if they are needed for instructional purposes.

## **IT Personnel**

**Findings:** Most respondents felt that there were enough IT personnel available to support the school's technology needs.

### **Recommendations:**

- The district should ensure that they have adequate IT staff to support the use of technology in the classroom. The National Education Association recommends a ratio of one full-time IT professional for every 500 students.
- The district should allow ongoing professional development for its IT staff to keep their skills up-to-date.

## **Technology-Related Tasks and Instructional Time**

**Findings:** Most respondents indicated that technology-related tasks (e.g., troubleshooting, device setup) did not take up too much of their instructional time.

### **Recommendations:**

- The technology team should continue to find ways to minimize interruptions in the classroom. This helps keep the teacher and the kids focused in the class.

## **IT Personnel Knowledge**

**Findings:** Nearly all respondents agreed that IT personnel were knowledgeable and able to assist with basic and advanced technology issues.

**Recommendations:** Schools should ensure that IT personnel have the knowledge and skills needed to support the use of technology in the classroom. This could include providing ongoing professional development and training opportunities.

## **Technology Support Staff Accessibility and Responsiveness**

**Findings:** Most respondents found the technology support staff accessible and responsive.

### **Recommendations:**

- The technology team should ensure that they are accessible and responsive to the needs of teachers and students.
- This includes providing multiple ways for users to contact support staff (e.g., tickets, email, phone, online chat) and responding to requests in a timely manner. Helpdesk tickets should be the primary means of contact unless there is an emergency where an email, chat, or

phone call could be used. It is recommended that in case of emergency, staff should still follow up with a ticket.

- The technology team should approach their work with patience and understanding.

## **Time to Resolve Technical Issues**

**Findings:** Respondents who answered the question about the time it takes to resolve technical issues generally stated that issues were resolved fairly quickly or within the day.

### **Recommendations:**

- The technology team should resolve technical issues as quickly as possible and minimize disruptions to teaching and learning.
- A ticket system should be used as the primary means of communication regarding technology issues. This allows for the tracking and monitoring of the issue, how long it takes to resolve, what was done to resolve the issue, and correspondence back with the staff member.

## **Additional Comments About Technology and Technology Staff**

**Findings:** Some respondents provided additional comments about technology and technology staff. Most respondents expressed happiness with the technology team and their timeliness in their support, while a few expressed some concern about speed in resolving an issue and professionalism. There were some concerns about needing support or training for various things like the interactive TVs and somebody to help with integrating technology into the classroom.

### **Recommendations:**

- The technology team should solicit feedback from teachers and staff on their experiences with technology and technology support.
- The technology team should use this feedback to improve their technology program and ensure that the team is providing adequate support.

## **Overall Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the survey and best practices for K-12 schools, the following recommendations are made to ensure that technology is effectively supporting teaching and learning:

- Invest in devices and infrastructure and maintain them properly.
- Have a plan in place for quickly troubleshooting and resolving technical issues.
- Regularly assess classrooms to ensure they have the necessary technology to support instruction.

- Create a technology group that meets to discuss the district's current and future technology needs.
- Review and update content filters to provide appropriate access to online resources.
- Ensure that there are enough IT personnel to support the school's technology needs.
- Provide ongoing professional development to IT staff and teachers on the use of technology.
- Ensure that IT personnel are knowledgeable and able to assist with basic and advanced technology issues.
- Ensure the technology support staff is accessible, responsive, patient, and understanding.
- Strive to resolve technical problems quickly.
- Solicit feedback from teachers and staff on their experiences with technology and technology support and use this feedback to improve the technology program.