It is that time of year again when students and teachers have begun a new school year. Like every new school year, old friends will catch up on what happened over the summer and new friends will be made. There is a feeling of excitement about the learning opportunities that students will have and perhaps some apprehension about challenges that may lay ahead.

This sense of newness, excitement and apprehension are felt throughout the schools and district office. As students and teachers dive into the learning, school and district staff are busily providing appropriate services to support them. In this edition, we share with you stories from across Canada about the work that districts are doing to support today’s contemporary learning environment. You will find out how districts are strategically ‘tucking’ technology tightly into their Learning Plans, providing increased access to devices and cloud-based digital resources and optimizing their infrastructures by embracing the cloud-based services.

I invite you to read the articles inside and engage in a conversation with our IBM K-12 team on any of the ideas and services described. We would be honoured to work with you and your district as you provide the best learning experience for your staff and students!

Sincerely, Anne Saftich, IBM Chief Education Officer
asaftich@ca.ibm.com

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**Highlights**

**British Columbia**

The BC K-12 Team is on the go with many initiatives across the province. Areas that are high priorities with the districts include:

**Strategic Planning for Infrastructure and New Technologies**

Many districts have engaged the IBM K-12 team to conduct a formal assessment of their current technology infrastructure in order to evaluate the needs of instruction and learning over the next 3-5 years. Every district wants to tie their technology investment much closer to their education priorities. Over the last few months, our team of K-12 subject-matter experts has been engaged with Rocky Mountain SD 6, Comox Valley SD 71, Okanagan Shuswap SD 83 and several others, to help them better understand the new technologies and best practices that can impact both IT and curriculum.

**SCCM and Mobile Device Management (MDM)**

SCCM is becoming a BC standard. With the ongoing provincial licensing opportunities that Microsoft offers, many districts have taken advantage of the great tools available in SCCM. These districts, just to name a few, include Delta SD 37, Port Alberni SD 70, South East Kootenay SD 5, Sea to Sky SD 48, Central Okanagan SD 23, and Abbotsford SD 34. MDM has become a priority to achieve the most effective management of iOS, Windows, and other devices. Coquitlam SD 43, along with South East Kootenay SD 5, are currently completing their implementation of iOS, Windows, and other devices. Coquitlam SD 43, along with South East Kootenay SD 5, are currently completing their implementation of iOS, Windows, and other devices. Coquitlam SD 43, along with South East Kootenay SD 5, are currently completing their implementation of iOS, Windows, and other devices. Coquitlam SD 43, along with South East Kootenay SD 5, are currently completing their implementation of iOS, Windows, and other devices. Coquitlam SD 43, along with South East Kootenay SD 5, are currently completing their implementation of iOS, Windows, and other devices. Coquitlam SD 43, along with South East Kootenay SD 5, are currently completing their implementation of iOS, Windows, and other devices.

New Telephony Technology Helps to Reduce IT Costs

SIP Trunking is a Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and streaming media service which should be a priority with school districts to provide savings. This technology works with either the older phone environments or newer IP telephone infrastructure. It is enhanced with Microsoft's Skype for Business (MysFlBC), and a district-wide technology refresh and renewal. Richmond School District 38 is beginning their mail conversion to Microsoft Exchange and SharePoint with our business partner, Scholantis and their ePortfolio.

For more information contact: Steve Cuccione, IBM K-12 Education Client Manager, at scuccione@ca.ibm.com or Chris King, IT Architect, at cmking@ca.ibm.com.

**Alberta / Saskatchewan / Manitoba**

Alberta:

Rocky View Schools (RVS)

The leadership team at Rocky View brought in IBM to conduct an IT Optimization and Organizational Assessment in late 2014. This collaborative effort reviewed all of Rocky View’s IT infrastructure (devices, servers/SAN, security, and networking), as well as the IT team structure and alignment for supporting the division’s needs. The final report identified priorities and opportunities for RVS. It included strategies for industry best practices to drive efficiencies in managing technology and IT team capacity building, both of which ultimately support student learning requirements.

Saskatchewan:

North West School Division (NWSD)

In partnership with the IT Leadership team, IBM worked with NWSD staff to develop a best practices model for device deployment utilizing the latest tools in MS System Centre Configuration Manager (SCCM). This involved the creation, testing, and employment of a new image strategy for the 2000+ devices being installed this summer. It was further augmented with a centralized virtualization scheme using MS Hyper V technology and the System Center Virtual Machine Manager management suite. NWSD central data and storage sites were upgraded to support the latest technologies, along with IT team education through hands-on knowledge transfer.

Manitoba:

Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM)

DSFM wanted to migrate their distributed ADS domain design to a centralized model that would leverage their recent upgrade in WAN speeds. This work effort was complemented by the recent release of IBM’s SchoolConnect 6.3 that supports both the end user experience, and the IT team ID management process. IBM began the project in May, as soon as French language support was made available in SchoolConnect, and will be working toward completion of the rollout with DSFM staff in the fall.

For more information contact: Joanne Jackson, IBM K-12 Education Client Manager, at jjackson@ca.ibm.com.

**Northern Ontario**

Simeon Muskoka Catholic District School Board (SMCDSB)

Working with IBM’s K-12 Education Consulting Practice, SMCDSB deployed new infrastructure and classroom technology to 25% of their district within a three month period. The remaining 75% was rolled out this summer. IBM’s Education Consultants continue to work with Apple Canada, SMCDSB Senior Administration, Academic Services, and ICT to ensure the project plan meets SMCDSB’s strategic goals.

Key topics of interest in Northern Ontario are:

- IBM’s recent award of OEMC’s Cloud Technology RFP
- IBM’s Cloud Readiness Assessment
- Critical infrastructure projects using SCCM

Ottawa Catholic District School Board (OCDSB)

As an IT thought leader, Ottawa Catholic DSb was looking to the future for Disaster Recovery options. They engaged IBM K-12 Education to perform our Disaster Recovery/Cloud Readiness Assessment to see how viable Cloud DR was for them. An IBM K-12 IT Consultant analyzed all the major Cloud vendor solutions, while examining best practices DR options that Ottawa Catholic could implement. This consulting work is complete, and Ottawa Catholic has made the decision to move to the Cloud for Disaster Recovery services. They will begin with a proof of concept to ensure full functionality, and expect to have Cloud DR implemented by the fall.

Durham District School Board (DDSB)

As Durham is preparing to expand and grow BYOD in the district, they wanted to ensure their infrastructure was ready to handle the anticipated increase in network traffic. They engaged IBM K-12 IT Consulting Services to do a full BYOD Infrastructure Readiness Assessment. IBM looked at security, as well as the entire wired and wireless infrastructure, to highlight what was working well and what changes needed to be made. DDSB is now in test mode with a planned phased implementation of an expanded BYOD program as resources and budget allow.

For more information contact: Lui De Dominicis, IBM K-12 Education Client Manager, at luide@ca.ibm.com.

**South / Central / Eastern Ontario**

For more information contact: Tai Lui De Dominicis, IBM K-12 Education Client Manager, at luide@ca.ibm.com.

continued on page 4
Niagara Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) 

While in the process of developing a Technology Roadmap for the district, NCDSB realized there was an immediate need to update SCCM from 2007 to 2012 to better leverage the features available in 2012. They worked with IBM’s K-12 IT Consultants to build the upgrade plan, create images, and perform the SCCM upgrade based on our extensive “Best practices for SCCM implementation in school districts.” Completion of the SCCM upgrade is planned for the end of August, just in time for back to school.

Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board (PVNCCDSB) 

PVNCCDSB is well regarded for their focus on linking teaching and learning goals to their technology plan. Earlier this year, they asked IBM’s K-12 Education Consulting Practice to work with stakeholders from across the district and help to develop a “Bring Your Own Device” (BYOD) strategy. The engagement included:

• helping to define the goals of the BYOD initiative
• recommended indicators of success that will be monitored and measured throughout the initiative to enable ongoing reflection and refinement of the initiative
• recommendations related to the grade levels for initial implementation and the grades which may follow over the next three years
• articulation of the minimal acceptable ‘device’ specifications (i.e. Wi-Fi capable, screen size, etc.)
• recommendations related to the expectations of use and guidelines for use.

Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) 

As part of WRDSB’s strategy to move to a highly virtualized server environment, they engaged IBM to assist them in migrating from legacy, non-redundant 1 Gbps virtual networks to new 10 Gbps fully-redundant virtual networks. IBM was able to help WRDSB to:

• Increase virtual network capacity by 20x and alleviate virtual network capacity issues
• Implement full virtual and physical network redundancy and fail-over capabilities within the WRDSB data centers
• Provide a seamless, non-disruptive migration of production virtual machines from legacy 1 Gbps to 20 Gbps virtual networks
• Simplify virtual network administration and configuration using a combination of physical switch configuration and implementation of distributed virtual switches.

For more information contact: Frank Grano, IBM K-12 Education Client Manager, at fgrano@ca.ibm.com.

South Western Ontario 

Lambton Kent District School Board (LKDSB) 

Phase 1 of LKDSB’s multi-year strategic plan is now complete. After engaging IBM K-12 to create an IT Optimization Plan in early 2014, the Board continued to partner with IBM for the implementation of their plan. This phase included migrating Novell to Microsoft technologies, building a single Active Directory, designing a centralized imaging system with custom Windows 7 images, and designing a file and print solution. LKDSB staff were integral to the rollout, and the IBM-LKDSB teams worked in tandem to deliver the new environment on a tight schedule with minimal disruption to each school. The teams deployed the entire solution to 68 locations in under four months. The rollout plan involved SchoolConnect training options for each school during and post-deployment, including hands-on workshops, videos and how-to guides.

Chris Marvell, Manager of IT at LKDSB, commented on the Phase 1 project. “We have been extremely pleased with this massive technology rollout. The IBM team brought a huge amount of experience to the project, as well as hard work, dedication and professionalism - they have been a fantastic partner, and we could not have reached our objectives in the time scales required without them. Our joint effort was truly appreciated across the Board, exceeding school and department expectations, minimizing disruption during the transition, and providing a much more modern and flexible technical environment. This new infrastructure will be the bedrock upon which we build new services to improve technology in the classroom and increase board efficiency. Thank you IBM Canada K-12!”

For more information contact: Julie Parkyn, IBM K-12 Education Client Manager, at jparkyn@ca.ibm.com.

Some more information about the SBDSB:

• Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board (PVNCCDSB) 
  • They have engaged IBM to assist them in their BYOD strategy. 
  • They have asked IBM’s Education Consulting Practice to work with stakeholders from across the district and help to develop a “Bring Your Own Device” (BYOD) strategy. 

How Simcoe Muskoka “Lands the Plane”

By 2012, Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board (SMCDSB) thought that they had solved their technology integration challenge. They had called in IBM K-12 Education and Technical Consultants to share their insight, and help create a plan to tightly integrate their technology with their learning agenda. SMCDSB then made the required investments in technology to develop the infrastructure to support this plan.

Fast-forward to December 2014 … the plan created two years earlier had still not taken root. Brian Beal, Director of Education, realized something needed to be done to propel the project forward, and so he contacted IBM. Senior Education Consultant Jonathan Bibby was hired to create the process to bring their well thought out learning plan to life.

A focus on student engagement

Brian’s particular goal was to increase student engagement. Understanding the student voice (with or without technology) was the key to engagement. Brian knew that particular areas of focus for the district should be Grades 4 to 6, Grade 9 religion, and the applied level programming at high school, especially math. In addition to this, Brian had a broader challenge for IBM.

The district recently completed an extensive process to develop a new strategic priorities document, of which they are very proud. Our Faith, Our Future is the guiding document moving the district forward. The plan that Jonathan was to develop with SMCDSB, needed to be tightly connected to this work.

Jonathan’s first step was to have one-on-one meetings with staff who were involved in educational technology work, so as to determine their successes and challenges. Key themes emerged, some of which were noted in the 2012 study:

• Pockets of excellence existed, but there was no real drive towards systemic change
• There were perceived silos between ICT and Academic Services
• There was a desire and need for consistent models of technology in schools, which needed to be used effectively and supported by professional learning for teachers; and most importantly
• A plan was needed and it had to be driven forward by decisive leadership.

Drives out a new learning plan

With all of this in mind, a new SMCDSB learning plan was born called Engage and Transform. Brian launched the plan to the 50 district principals and other leaders at the end of March 2015, with a call to action. The plan has some key underlying messages reflecting the voices from the system:

• the need to stay focused
• the need to align the work of the district; and
• the need to transform the teaching and learning experience for all, which would lead to engaged students achieving their full potential.

In order to do all of this, it would be necessary to create a culture of systemic thinking.

With effective leadership involvement

Brian also recognized that he and Peter Derocz, Associate Director, would have to be closely involved with the implementation in order to effectively mobilize the system forces required. Along with Jonathan, who provided ongoing high level project management and consulting assistance, they formed a tight governance team to ‘land the plane’. This team included the work of the ICT department and academic services staff to ensure that everyone moved toward the same goal, and that key milestones, deliverables and dates were met.

Brings innovation throughout the district

SMCDSB’s communications department created comprehensive internal and external plans, in consultation with IBM, to help move the project forward, and to keep stakeholders informed, engaged and excited about the plan. The district now has an Engage and Transform website and uses press releases and social media to tweet about the project as it progresses. Staff are kept up-to-date about upcoming changes and the evolution of the project.

The work is not yet over – academic services staff are creating and implementing a K-12 learning plan which aligns all of their professional learning and support with a focus on students as collaborative contributors; an assessment plan for this learning plan will also soon follow.

The entire educational community of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board is aligned in its efforts to Engage and Transform the teaching and learning agenda. Brian is looking forward to continuing the strategic partnership with IBM, as the project enters its first full year of implementation, and generating results for both staff and students. Brian constantly reminds us of the final words of the Board’s vision – “we are working together to transform our world … and the partnership with IBM is crucial to the realization of this vision. Our students, both present and future, are depending upon us to get this right.”

For more information contact: Jonathan Bibby, IBM K-12 Senior Education Consultant, at jhbibby@ca.ibm.com.
SchoolConnect 6.3 is now available!

The much anticipated software release provides new features, updates to existing functionality, a new LanSchool version and new SchoolConnect services.

New Features

CloudDrive
- Drive mapping to cloud storage on Windows devices
- Allows users with local programs to open, modify and save files directly to the cloud
- Direct cloud storage is accessible without syncing files or folders with local storage
- Assigns cloud storage type based on user type, on a per school basis
- Cloud storage icon appears automatically during system logon
- Supported storage: Google Drive, MS OneDrive, OneDrive for Business
- Enabled upon request: Dropbox, WebDAV-FTP, Amazon Web Services, Openstack
- Support for Active Directory Federation Services (ADFS).

French Support
Available for teacher and student functions including the Password Self-Service Portal, the BYOD landing page and user documentation.

Chromebook Support
All of the SchoolConnect web pages (for Admins, Teachers and Students), SchoolConnect Web Services (BYOD, Remote File Access, Password Self-Service Portal) and LanSchool are supported on Chromebooks.

Grade Groups
SchoolConnect now creates a group for each grade within the grade OU. This allows administrators to assign a different password policy and account lockout policy by grade.

Itinerant Administrators
Principals, VPs and Secretaries can be itinerant as Office Users.

Resource Search for Administrators
Any level of administrator can now enter a search query from within SchoolConnect to locate users, groups or machines. SchoolConnect will search your Active Directory and find the location of the entity without allowing direct access to AD. This means that when admins are creating a user and receive a message “user already exists”, the admin can search AD from the SchoolConnect interface to locate the resource.

This function provides the ability to find resources quickly and easily.

LanSchool 7.8.1
- The LanSchool Connection Server now supports up to 10,000 connections, will auto direct the Student and Teacher to the correct LCS and includes the ability to auto update the Teacher agent
- The functionality of the Chromebook Student is upgraded to include popular LanSchool features such as View Student, Show Student, Save Snapshot and Chat

• There is a new configurable option that will ask students to grant permission to allow a Teacher to view their screen.

SchoolConnect Services
- BYOD Web Interface / Palo Alto Integration for SSO: This is a service that integrates the SchoolConnect BYOD interface with the Palo Alto Captive Portal to enable Single Sign-on. The service leverages the Palo Alto APIs and customizes the SchoolConnect BYOD interface to allow end users to authenticate once
- SchoolConnect ID Provisioning: This service automates the creation of User IDs and groups in AD based on automated extracts from a district’s Student Information System and Human Resources System
- ID Federation and Synchronization: This service implements synchronization of Active Directory (AD) user accounts and passwords with the Google and/or Azure Active Directory. In addition, Active Directory Federation Services (ADFS) can be implemented to authenticate users based on the on-premises AD and enable single sign-on without storing passwords in the cloud.

Coming in Fall 2015
- iPad Printing
- 64-Bit Multi-Threaded ADSync Tool

CloudDrive
- Drive mapping to cloud storage: Google Drive, OneDrive, OneDrive for Business
- Ability to assign a different password policy and account lockout policy by grade
- ID Federation and synchronization services with Google and/or Azure

SchoolConnect 6.3

Highlights

• Drive mapping to cloud storage: Google Drive, OneDrive, OneDrive for Business
• Ability to assign a different password policy and account lockout policy by grade
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IBM CloudDrive
In 2011, the BC Ministry of Education (MOE) engaged in a province-wide project to review the technology infrastructure in every school district and determine future needs. Not surprisingly, their most important need was reliable Internet access. It was apparent that the 18 year old Provincial Learning Network had exceeded its capacity for efficient service due to the incredible growth in networking and Internet demands in the schools.

In 2014, after designing a new network architecture, the MOE began installation of the Next Generation Network (NGN) centred around Palo Alto firewall technology. Currently 669 schools and over 50% of the provincial student population are benefiting from the NGN.

Feedback is very positive from the classroom and IT

Recent interviews reveal that BC districts are receiving much faster and more reliable access to educational resources in BC and the rest of the world. A short video created by the Central Okanagan School District in Kelowna, is an excellent example of how the new NGN is positively affecting teaching and learning. https://video.ad23.bc.ca/videos/video/1287/.

Doug Gray, Administrator at the McWilliams Innovation Centre, says that “In SD 23, we have a student innovation site and the idea behind the site is to create programs and services for the students with a blend of the best use of technology with the best use of learning. We try to stay current in the best learning practices and also push the boundaries in technology. And for that reason, we are really blessed to have the NGN that is allowing us to create programs and services that we otherwise couldn’t have done.”

As much as 10% of the student population, from Kindergarten to Grade 12, takes advantage of SD 23’s blended learning program. This year, their students have gone on over 50 virtual field trips, one of which allowed them to go to the Great Barrier Reef and talk to a scuba diver who was 5 meters under the water! These exciting educational programs would have been impossible without the new NGN.

District IT departments also benefit from increased security and network manageability and the NGN provides the latest technologies for upgrading and scaling as district requirements change in the coming years.

This significant project highlights the value of the strong partnership between the BC Ministry of Education, the BC Government Office of the CIO, IBM Canada K-12 Division, X10 Networks, and TELUS.

For more information email: Steve Cuccione at scuccione@cs.ubc.ca, James Shyptka at james.shyptka@gov.bc.ca, or Garth Caters at garth.caters@telus.com.

NGN – A Great Success Story for BC’s Ministry of Education

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For more information email: Steve Cuccione at scuccione@cs.ubc.ca, James Shyptka at james.shyptka@gov.bc.ca, or Garth Caters at garth.caters@telus.com.

The Chinook School Division (CSD) has its division office located in Swift Current, two hours west of Regina. They are famous for at least two things. The first is Scotty the T-Rex, which is one of the largest, most complete Tyrannosaurus Rex skeletons in the world. The second is the amazing 98% technology-refresh project that they completed throughout the division in a mere 14 months.

The division’s technology infrastructure had become dated and they also had a large open-source footprint. As a result, Chinook had serious challenges in securing skilled technical staff, and great difficulty with integrating their existing systems with newer technologies such as MS SharePoint, and Cloud services. So, CSD contacted IBM K-12 Education technical consultants to conduct an Infrastructure Technology Optimization Review (ITOP).

After a technical deep dive and discussions with all levels of the division’s stakeholders to better understand the issues and challenges they faced, as well as the vision of Chinook Senior Management, IBM recommended a conversion to the Microsoft platform. This meant Windows Server, MS SharePoint, MS Active Directory, IBM SchoolConnect, Palo Alto firewalls, MS Office 365 and much more.

Initially, it was the intention of the school division to implement the IBM recommendations using its own IT resources. However, given recent changes to their IT staff, the desire to complete the full implementation of the roadmap within one academic year, and the education necessary for the IT staff, CSD realized they needed help. As such, the IBM K-12 Team was asked to provide the design, implementation, management and most importantly, IT education, for all projects included in the new technology roadmap.

From the deployment in a pilot school in May 2014 to the final two schools completed in July 2015, the overall solution included the following key elements:

- Provide training and documentation to Chinook IT staff to enable support of all solution systems
- Architect and implement MS Active Directory Services
- Install and configure MS SCCM, including End Point Protection and Software Updates
- Create a new Windows workstation image with SCCM, including Driver Packaging
- Create App-V packages with SCCM integration
- Architect an optimal network design for the WAN, LAN, and wireless networks with an enterprise firewall installation and configuration
- Install and configure school servers in a VM environment
- Install and configure an enterprise backup solution
- Design and implement a new division web portal
- Migrate the division from the existing email application to a cloud-based solution
- Provide project management for the implementation in all 28 schools and the division office.

As a result of the ITOP roadmap, a number of other division challenges were also addressed.

Ease of use and security enhanced!

Through the integration of user IDBs with e-mail, the division portal and other systems, both administrative and academic panels enjoy Enterprise Single Sign-On. There is now a secure teacher take-home laptop program, and secure file access from home through a standard web browser for all users.

Efficiencies lower costs!

Network traffic is isolated and routed properly, allowing optimization of the available bandwidth; the wireless network is robust, scalable, standardized and BYOD ready; multiple virtualized servers will run off of a single physical box resulting in fewer physical servers and easier management and backup.

Kyle McIntyre, Deputy Director of Chinook School Division, stated, “We at Chinook had a vision to provide a 21st century technological and learning experience for our students and staff. We knew that IBM’s K-12 team had the expertise and the strategic partnerships, to assist us to meet this goal.”

“Throughout the rebuild IBM’s support was invaluable and for our schools has been absolutely outstanding. We are now positioned to provide our students and staff wireless connectivity in any of our division’s buildings and have created a collaborative cloud portal that is world class: Chinook and IBM rock!”

For more information contact: David Ell, Strategic Planning Consultant, at daveell@cs.ubc.ca.

IT is the big winner!

User accounts are more manageable with simplified administration and support.

Password maintenance, such as student password resets or changes – always a huge challenge – can be performed by the teachers. More efficiency has evolved from a centrally managed, systematic, standardized imaging and application deployment solution. There is also simpler application support by running applications in a secure, virtual App-V environment. This means fewer on-site school visits by technicians and quicker response times, as applications can be deployed remotely and updated dynamically.
The Technology Climate Is Changing – The Forecast is Calling for Clouds!

Cloud technologies represent the most prevalent shift in IT operations today since virtualization. They have the potential to offer dramatic savings in time, money, and flexibility for IT departments.

With so many Cloud providers, various pricing models and different offerings (i.e. IaaS, PaaS, SaaS), you can be quite overwhelmed as you consider going to the Cloud, let alone ensure that you are choosing the best solutions to meet your needs.

IBM can help. Here’s how.

A Cloud Readiness Assessment will deliver a deep dive into your current IT infrastructure, identify issues, provide recommendations, and create a roadmap for the Cloud solution(s) that will best meet your needs today and in the future.

It all starts with a 3 to 5 day engagement to understand your environment and to answer your questions about Cloud. IBM staff will meet with technical staff and other stakeholders to build a comprehensive snapshot of your environment today. From there, we examine any issues in your current architecture, discuss how these may be roadblocks to or impact Cloud solutions, and offer recommendations to address them.

Next, we work with you and your team to understand your short term, mid-range and long term goals, as well as those of your clients. We use this data to map out the mix of Cloud based and traditional solutions that will best address each of your current pain points, goals and gaps in technology, based on best practices and cost optimization.

Hybrid Clouds are the future

Cloud is not an all or nothing endeavour. Moving services to the Cloud where optimizations in cost, management, elasticity and other benefits are achievable, is the most common use case for the Cloud in education.

However, most IT shops will still retain some systems on premise, due to factors that make them cost prohibitive in the Cloud, data sensitive, or necessary for complex management and integration. Cloud is there to supplement and optimize first and foremost. Over time, a natural shift of moving more and more into the Cloud will occur, and your IT team will gradually develop the skills and processes to support this change, just as easily (or more) as your team supports your current environment today.

For more information contact: Peter McKay, IBM Services Manager, at pmckay@ca.ibm.com.

Types of Cloud Services – What you need to know

SaaS (Software as a Service) – SaaS is something that many people are using today and do not even realize it. Google Apps and Microsoft Office 365 are examples of SaaS offerings and there are many more. Do you have a system or process that is difficult to manage or requires special hardware? There may be an SaaS offering that can offload this from your IT plate and provide better service to your clients.

IaaS (Infrastructure as a Service) – IaaS is a shift away from a traditional, on-premise data centre. All of the hardware, cooling, power, networking, and maintenance considerations move to a virtualized infrastructure, hosted by an enterprise provider. IaaS can save considerable costs in terms of purchasing and supporting physical hardware, having elasticity with virtually unlimited resources available on demand, and allowing you to scale up and down as needed. In a traditional virtual infrastructure, the servers and storage (and their costs) need to be configured for peak usage, but remain unused the majority of the time. When you factor in all of these costs, the benefits of moving to the Cloud and consuming only what you need, for a fraction of the cost, quickly start to make sense.

PaaS (Platform as a Service) – PaaS allows software developers to quickly and efficiently develop, test and rollout new applications, in a simple environment that they can fully control, without needing to engage the larger IT team. PaaS provides developers with a ready-to-use environment for programming, complete with version tracking and testing capabilities that would traditionally involve needing access to manage VMs or assistance from IT. PaaS can streamline the development process and provide a platform to host applications once in production, leaving the developers with full control to support their creations.

Control of your Cloud belongs to you

If you are anxious about the implications of cloud technology for your IT department and school district, you are not alone. Though cloud technologies are touted as being the next big thing with limitless possibilities, there is the common fear of loss of control over your physical resources, the uncertainty as to the actual benefits, and the introduction of increased complexity.

IBM recognizes that school districts today continually have to deal with budget cuts and many IT challenges, including providing resources with shorter lead times, managing data growth, and sustaining disaster recovery plans. We also appreciate knowing that you would like to have a trusted partner to call and discuss your concerns, to get qualified advice, and to move at your speed into this new technology.

How IBM’s SoftLayer can help you

IBM SoftLayer with two Canadian sites in Toronto and Montreal, makes everything easier to manage and control. It allows you to custom build advanced functions, using thousands of available APIs that will complement and automate your daily tasks. It provides you with access to a personalized portal, and specific tools and resources, where you have full secure control over your data centre in the cloud, as if it were local.

IBM Announces IBM SoftLayer as A Cloud Solution for Ontario School Districts!

IBM K-12 Education is very pleased to announce that OECM has chosen the IBM SoftLayer solution to provide its customers with personalized Cloud services.

OECM is a Broader Public Sector (BPS), not-for-profit, group procurement organization offering a Marketplace of competitively-sourced and priced products and services through collaborative sourcing agreements. Buying through their Marketplace helps Ontario’s publicly funded education institutions and other publicly funded organizations deliver savings and increase efficiencies.

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Control of your Cloud belongs to you

If you are anxious about the implications of cloud technology for your IT department and school district, you are not alone. Though cloud technologies are touted as being the next big thing with limitless possibilities, there is the common fear of loss of control over your physical resources, the uncertainty as to the actual benefits, and the introduction of increased complexity.

IBM recognizes that school districts today continually have to deal with budget cuts and many IT challenges, including providing resources with shorter lead times, managing data growth, and sustaining disaster recovery plans. We also appreciate knowing that you would like to have a trusted partner to call and discuss your concerns, to get qualified advice, and to move at your speed into this new technology.

How IBM’s SoftLayer can help you

IBM SoftLayer with two Canadian sites in Toronto and Montreal, makes everything easier to manage and control. It allows you to custom build advanced functions, using thousands of available APIs that will complement and automate your daily tasks. It provides you with access to a personalized portal, and specific tools and resources, where you have full secure control over your data centre in the cloud, as if it were local.

For more information contact: Daniel Prodhan, IBM Cloud Architect at alpedrohan@ca.ibm.com or go to: http://www.ibm.com/cloud-computing/us/en/?lnk=ushpv18c2
Dear IBM K-12,

All we’ve been reading for the past year is Cloud, Cloud, Cloud. We’re now convinced that Cloud technology will solve many IT problems and create many learning opportunities. We want to start with Google Apps for Education and go from there. However, above all, we want to do it right. Neither our IT team nor our teachers need more stress. Below are some major questions that we are wrestling with. What do you recommend that will help us with such a significant transformation in our district?

Signed,
Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Chief Education Officer (CEO),
Representative District in Canada

Like you, many districts are adopting Google Apps for Education (GAFE), Google’s suite of free applications for collaboration and productivity, as their first Cloud project. The 24/7 availability of these web applications is seen as one of the strategic enablers to make learning with technology ubiquitous.

Today, school districts who are on Chromebooks are enabling school districts to move toward their vision of the contemporary classroom. However, there are complexities involved with Cloud adoption. The implementation and management of Chromebooks can add another layer of sophistication to the IT architecture for support teams to handle. This requires time and expertise to accomplish in a cost-effective way.

IBM K-12 Education can streamline deployment of Chromebooks and guide the district in the adoption of best practices. This allows services to enroll and configure Chromebooks in the Google management console, and facilitate Cloud printing. An IBM K-12 GAFE Specialist can help you define managed networks, security policies for users and devices, account control and URLs, applications and extensions, and configure pre-installed applications. The Chromebooks can be enabled for auto-enrolment. Skills transfer and documentation is also provided. Manual on-site enrollment is available as an option if the Google Management License is not purchased.

A: Glad you asked. We’ve created Google School Directory Sync – just for you.

For districts interested in automating the synchronization of users and groups in the Student Information System (SIS) with the GAFE domain, IBM K-12 can implement Google’s School Directory Sync. This automatically adds, modifies, and deletes information in the GAFE domain to match data in the SIS. One of the main benefits of this service is synchronizing class/section (group) information that is typically not maintained in Active Directory.

A: We highly recommend you start with our GAFE Planning and Deployment Service.

We work with you to define a district strategy based on best practices for GAFE implementation. This is followed by a technology review of Active Directory, authentication, security, firewall configuration, and bandwidth planning. An IBM K-12 GAFE Specialist can install Google Active Directory Sync (GADS), enable desired Google services and, if required, migrate user email accounts and data to Gmail. IBM K-12 tailors the technical training and support to meet your district’s needs.

A: We are concerned about security of staff and student information.

School districts may choose to enable GADS authentication via Active Directory Federation Services (ADFS) instead of Google’s Password Synchronization Service. This allows authentication of users based on the on-premise Active Directory, allowing single sign-on, and prevents users’ passwords from being stored in Google’s Public Cloud. Google then uses Federation Services to confirm a user’s password is correct with the on-premise Active Directory.

A: What is the first step?

Note also that deploying a Federated Authentication Service permits authentication to other Cloud applications without having to synchronize passwords with each service. An IBM K-12 GAFE Specialist can deploy and configure ADFS, enable GADS authentication with ADFS, and provide documentation and skills transfer to your district’s IT Staff.

A: We are buying Chromebooks in large quantities and need to deploy them quickly. Can you help?

A: Yes, we can. Take a look at our Google Chromebook Enablement Service.

Districts are increasingly incorporating Chromebooks into their technology enabled learning plan as devices to access GAFE services. The low-cost Chromebooks are enabling school districts to move toward their vision of the contemporary classroom. However, there are complexities involved with Cloud adoption. The implementation and management of Chromebooks can add another layer of sophistication to the IT architecture for support teams to handle. This requires time and expertise to accomplish in a cost-effective way.

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A: What do you recommend?

A: We’ve been using GAFE over the past year or so but now it’s spreading like wildfire. Can you help us to avoid big problems later?

A: IBM K-12 has developed a GAFE Optimization Service to address this concern.

For those districts that have been using GAFE for some time, this service reviews a district’s GAFE domain and services against best practices, analyzes GAFE management procedures, settings, security policies, and documentation, and provides recommendations for improvement.

A: Wait a minute. Our teachers are central to this transformation. How can we ensure that they are keeping up with GAFE technology and using it to benefit student learning?

A: Good question. We’ll work with you to develop a tailored GAFE Implementation Plan.

An effective GAFE implementation is one that is well planned. Changing teacher practice requires the ability to anticipate, manage, and capitalize on both the opportunities and issues created with GAFE. User readiness is crucial when setting realistic expectations and creating change in the planning process. Transformation in educational organizations requires thoughtful planning for, and communication to, all district staff.

IBM K-12 GAFE Certified Consultants can lend you a hand in identifying the challenges that your IT and educational staff will face, and create solutions to successfully navigate their transition to the Cloud. IBM K-12 Education frequently works with school districts and Ministries of Education across Canada to help them successfully implement large-scale change and create buy-in from all levels of employees. Our Certified GAFE Trainers understand best practices to promote a seamless and comprehensive transition to GAFE.

A: We just don’t have the staff to do all the training. Can you help?

A: Most certainly. We have GAFE Professional Learning Services.

Through the use of Google Apps for Education, IBM will assist you in building teacher capacity and supporting students in a collaborative, inquiry-based classroom. The GAFE Professional Learning Service will enhance your principals’ and teachers’ knowledge of the powerful GAFE tools, give them the opportunity to create, share, collaborate and communicate with all stakeholders, and apply these skills to change teaching practice. Our K-12 Education Consultants will help move the district forward and create a modern collaborative and creative environment for your contemporary classrooms.

A: It sounds like you would be a great resource. How do we get started?

We would be honoured to support your district in your GAFE journey. Start by sending us an email to discuss any of these answers in more detail or how we can help you with your implementation.

Sincerely,

Anne Safchik, asafchik@ca.ibm.com
IBM Chief Education Officer (CEO)

Peter McKay, pmckay@ca.ibm.com
IBM Services Manager.
Is Your GAFE or Office 365 Initiative Really Ready For Enterprise Deployment?

Have you been testing Google Apps for Education (GAFE) and/or Microsoft Office 365? Both are amazing products with features that educators and IT staff love. However, testing these solutions for too long before moving to an enterprise deployment is causing major challenges for some IT departments.

‘Getting your feet wet’ by having teachers work with these products versus moving to a full enterprise deployment can be two very different things. There are many considerations that have come back to haunt those that have ‘splashed around in these waters’ too long.

Questions and more questions

In order to move to an enterprise deployment, there must be a detailed plan and key processes put into place as early as possible. There are many preliminary and fundamental questions that need to be answered. What is your Cloud domain name? Who owns it? Is it registered to your board? Is it the permanent name that you wish to use? Are all of your users in Active Directory? How are they created? How will you sync to the Cloud? Are your usernames unique? Are your passwords secure? How do you want to use the Cloud, not just today, but in the future?

Could this be happening in your district?

Recently, a customer, who had been slowly rolling out a Chromebook Management Console, has come back to haunt those that have ‘splashed around in these waters’ too long.

Step 1: Standardization

IBM K-12 worked with IT to design the implementation of an enterprise infrastructure with minimal disruption to the users already using GAFE. The customer now has policies and processes that allow all users to come on-board in a standardized and manageable manner.

Step 2: Automation

The next step will be to enable a full user ID automation system to take user IDs from the Student Information System into Active Directory (AD) for seamless user registration to full AD/Cloud account enablement. This will dramatically reduce the workload on IT in terms of user management, and tie all of these systems together for a single ID, single password user experience.

The lesson learned

Innovation and testing of new solutions should always be embraced and encouraged in education, but enterprise considerations are critically important once an initiative is ready for broader deployment.

The IBM K-12 team can help you, regardless of where you are in this journey. Thinking about trying a Cloud service? We can work with your IT and curriculum teams to create a detailed plan from concept to production and help you every step of the way to ensure that your move to the Cloud is successful.

Already piloting or concerned that you may have gone too far, too fast? We can help to identify what is working, what needs to be changed, and provide a roadmap, recommendations and services for moving to a full enterprise deployment

Cloud services are an easy win for both IT and curriculum. Let us help you to ‘jump in’ and make your journey to the Cloud a successful, stress-free one.

For more information contact: Peter McKay, IBM Services Manager, at pmckay@ca.ibm.com.

Enterprise Management needed for Chromebooks? For sure!

Get a platinum handle on your Chromebooks today

The majority of devices in most schools are still based on traditional Windows platforms because of their enterprise management capabilities and the extensive software in use. However, school districts are discovering that Chromebooks are cost-effective, user-friendly, and powerful devices. As such, Chromebooks are now quickly becoming excellent supplementary devices in the classroom.

Google’s Chromebook Management Console is crucial

The Chromebook Management Console has many powerful network and management features necessary for IT to support these devices securely and provide the best user experience. By default, however, Chromebooks do not come with the license required to enable this management and adding it as an afterthought often requires the Chromebooks to be collected, reloaded and redeployed.

Many IT shops have recently been overwhelmed as Chromebooks poured into their system at an unexpected rate. They have not had the time, resources, or skills to cope with them. This technology, though potentially cost-effective and powerful, can prove otherwise if not dealt with properly at the beginning.

IBM can help

Our services team will work with you to develop a customized solution and process to support your Chromebooks, including best practices for deployment, management and integration with your existing Windows infrastructure (e.g. printing, home directory access, etc.).

Getting an immediate handle on these devices today is the best way to avoid future issues, and ensure that you reap the benefits from the time you implement them into classrooms. While it is never too late to develop an enterprise strategy for Chromebooks, the longer you wait, the more complex it will be, and the more work effort will be required to include them in a managed IT solution.

For more information contact: Brad Klinck, IBM Senior IT Architect, at bklinck@ca.ibm.com.
BYOD – Helping to Transform the Learning Experience

The Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board (ALCDSB) ran a trial experiment ‘Bring Your Own Device’ (BYOD) program with their grades 4 to 6 classes, primarily working on math. After a promising year of focused effort, they decided they were ready to take a bold step forward and fully implement BYOD throughout grades 9 to 12.

The district began upgrading its infrastructure some eighteen months prior, anticipating the future needs of such a successful program. The Learning Technology Services (IT) department was now certain that their revamped network was capable of sustaining the additional load, once their secondary students started using their own devices on a regular basis.

ALCDSB is a midsize school district east of Toronto totalling 41 schools with 12,800 students enrolled. The district includes Kingston, Belleville, Napanee, and large rural geographical areas extending to Algonquin Park.

Creating a new learning plan

Discussions between ALCDSB staff and IBM Canada K-12 Education Consultants led the district to an understanding that BYOD was more than “turning on the network” – this would not be a case of “if they build it, they will come”. District staff turned to IBM K-12 to co-create a comprehensive and integrated BYOD learning plan which would best serve their secondary students.

IBM worked with a core team representing both the academic and technology perspectives that included secondary teachers, school and district administrators, and central district staff. Using the IBM Technology Effectiveness Framework as a guide, discussions were held with this team over the course of four days to tackle questions including:

• Why are we going to promote BYOD in the district?
• How can we ensure the plan is equitable for all students?
• How can we get buy-in from all students, parents and educators?
• How can we support teachers in “managing” student devices in the classroom?
• How can we ensure that devices are used for school use and are not a distraction?

Transforming teaching

BYOD is typically considered a student-focused initiative, but ironically, a major program issue repeatedly challenged and discussed, was ALCDSB’s staff deployment model. As the engagement between IBM K-12 and the core team progressed, it became clear to the educators in the room that this was not a technology conversation, but a conversation related to the fundamental process of teaching – that they were in fact discussing a transformation of the teaching and learning environment to support their contemporary students.

Furthermore, it became clear that the BYOD initiative had to include a comprehensive professional learning plan for all levels of the organization – teachers, central board staff, principals and vice-principals and senior administration – so that all could support and embrace the change in pedagogy.

What to do

The BYOD plan was approved by the team at the end of March after three months of consultation. Its core philosophy integrated the use of technology in schools with the key education priorities of the district. It connected the BYOD program to the important work of teachers in supporting their students.

Moreover, ALCDSB had recently decided to implement Microsoft Office 365 as its key productivity tool. As such, the plan was connected to this tool to support the implementation of BYOD.

The creation of the BYOD plan also included a review of the digital citizenship policy through the lens of best practice, an initiative conducted by the IBM Education Consultant.

ALCDSB will realize the benefits of BYOD technology through a phased-in approach by:

• Improving teacher and student productivity, and accessibility to electronic resources
• Enabling teachers in their use of technology, to support student learning through the four core instructional strategies
• Creating an expectation that student devices will be a fully integrated tool for teaching and learning.

How to do it

Now that the ‘what to do’ was determined, the IBM team also worked with ALCDSB to plan the ‘how to do it’ - a phase sometimes overlooked. Key to the BYOD transition was the creation of a BYOD Implementation team, consisting of a member of senior administration, a school-based administrator, and central office staff – both academic and IT – and a classroom teacher. Their assessment plan included success criteria for each of the BYOD phases, and clearly stated what needed to be measured, and how. And, of course, a detailed rollout and implementation plan was also provided to the district to support the first year of implementation.

Director of Education, Jody DiRocco, stated, “I am pleased with our progress to date. We could not have done it or made it to this point without the support... the IBM team provided for us. We always appreciated their direction, guidance and counsel.”

For more information contact: Jonathan Bibby, Senior Education Consultant at jbibby@ca.ibm.com.
Teachers absolutely LOVE their iPads! They love the fact that no matter what they’re doing or what app they’re using, everything feels easy and intuitive. They love exploring and experimenting with new apps. They love the small and portable form factor, the instant on, and the battery life. They are excited about the educational opportunities that can help facilitate the 5Cs (i.e. communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and global citizenship) in their classrooms. What’s more, teachers feel iPads make it easier to implement SAMR.

However, few teachers or administrators are aware of the many challenges that arise with iPads – moving what is a consumer device into a complex educational environment.

For IT staff, migrating thousands of existing devices to Apple’s Device Enrollment Program (DEP) is a significant challenge. The creation of a unique Apple ID per device/user can be very resource and time intensive. The iPad provisioning process is extensive. The workflow is complex.

The use of iPads in a shared environment brings with it many challenges:

- wireless readiness
- data management
- policies and procedures
- student inappropriate use
- service turn-around time
- on-going management
- administration of iOS updates
- management of damaged devices and cables.

App usage also raises other questions. What are the pros and cons of using a Mobile Device Manager (MDM) versus Apple Configurator? Because the Volume Purchase Program (VPP) ties apps to individual emails/school accounts, as staff move, who owns the app? Should apps be pushed (installed silently) or pulled (from the App Catalogue)? How will applications be purchased and distributed given the restrictions imposed on students under the age of 13?

These are some of the issues that must be discussed and resolved before rolling out these devices. All of these challenges are compounded by the growing number of devices especially when impromptu school purchases have ‘hijacked’ already stretched support resources.

Advance planning is critical

It has become abundantly clear that every district must develop a comprehensive plan of execution, taking into account all of the critical success factors, and applying best practices for iPad deployments. Moreover, the proposed solution needs to be piloted in order to identify district unique issues and incorporate resolutions into the overall plan.

The support model is indispensable

You want to maintain teacher confidence in the technology and ensure optimal use of the devices in the classroom. As such, developing an adequate support model is also essential.

IT needs to:

- Deploy an advanced MDM, and create a methodology to migrate devices from the Apple Configurator to the MDM. (Regardless of the MDM solution, the technical staff must understand the Apple Ecosystem and any device management limitations)
- Integrate the MDM with Active Directory to facilitate delegation of roles
- Implement robust default security policies
- Outline a design for application management
- Sketch out how to address iOS changes and updates.

If a comprehensive iPad plan is not developed to address all of these aspects, it will inevitably lead to frustrated teachers, students, and IT. IBM K-12 has extensive experience in technology deployments in schools, coupled with iPad best practices, processes, and strategies. We are able to help you and your district build a blueprint, to ensure a successful implementation and mitigate many of the challenges.

For more information contact: Peter McKay, IBM Services Manager, at pmckay@ca.ibm.com.
People, Budgets and Technology
North Okanagan Shuswap updates all 3 in planning for the future

SD 83 (North Okanagan – Shuswap School District 83) is located in BC’s beautiful Okanagan Valley. With 7,500 students, the district includes the major centre of Salmon Arm and the area around Shuswap Lake, as well as the northern Okanagan communities of Armstrong and Enderby.

In late 2014, SD 83 engaged IBM K12 to perform an IT Optimization Assessment (ITOP), which took a deep dive into the district’s educational technology. The goal of the ITOP was to refresh SD 83’s technology landscape and, more importantly, to make recommendations around support and training for the IT staff.

From the beginning of the assessment, the ITOP process kept the district’s vision and goals at the forefront of the review. “While budgets remain limited, it became evident that we required a focus on what our district needs to ensure we are providing access to the tools and infrastructures for both today’s, and our future teaching and learning services to our students. We have reached a time where we must ensure both our students and educators are not left behind from the lack of good access to technology,” says Glenn Borthistle, Superintendent of Schools.

The ITOP report led to many discussions and conversations among the Senior Management team, their Technology Leadership Team, and the Board of Trustees, on how to best address their strategic areas with the recommendations from IBM. In the spring, there was additional feedback from district administrators, educators and other key stakeholders. The resulting priorities included:

- Enhanced Learning Opportunities & Improved Engagement of all Learners
- Data Centre Virtualization, Consolidation and a Backup / Disaster Recovery strategy
- Workstation Image Management Revitalization
- Network Upgrades (Getting Ready for the Provincial Next Generation Network)
- Consolidation of IT Decision Making Controls
- Communication & Collaboration Tools
- Workstation & Server Refresh, Laptop Implementation, Printing Optimization in schools
- Resource Standardization & Management
- BYOD Program Implementation.

To make the transition a reality, three fundamental changes in process were required.

Making it happen with purposeful budgeting

With support from the Senior Management Team, the Board, and the school principals, some funds were centralized and re-allocated to support this significant $2.3 million initiative. While this investment appeared to be larger than their annual technology budget, it represented a 4 to 5 year plan which was not significantly more than the budget spent in the prior 4 to 5 years. More importantly, there is a sustainability road map to ensure the district can stay on top of evolving technology. Future plans, built into the ongoing IT budget, will ensure that the end-user technology is refreshed every 4 years.

SD 83’s Mission: To engage all students in meaningful and relevant learning experiences that develop their knowledge, skills, attitudes, creativity and the pursuit of personal success.

SD 83 Belief Statement: The world has changed and the way that students learn has changed. If used effectively, technology is a means to improve student learning by enabling students to become more engaged with their learning, make connections with other learners, and allows teachers to personalize learning.

(District Technology Plan Sept. 2014)

Preparing our people

To change pedagogy, it was critical for the district to provide tools for the teachers such as access to common teaching and learning applications, reliable access to the Internet and laptops, and in the future, access to Cloud applications like Office 365. The focus around more “Communities of Practice” will develop with support staff as the transition continues.

Redefining technical team roles

SD 83 now has a standardized deployment with only three images district-wide. With the implementation of IBM SchoolConnect, all user IDs in Active Directory will be managed automatically on a daily basis using an extract from the CIMS SIS and the CIMS HR systems. SchoolConnect will then synchronize Active Directory with Office 365. This will provide a single User ID and password for both AD and Office 365, significantly reducing the IT ID workload. These tools also simplify management of printing, password changes, access to school resources from home, and a BYOD landing page to bring district resources to user owned devices.

This new centralization and standardization in conjunction with IBM SchoolConnect has significantly reduced the day-to-day workload of the technical team and has evolved their practices to:

- Having greater focus on productivity rather than simply being reactive to sustain technology
- Providing district based, centralized deployment of technicians
- Freeing up technical staff to work on long term projects rather than daily maintenance
- Creating specialist technical roles to focus on the more critical areas of support for the district.

The Rollout

“We have had to try and level the playing field and have had to start all over again in some areas because our aging infrastructures have reached 8 years or more,” says Stephen Olfinger, LT. Manager.

SD 83 started this spring and summer with a major overhaul of their network infrastructure in order to support the anticipated 6900 end user devices. Soon, guest access and prioritized network traffic for district owned devices and BYOD deployments will become a part of this strategy. The data centre is now centralized and scalable, and has an enterprise disaster recovery plan in place. The district is standardized on Windows 7 and has plans for SharePoint, Outlook and Microsoft Office 365 for communications. They also performed a gap analysis to create a standardized list of educational software for use by staff and students.

Stephen expects that “As the implementation plan unfolds in SD 83 schools, you will see kids everywhere; in hallways, in a corner, at a table, on the floor – almost anywhere students can be – using technology for their learning.”

While the IT Roadmap focused on infrastructure, devices, and support, its primary objective was to enhance student learning. Supporting learning with a robust infrastructure provides the tools for student learning, presentation of curriculum and creation of knowledge. Now SD 83 is acquiring the tools to move forward with their learning priorities.

For more information contact: Steve Cuccione, IBM K-12 Education Client Manager, at succion@ca.ibm.com.
Hanover School Division (HSD) is located southeast of Winnipeg, Manitoba. It has 18 schools serving a number of communities in Steinbach (the location of the divisional office), Bothwell, Niverville, Grunnthal, Blumenort, Kleefeld, Landmark, and Mitchell.

In recent months, HSD has been involved in their “Our Kids” project, which aims to clearly define the skills, knowledge, values and disposition that a graduate student will possess. This project has involved feedback from a broad spectrum of stakeholders and over the next year, this input will be collated by the division to create a unified statement of “Our Kids” for HSD.

In addition to the “Our Kids” project, HSD has been working tirelessly to improve their IT infrastructure to best serve the students and staff of the division – a chief priority for Superintendent Randy Dueck. When he took on the leadership of the division in 2012, he stated: “One of our goals is to be a Provincial leader in the use of technology for learning within 5 years.”

Their next challenge was to connect these pieces together. This is where IBM came in – to support the division in creating a plan, strategic in nature, and which embeds technology as a key component in the learning agenda to support “Our Kids”.

The IBM K-12 education consultants held discussions around best practice with the senior team, and a core team that included principals and central division staff, plus focus groups of teachers, program and IT staff. They also reviewed survey information from teachers and students.

Conversations with the senior team and the core team led to much debate about how the district could connect their high level strategic work with their technology investments and truly focus their efforts in a way that would serve students through a unified pedagogical approach.

The ensuing plan proposed a two-tiered strategic direction:

• continue the work of the “Our Kids” project and connect the learning plan with this direction over the next 12 months

• initiate the work of transforming pedagogy by building capacity of key staff with an inquiry-focused model of learning.

This plan was called the Deeper Learning Plan.

The district has been doing some initial work on inquiry learning to serve as a starting point for deeper learning. Inquiry (supported by technology) was selected as the initial focus of the district’s work, to direct their learning agenda and to embed technology into the teaching and learning experience.

IBM recommended a detailed professional learning plan that would truly embed staff learning at the school level – something that all teachers indicated was the best way for them to learn. Teachers said they needed to work with others in implementing best practices, and then to immediately have support as they make the change themselves.
IBM Canada K-12 Education
Your team for educational solutions

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<tr>
<th>BRITISH COLUMBIA</th>
<th>Client Manager</th>
<th>Inside Sales Support Representative</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steve Cuccione</td>
<td>Monique Thibault-LeBlanc</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:scuccion@ca.ibm.com">scuccion@ca.ibm.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:mleblanc@ca.ibm.com">mleblanc@ca.ibm.com</a></td>
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| ALBERTA/                        |                      |                                    |
| SASKATCHEWAN/                  |                      |                                    |
| MANITOBA                       |                      |                                    |
|                              | Joanne Jackson       | Angela Gradini                     |
|                              | jjackson@ca.ibm.com  | agradini@ca.ibm.com                |
|                              | 905-316-2319         | 905-316-1451                       |

| ONTARIO                        |                      |                                    |
| Owren Sound - Windsor          |                      |                                    |
|                              | Julie Parkyn         | Angela Gradini                     |
|                              | jparkyn@ca.ibm.com   | agradini@ca.ibm.com                |
|                              | 519-352-5607         | 905-316-1451                       |

| Southwestern Ontario and GTA West |          |                                    |
|                                   | Frank Grano       | Eliza Popescu                      |
|                                   | fgrano@ca.ibm.com | elizapop@ca.ibm.com               |
|                                   | 905-315-1228      | 905-316-1954                      |

| Toronto                        |          |                                    |
|                               | Lui De Dominicis | Eliza Popescu                     |
|                               | luide@ca.ibm.com | elizapop@ca.ibm.com               |
|                               | 905-316-5865    | 905-316-1954                      |

| Eastern Ontario                |          |                                    |
| GTA East                       |          |                                    |
|                               | Frank Grano       | Monique Thibault-LeBlanc            |
|                               | fgrano@ca.ibm.com | mleblanc@ca.ibm.com                 |
|                               | 905-315-1228      | 905-316-6443                        |

| Northern Ontario               |          |                                    |
|                               | Lui De Dominicis | Monique Thibault-LeBlanc            |
|                               | luide@ca.ibm.com | mleblanc@ca.ibm.com                 |
|                               | 905-316-5865    | 905-316-6443                        |

| QUEBEC                         |          |                                    |
|                               | Joanne Jackson       | Eliza Popescu                      |
|                               | jjackson@ca.ibm.com  | elizapop@ca.ibm.com               |
|                               | 905-316-2319        | 905-316-1954                      |

| NOVA SCOTIA/NEW BRUNSWICK/NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR/P.E.I | |                                    |
|                                                          | Julie Parkyn       | Eliza Popescu                      |
|                                                          | jparkyn@ca.ibm.com | elizapop@ca.ibm.com               |
|                                                          | 519-352-5607       | 905-316-1954                      |

| NORTHWEST TERRITORIES/NUNAVUT/YUKON | |                                    |
|                                     | Joanne Jackson       | Angela Gradini                     |
|                                     | jjackson@ca.ibm.com  | agradini@ca.ibm.com                |
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