

Falmouth Public Schools

Capacity-Building in Using Assistive and Learning Technologies
December 12, 2005

ALLTech staff members have been privileged to work with the Falmouth Schools in implementing a survey of technology needs and participating in grade-level conversations with teachers. Our strong impression is that Falmouth has deployed key technologies and staff members are highly skilled. In reflecting on the needs assessment and the conversations with teachers, ALLTech offers the following recommendations:

District Level

1. **Develop and implement a plan that articulates usage of assistive technologies and software grades kindergarten through 12.** Falmouth already possesses significant capacity in using assistive technologies and software.
 - a. Articulate the use of assistive technologies across grades and schools.
 - b. Integrate the implementation of assistive technologies into Falmouth's technology plan.
 - c. Develop and implement a multi-year professional learning plan for special education staff members.
2. **Develop and maintain a district-wide inventory of assistive technologies and software.** A district-wide inventory of assistive technologies and software may already exist. As technologies are implemented across schools, it is essential that school administrators and educators be able to locate and implement specialized technologies, as needed.
 - a. Coordinate inventory with work already being done by Sue Palfrey.
 - b. Maintain software updates and assure usage of the same software version across the district.
 - c. Check on availability of licenses and networking, such as Inspiration.
 - d. Assure that computer hardware is available to support assistive software.
3. **Build skills in technology integration for specialized software, with emphasis on supporting integration of technology into literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies.** Examples of technology that support content areas include concept mapping software, text-to-speech software, voice recognition software, digital text, online libraries, word prediction software, interactive white boards, and content area software.
 - a. Provide one or more workshops on using software to support writing, such as DraftBuilder, Kurzweil, and Inspiration.
 - b. Develop a plan for k-12 implementation of reading and writing software.
 - c. Provide technical assistance and support in using scanning and OCR software.
 - d. Provide consultation on using Dana (upgraded AlphaSmart) or other available alternatives to AlphaSmart
 - e. Provide workshops on selecting and using electronic white boards, such as SmartBoard and Mimio.
 - f. Provide technology training to new employees.
4. **Provide consultation, as needed, for district-wide technology planning and implementation.**
 - a. Provide consultation and research on new and emerging technologies.
 - b. Schedule periodic updates for school administrators on technology implementation.
 - c. Conduct and/or supervise research studies that examine the effectiveness of new technologies (e.g., supervision of research project by Christine Labbe).
 - d. Periodically monitor implementation of technologies and development of teachers' skills through administration of surveys, teacher focus groups, and other methods.

School and Classroom Levels

5. ***Build skill levels for utilizing technologies already present.*** Examples of underused software already present include voice recognition software, built-in computer accessibility software, scanning software, and Kurzweil software.
 - a. Provide support and technical assistance at the 5th grade with Andrew Folley.
 - b. Provide training and technical assistance for speech to text software, such as Dragon NaturallySpeaking and Via Voice—Diane Reid and April DeCouracey
 - c. Develop resource experts at the building level.
 - d. Coordinate and build skills in using specific software, such as Lexia and Earobics software.
6. ***Provide focused support in specific areas.***
 - a. Provide consultation to the functional life skills classroom.
 - b. Provide support for teachers of students with individual needs.
 - c. On-site individualized consultation and trouble-shooting are critical to successful implementation.
 - d. Consider implementation of a summer technology program or component for students.
7. ***Provide consultation on using augmentative and alternative communication technologies, with emphasis on building staff skill capacity to successfully implement them.***
 - a. Provide sustained support in the use of augmentative and alternative communication technologies, in order to build capacity for successful implementation, such as DynaVox, Boardmaker, Gemini, and other augmentative and alternative communication technologies.
 - b. Provide technical assistance on using specialized augmentative and alternative communication technologies.