

High School Technology Graduation Requirement

Background

In 2001, The Issaquah School District Board of Directors approved recommendations from the then High School Graduation Requirements Committee that included a recommendation around technology proficiency. The committee's proposal included the creation of a list of "discrete technology skills" that all graduates should possess. An assessment was created to be administered to 8th graders to demonstrate proficiency. Any 8th grader who did not pass the assessment is "required" to take a technology class (Software Tech) during high school or students could learn the skills "on their own" and re-take the assessment at a later time.

This has been the practice in the ISD for the last decade. During that same time period, the Issaquah School District Board of Directors created an adopted its Mission and Ends with significant input from parents, students, staff, and community members as well as education and business experts. End Four (E-4) states: "Throughout life, students will understand and apply current and emerging technologies to extend their personal abilities and productivity."

In the past, the administrative team has presented the Software Technology class requirement and/or passage of the technology proficiency exam as "evidence" during Ends monitoring around E-4.

Rationale for Change

By reviewing and reflecting upon our students' schooling experience, it is apparent that there are current classroom activities and potential future opportunities that allow or will allow our students to demonstrate the technology skills embedded in E-4. In our ongoing efforts to refine and improve our existing courses and assessments and develop future possibilities, our goal is to develop more meaningful and relevant learning opportunities for students that will allow for some flexibility while ensuring quality outcomes.

2010-11 School Year Plan

Students will be given greater opportunity to meet the technology graduation requirement through one of our existing pathways; passage of the technology proficiency test. Historically, students have been able to meet the technology graduation requirement by passing the proficiency exam that allows students to demonstrate a minimal level of exposure and familiarity with essential software programs. The exam is not a good reflection of the more robust and comprehensive experience that students have in the Software Technology class where the goal is digital literacy as opposed to minimal competency that the exam measures. That said we will take the following steps this school year:

- Proficiency Exam will be offered three (3) times a year as opposed to the one time a year offering of the past.
- The on-line tutorial preparation software will be available and accessible to all interested students whereas in the past, only those who registered to take the proficiency exam could have access.
- The Proficiency Exam itself will be updated based on new standards coming out of OSPI.
- Likewise, the Software Technology class will be adjusted and updated to match with the new state standards.

2011 and Beyond

In the original technology proficiency plan presented to the Board of Directors in 2001, the committee recommended that “reinforcement and application of the discrete (technology) skills will occur throughout high school.” Schools were encouraged to “decide which skills will be emphasized in which core curriculum areas.”

In the new negotiated agreement between the Issaquah Education Association and the Issaquah School District under teacher Technology proficiency it states: “Certificated staff is expected to consistently incorporate technology into instruction and to facilitate student use of technology as a learning tool infused into curriculum. The goal is to reach OSPI Tier 3 Classroom integration of Technology. A Tier 3 classroom promotes students to be actively engaged in using technology in individual and collaborative learning activities.”

Our ultimate goal is that a standalone course will be unnecessary as evidence for meeting E-4. Students will be understanding and applying current and emerging technologies to extend their personal abilities and productivity in all classrooms consistently throughout the school year. Technology-oriented courses will continue to be offered and developed as options for students to provide a more in depth learning experience aligned with their interests.

Until we reach this goal, we will:

- Continue to look for ways to train and develop our teachers in technology usage
- Review and update our middle school technology courses and overall experience to allow students opportunities to demonstrate their skills to meet the graduation requirement prior to entering high school.
- Continue, through the direction of our Director responsible for Career and Technical Education, to work with teaching staff to refine and develop courses that are relevant and meaningful that allows students to demonstrate the skills embedded in E-4 and meet the technology graduation requirement.