

Consolidation of IT & Maintenance Services



Middleborough School Department
and
Town of Middleborough

Community Innovation Challenge Grant
2012/2013

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INTRODUCTORY LETTER

April 1, 2013

Secretary Glen Shor
Executive Office for Administration and Finance
State House
24 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Secretary Shor:

Over the past two and a half years, the Middleborough Public Schools and the Town of Middleborough have worked collaboratively to combine technology and maintenance services to increase efficiencies and control costs. Technology and maintenance are two areas where both school and town needed to focus their attention. The School Department had been without an IT Director since 2005 and the Technology Director for the Town was scheduled to retire June 2012.

The Interim Superintendent of Schools and the Town Manager moved forward with the recommendation from the Technology Task Force Committee to consolidate technology services. In April 2012, a Technology Systems Administrator was hired to oversee the school and town technology needs.

The Community Innovation Challenge Grant provided the resources to fund the purchase of systems to manage technology and maintenance services for the school system and town. Technology systems purchased include SchoolDude ITAM and renew the membership to IT Direct, on-line modules that allow for tracking inventory and work requests for technology users on both the school and town side. The new School/Town Technology Administrator is able to track requests made through the on-line system and print reports to analyze inventory and usage. CIC Grant funds also allowed for the purchase of a storage solution to allow for redundant data recovery and increased storage.

Focusing on the maintenance of all school and town buildings, Maintenance Direct, a module of SchoolDude, was purchased with CIC Grant funds. This on-line system allows school and town personnel to report building needs directly to the school's maintenance department.

The FY14 School Budget provides for a Facilities Director who will oversee both school and town buildings, this continued collaboration between school and town will continue to provide efficiencies and cost controls.

Middleborough is a \$66 million dollar enterprise. It is important for the town and school department to plan, invest and manage its IT infrastructure and facilities. The CLC grant has been instrumental in beginning the process of true collaboration between the entities. This collaboration is essential for Middleborough's ability to thrive in a global and competitive society.

Sincerely,

Roseli S. Weiss, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Innovation Challenge grant for Middleborough Public Schools and the Town of Middleborough consolidated the IT needs of both entities. The school department and the town needed to hire someone to manage the hardware, software, professional development, tech support and network infrastructure. After careful research and planning it was decided to hire a Technology Systems Administrator to manage the two entities' technology needs. The intent of the consolidation of services is to improve efficiency of operations and cost savings.

PARTNER COMMUNITIES

This project was a partnership between the school side and town side of Middleborough local government. The interim Superintendent of Schools and the Town Manager were part of the Technology Task Force Committee under the direction of the Selectman. The membership of this committee consisted of a Selectman, a School Committee member, two staff appointed by the School Superintendent, two staff appointed by the Town Manager, three citizens and a finance committee member. The task of the committee was to develop a strategic plan for IT and investigate and make recommendations on consolidation of School and Town IT departments.

GOALS

Grant funding allowed Middleborough to achieve their goal to consolidate town and school department information technology and facilities management for increased operational efficiency and cost savings.

Timely response to technology and maintenance concerns (as measured by software)
Maintaining an environment that is safe for employees, students, and the public (analysis of software work orders)

The ability to effectively identify maintenance and technology issues (increased staff and services)

Timely repairs to equipment to allow a strong preventive maintenance program

Savings on unnecessary and costly repairs caused by neglect

Allow accurate projections to use and help in developing a more efficient budget

Allow better planning for capital repair, maintenance and replacement

- Cost savings through shared services
- Efficiency through shared services
- Increase Level of Service

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

A Technology Task Force was formed to develop a strategic plan for IT and investigate and make recommendations on consolidation of School and Town IT departments. The interim Superintendent of Schools and the Town Manager were part of the Technology Task Force Committee under the direction of the Selectman. The membership of this committee consisted of a Selectman, a School Committee member, two staff appointed by the School Superintendent, two staff appointed by the Town Manager, three citizens and a finance committee member. The Technology Task Force focused on assessing IT, facility maintenance, and capital needs coming out of the economic recession and addressing these needs.

The Technology Task Force Committee recommended that Middleborough consolidate school and town technology services and have a single person oversee these services for both entities.

The Interim Superintendent of Schools and the Town Manager moved forward with this recommendation. The town and school department used budgetary funding to hire a joint Technology Systems Administrator. The new Technology Systems Administrator was hired as a school employee, with the school department charging the town for the time spent on town needs. (School needs account for the majority of the Technology Systems Administrator and staff time.)

The Technology Systems Administrator assessed the town and school needs and oversees planning and implementation of new systems and procedures to meet those needs, starting with placing both town and school functions on the same web based applications for computer help desk, computer asset management, and facilities management.

The Community Innovation Challenge Grant provided the resources to fund the purchase of systems to greatly enhance management of technology and maintenance services for both the school system and town. Technology systems purchased include SchoolDude ITAM and membership to IT Direct, on-line modules that allow for tracking inventory and work requests for technology users on both the school and town side. CIC Grant funds also allowed for the purchase of a storage solution to allow for redundant data recovery and increased storage capacity (a 16 TB MDL SAS and a 24 TB SATA Network storage NAS-Backup storage for virtual servers). For enhanced management of maintenance of all school and towns buildings, SchoolDude Maintenance Direct was purchased. This on-line system allows school and town personnel to report building needs directly to the school's maintenance department.

IT systems: Over the summer, school employees were able to access the IT Direct help desk. A computer technician was hired by the Town and implemented the IT Direct help desk to all Town employees.

Facility maintenance system: With SchoolDude Maintenance Direct purchased and installed, maintenance requests for building repairs are now processed electronically, by both school and town employees. School and town administrators are now able to check on the progress of their requests electronically.

Initial Successes include:

- Increased access by maintenance and technology staff to maintenance and technology request data.
- Development of progress updates on work orders to keep the requesters informed, a critical and highly valued customer service benefit of the new systems.

BUDGET

Original Budget:

Item	Cost
School Dude	\$ 8,210.60
Storage Expansion	\$15,000
Citrix Module	\$ 5,000
	\$28,210.60

Revised Budget:

The budget was revised to manage cost increases. The Storage Expansion cost went up and the Citrix Module, which provides work-from-home access to computer systems, would have been much too expensive. Given the work-from-home option is a lower priority than consolidating school and town technology and facilities maintenance functions, the Citrix module was cut from the budget and related funds went to funding the Storage Expansion.

Item	Cost
School Dude	\$ 8,210.60
Storage Expansion	\$20,000
Citrix Module	\$0.00
	\$28,210.60

Actual Expenditures:

Item	Cost
School Dude	\$ 9,850.42
Storage Expansion	\$18,360.18
Citrix Module	\$ 0.00
Total	\$28,210.60

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

The challenge for the Town of Middleborough Consolidation of IT & Maintenance Services was that the original grant requested \$190,010.60 to completely consolidate both departments was funded for \$28,210.60. However, the district is grateful for the funding as it allowed for the purchase of a work order system that included reports that document service calls for both the town and school IT and Maintenance departments. The product also included an asset management piece for managing inventory. The timing of the grant provided the impetus to begin the collaboration between the school and town departments.

Sharing staff between the town and school sides can be a challenge in municipal government. Fortunately, Middleborough has a history of sharing staff between the town and schools as specific expertise is needed, particularly around maintenance needs. This history provided a helpful context for successful consolidation of town and school IT and maintenance. The systems implemented with the grant will help track use of school staff on the town side and vice versa; this information will be used to more formally share staff and ease into addressing cost sharing for shared staff.

OUTCOMES

The electronic request system has allowed the maintenance and technology staff the ability to prioritize their requests and to access the system from any Town/School computer during the work day to check in on any additional needs that arise. The system also allows for progress updates on work orders to keep the requesters informed, a key customer service feature.

The Systems Technology Administrator is better able to analyze the big picture on both town and school sides for insight and better planning for capital repair, maintenance, and replacement needs.

Timely repairs to equipment to allow a strong preventive maintenance program, with savings on unnecessary and costly repairs caused by neglect.

Data from the new systems support more accurate projections to use and help in developing a more efficient budget.

Additional tech staff were hired on both the school and town side through budget process, with justification from the new systems' reports showing what was and wasn't getting done, including identifying unmet needs for teacher support.

Data from the IT and maintenance systems will also be useful in conducting performance evaluations of IT and maintenance staff based on workload and project completions.

This project can serve as a doable and simple solution for hundreds of towns in our state. This has been a successful collaboration between the Middleborough Schools and the Municipality.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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REFERENCES:

How a Massachusetts Town Consolidated IT with Schools

Massachusetts Municipal Association

School District Consolidation Massachusetts: Opportunities and Obstacles, Sarah Carleton, Christine Lynch, Robert O'Donnell 2009

Schools Hire IT Director with Grant

Town, Schools to share IT operations in Middleboro

Town-School Consolidation Approved Massachusetts Municipal Association

RESOURCES

School Dude