

Technology Plan

**Ann Arbor Learning Community
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School Summary

Ann Arbor Learning Community (AALC) is a public school academy authorized by Eastern Michigan University. In June 2009 the school had 266 students enrolled in kindergarten through eighth grade. The school's early primary classes include kindergarten and grade one, primary classes include grades two and three, intermediate classes include grades four and five, and middle school classes include grades six through eight. AALC first enrolled students in 1998. The school's charter with Eastern Michigan University was renewed in 2008.

In 2008 - 2009 parents reported students' ethnic background distribution as 66% Caucasian, 11% African American, 5% Asian or Pacific Islander, 1% Hispanic Latino or Spanish Origin, less than 1% American Indian while 17% reported students had multiple ethnic backgrounds. 6% of the student body indicated household income eligibility for support (*Direct Certification Report*).

AALC operates independent of a private, charter school corporation for its curriculum and school operations while it receives personnel services from a private corporation. AALC receives funds for its annual operating budget from the State of Michigan. The school utilizes site-based administration, direction from its school board and guidance from its chartering agent for its operations and budgetary management.

AALC currently leases a 26,000 square foot building located at 3980 Research Park Drive in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The school's instructional and administrative space includes nineteen regular classrooms, two classrooms for art and music instruction, a gym (multipurpose room), warming kitchen, two staff workrooms, conference room and five offices. The school's building is situated on six acres of land. There is an outdoor play structure for early primary and primary students and a plan for installation of outdoor equipment for older students in summer 2009. Gardens have been planted and are being maintained or developed by students, staff and parents.

AALC's instructional staff includes fourteen classroom teachers, an art teacher, a music teacher and a part-time physical education teacher. All teachers hold Michigan teaching certificates. The administrative staff includes the dean, business manager and office assistants (part-time hourly positions). A teacher consultant, social worker, occupational therapist, physical therapist and instructional aides provide services for students with special education plans. Parents volunteer as school board members, as participants in the PTSO (Parent – Teacher – Student Organization), as enrichment course facilitators and as support to educational activities.

Mission

The mission of the Ann Arbor Learning Community is to nurture independent learners as they acquire the tools they need to shape an environmentally healthy and socially responsible future. In a supportive, student-centered community that appreciates uniqueness, AALC helps students develop a strong sense of self and lifetime love of learning. The school fosters the development of essential life skills and core academic knowledge through small, multi-aged classrooms that honor the learning style and creative strengths of each student.

The school's current charter sets three goals that reflect this mission and the school's philosophy. These goals challenge the school to develop independent life-long learners by meeting the individual needs of each student; develop an environmental education program with a focus on organic gardening, outdoor education and sustainability; and develop the students' sense of social responsibility within the school and global community.

Technology helps Ann Arbor Learning Community meet its curricular mission. Software and the filtered Internet support students' skill and knowledge development. Software programs and web-based resources align with classroom units or core subjects. Resources found on the Internet by teachers improve educational activities and enhance teaching methods. Teachers' networked thin clients facilitate their lesson planning, communication with parents, professional development and student progress reporting with off-site access to the network. Ann Arbor Learning Community complies with reporting requirements from the school's charter authorizer (Eastern Michigan University) and Michigan Department of Education using technology in its office.

Goals

Instructional

Student will experience and use technology at Ann Arbor Learning Community across all grade levels. Their technology experience will address the Michigan Educational Technology Standards and the school's curriculum standards.

Teachers want students' technology experience to include

- use of different technologies (computer, digital camera, calculator, and digital video camera);
- presentation of their work and organization of information in all subject areas;
- application of technology to students' reasoning and communication in science, social studies, language arts and the arts; and
- understanding technology's role in careers or in their life skills.

Technology maintenance

- Technology equipment will remain at the school and be available for student and staff use during school hours.
- Outsourced technical support will maintain networked hardware and software.
- The network will allow staff to share, print and scan documents as well as access documents from remote locations.
- Hardware and equipment will be assessed for its support of curriculum. Additional equipment, ex. additional LCD projector for daily instructional use; will be purchased as operating budget funding becomes available. Plans for hardware replacement will be developed.
- Professionals in the field of information technology will be consulted for their opinions and support. An ad-hoc technology committee may be utilized for future technology directions.

Planning and technology integration for school's future

- To ensure that the school is operating a reliable, cost-effective network, continue to assess the outsourcing of support and networking against an on-site server and internal support staff.
- The school's web site is a resource for communication with current families, information for prospective parents and marketing of the school to the broader community.
- Analysis by the School Improvement Team will result in the development of a software program that will track student's progress and academic achievement on their Individual Learning Plan. The student achievement and progress data housed by the program will be accessible to teachers and parents.

Telecommunications and technology resources are disbursed throughout the classrooms at the school. The technology infrastructure includes cabling and electrical wiring, printers in staff and teacher workrooms, phone and Internet access throughout the school and networked thin clients in classrooms and offices.

Needs Assessment

The STaR (School Technology and Readiness) Chart completed with staff input assesses AALC as Mid Tech overall. The STaR Chart summarized AALC's technology status by area.

	Low tech	Mid tech	High tech
Hardware			X
Connectivity		X	
Content		X	
Professional development		X	
Integration and use	X		
<i>Overall</i>		X	

Infrastructure

The school continues to use terminal services hosting with outsourced support, offsite document storage, office applications, anti-virus and Internet content filtering. The following table outlines available resources.

<i>technology resources</i>	
Thin clients	X
Operating system	Windows Server 2003
Standard applications	MS Office
Printer/copier with scanning	X
Internet access	786 Kb
Servers – off site	X
Off-site access for staff	X

All thin clients require a staff, classroom or middle school student login to access documents on an off-site server, printing, and Internet access. Teachers release print jobs from student logins. The high speed Internet access is purchased by the school from a business service provider. Some teachers have laptop computers purchased with personal funds. For some projects in middle school students may use donated or personal laptop computers.

In 2008-2009 the student to thin client ratio in the intermediate and middle school grades was 9:1. Early primary and primary grades students used standalone desktops with CD-DVD capability installed in fall 2008. Operating budget (general fund) funded the new desktops. The student to desktop ratio in the early primary and primary grades was 12:1. The instructional and administrative staff to thin client ratio was 1:1.

Programs are available for pre-K through grade twelve, for different student needs (e.g. audio or voice features for some software programs) and for all core curriculum areas. Software on CD-ROMS is limited. Resources are sought to meet the criteria below.

<i>classroom software / content resources</i>	
Drill and practice	X
Authoring	X
Reference	X
Internet access	X
Simulation	X
Correlated with national and state educational standards	X
Macintosh & Windows compatible	X

Televisions with videocassette recorders and DVD players support classroom instruction. Cable television and television access is not available at the school. A donated LCD projector is available for use in instructional activities and meetings. The phone system includes ten voice lines for staff and student use, one dedicated fax line, and voicemail for all staff. Phones are located in nineteen classrooms and five offices. Teachers and students use digital and digital video cameras.

Curriculum and Instruction

Student technology use varies by classroom teacher and ability (grade) level. Student technology experience includes

- basic skills practice;
- research using CD-ROMs and the Internet for language arts, science, social studies and the arts; and
- presentation of their original work as printed reports or multimedia presentations.
- integration of media resources across all subjects
- use of digital images composed by students in their arts production

Teachers' goals for students' experience or use:

- gain keyboarding skills;
- gain basic computer use;
- effectively research using the Internet;
- use multiple technological tools (computer, digital camera, video, overhead projector) in presentation of student work; and
- understand technology use in potential careers and their future.

Over the next three years (2009-2012) the technology integration into curricular activities will follow the following timeline.

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Basic operations & concepts	EP, P, I, M	EP, P, I, M	EP, P, I, M
Social, ethical & human issues	EP, P, I, M	EP, P, I, M	EP, P, I, M
Productivity	EP, P, I, M	EP, P, I, M	EP, P, I, M
Communications	I, M	P, I, M	P, I, M
Research	P, I, M	P, I, M	P, I, M
Problem-solving & decision-making	P, I, M	P, I, M	P, I, M

Key: :EP = Early Primary (K – grade 1) P = Primary (grade 2-3)
 I = Intermediate (grades 4 –5) M = Middle school (grades 6 – 8)

Parent volunteers facilitate student enrichment courses in computer programming and other computer-based experiences.

The performing arts and environmental education (gardening) experiences for students could be identified as specialized curricula. Currently software and Internet resources support the arts and environmental education or gardening.

Students' educational experience is supported and enhanced by the Internet. As part of their social studies instruction and activity all grade levels viewed the Presidential Inauguration via the Internet projected in the multipurpose room and other classrooms. Intermediate and middle school students utilized technology to research, create and produce their own reports, video productions, oral presentations and other projects as part of their social studies project-based learning experience.

Distance learning delivering educational content has been utilized by one middle school student in 2008-2009 who enrolled in advanced coursework through a virtual university. Community-based opportunities may be utilized as they become available.

In the charter approved by Eastern Michigan University in 2008, the curriculum aligns with the Michigan grade level content expectations in math, science, social studies, and language arts. Teachers are aware of the Michigan Educational Technology Standards. Teachers' instructional planning is guided by the content expectations and standards.

Collaboration

Adult literacy service providers (Ann Arbor District Library, Ypsilanti District Library, Washtenaw Intermediate School District, and universities) are a source of technology professional development and training for AALC staff. AALC has not been a recognized community access or adult literacy services site.

Professional Development

Professional development funding from Eastern Michigan University and federal grants supports teacher or staff, self-selected technology experiences at conferences or workshops at sites away from the school. In 2008-2009, one workshop for all classroom teachers presented online resources for the school-wide math curriculum package. Funding also supported one staff member's distance learning.

For the near future (2009-2010) outside funding is expected to decrease while operating budget will continue to allocate for workshops, technical services and training & development. This means staff will need to utilize different resources such as webinars, online tools or other professionals (at the school, in the broader educational community or at

universities). Online technology skill assessments will be shared with teachers so they can assess and document their skill. The technology standards for students are available on the school's network for teacher's reference and review. With administration's expectation or direction, teachers should be able to recognize and build their skills through peer to peer information sharing, dialogue between among different types of staff, and other on-site opportunities.

AALC has utilized outside resources in the past as an educational technology graduate student (who was also a Michigan-certified teacher) provided individualized technology integration support to teachers. Given the current resources; funding projections for the future; range of technology skill and experience among teachers; and the school's relationship with graduate schools, a similar model of individualized coaching or training is realistic. Contact has been made with the U-M School of Information Practical Engagement Program to initiate or develop this development for fall 2009. Opportunities also exist to gain off-site training (workshops and conferences) that can be applied to the reality and resources of a public charter school. Input from professionals can also be sought.

Teachers and other staff will develop their technology competencies in order to meet the *ISTE National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers* as depicted in the following table.

	2008-09		2011-12
Technology operations & concepts	Progressing		Achieving
Planning & designing learning environments	Progressing		Achieving
Teaching, learning & the curriculum	Progressing		Mastery
Assessment & evaluation	Progressing		Achieving
Productivity & professional practice	Achieving		Mastery
Social, ethical, legal & human issues	Achieving		Mastery

Key: Progressing – less than half the staff meets the standard

Achieving – half or more than half the staff meet the standard

Mastery – all staff achieve the standard

Technology Committee

The school has formed technology committees in the past. The committees have written grants, advised staff and requested equipment purchases. The school does not maintain a large number of standing committees instead the committees evolve and dissolve based upon currently identified need or interest. In 2008-2009, an ad hoc committee investigated one software application for students and potential funding or grant resources. Ad-hoc committees may be utilized for future directions and decisions.

Technical Support

All network support is provided by an external information technology firm. Due to outsourced support and maintenance, equipment has been functioning consistently and is reliably available for staff use. Network reliability and speed has been improved through assignment to multiple servers. Technology integration and professional development is the responsibility of teachers or staff. The business manager requests technical support repair for hardware, software applications and the Internet access via e-mail, phone and the Internet. Staff is also encouraged to request technical support for thin clients and the network software applications from the external IT firm.

Supporting Resources

Online resources are available. Teachers and staff can access information or request materials from resource centers – i.e. Washtenaw Intermediate School District or Ann Arbor District Library or universities; online also.

Technology Costs (timeline)

Year	Cost	expenses (operating – equipment)	funding sources
2008-2009	20,773	Internet access; copier/printer leasing & maintenance; terminal services hosting (network) with outsourced support, applications and Internet filtering	Operating budget
	8,795	8 standalone desktops with monitors; 5 thin clients with flat panel monitors; 1 standalone desktop with monitor & sound card	
2009-2010	23,222	Internet access; copier/printer leasing & maintenance; terminal services hosting (network) with outsourced support, applications and Internet filtering	Operating budget
	970	1 thin client with flat panel monitor; standalone desktop for admin office	
2010-2011	26,058	Internet access; copier/printer leasing & maintenance; terminal services hosting (network) with outsourced support, applications and Internet filtering; onsite server setup & support	Operating budget
2011-2012	29,185	Internet access; copier/printer leasing & maintenance; terminal services hosting (network) with outsourced support, applications and Internet filtering; onsite server setup & support	Operating budget

Coordination of Resources

AALC has received reimbursement against the 2008-2009 e-rate funding for telecommunications services and Internet access. An e-rate funding application for 2009-2009 telecommunications services and Internet access was submitted. It is anticipated that applications for e-rate funding will continue through 2012.

The operating budget allocated and will continue to allocate funding for technology maintenance and equipment. In future years additional thin clients, desktops, LCD projectors or other equipment for teachers and students will be purchased.

Evaluation

For this revision of the technology plan, a teacher reviewed responses to the STaR evaluation and some teachers were surveyed on technology use and resources. The ratios of computers to students and administrative staff were also calculated. These and other evaluation measures listed below will be used to evaluate Ann Arbor Learning Community's technology.

- ratio of students to student workstations
- # of computers with Internet access
- technology use documented in student progress reports or Individual Learning Plan
- staff accomplishment of state & national technology standards
- documentation (teacher plans) & observation of technology integration
- ratio of administrative staff to computers
- # of software programs
- student fulfillment of state technology standards
- parent and staff feedback
- assessment of staff technology use & skills

With each revision of the technology plan technology use is evaluated, staff are surveyed, parent input or feedback is heard, and recommendations are made to the administration. Unmet goals will be addressed through the administration's direction of the teachers and educational program, as well as the school improvement team's plan for the school.

Acceptable Use Policy

AALC's *Technology Code of Ethics* was approved by the school board in January 1999; included in the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund cycle 3 application; implemented for students and staff beginning in November 1999; and amended with board-approved text citing the Children's Internet Protection Act in September 2003.

The school's technology includes Internet filtering on all thin clients used by students and staff. The external IT firm uses OpenDNS (www.opendns.com). Currently the filter settings limit access to adware, alcohol, dating, drugs, gambling, hate/discrimination, weapons, tasteless, proxy/anonymizer, nudity, sexuality and pornography sites while enabling phishing protection.

Students access the Internet for specific assignments with staff permission. They are not encouraged to browse the web as entertainment. A copy of the Acceptable Use policy with student and parent signatures is retained in student cumulative folders. The staff is also informed or aware of this Code.

Technology Code of Ethics Policy

Ann Arbor Learning Community will use technology in the school as an opportunity for students and staff to enhance learning, productivity, and information processing. The Board and staff specify that the school's computer hardware and software shall be used solely for educational purposes. Ann Arbor Learning Community expressly prohibits the use of computer, related equipment, and software for the purpose of sending or receiving information or images of a prurient, harmful, or harassment nature.

Rights

Students and Staff:

- May use hardware and software that they have permission to use.
- May access information from approved resources outside the school district.
- May request access to the Internet to receive and send information.

Responsibilities

Students and Staff are responsible for:

- Utilizing information technology only for educational purposes, including but not limited to the attainment of outcomes, goals, and objectives specified in curriculum documents of the district or otherwise delineated by teachers, administrators, or the Board.
- Using hardware and software in a manner that enables its ongoing usage.
- Adhering to the rules including, but not limited to, those posted in classrooms or computer labs or otherwise specified by school staff, for the use of hardware, software, labs, and networks in the school.
- Obtaining permission from a school official before bringing in their own software and using it on school equipment.
- Keeping hardware and software from being relocated, removed from school premises, or modified without permission of an administrator.
- Maintaining the privacy of passwords and supporting the prohibition of publishing or discussing passwords.
- All material received from sources outside the school district, including the Internet, under their user accounts.
- Accepting responsibility for keeping all pornographic material, inappropriate text files, or files dangerous to the integrity of the school's network, equipment, or software from entering the school.
- Adhering to the law and district policy pertaining to copyright and privacy rights in the use of hardware and software and in the transmission of copying of text or files.
- Avoiding using the technology for personal or private business, for product advertisement, or for political lobbying.
- Avoiding the malicious use of information technology to disrupt the use of technology by others, to harass or discriminate against others, or to infiltrate unauthorized computer systems.

Additionally, the staff is responsible for supervising students' computer usage and monitoring usage of the network and access to the Internet in accordance with this code and the Children's Internet Protection Act.

Disciplinary Action

Students and staff violating any of these Rights and Responsibilities will face disciplinary action, which may include:

- Banning their use of school information technology.
- Making full financial restitution for any unauthorized expenses incurred or any damages caused
- Attending training sessions.
- Facing additional disciplinary action deemed appropriate in keeping with the disciplinary policies and guidelines of the school up to dismissal from employment, litigation, or expulsion from school.

Use of technology is a privilege extended to students and staff in order to enhance learning and exchange information.

Each user of technology shall read the Technology Code of Ethics statements and sign the User's Responsibility Declaration prior to accessing and using district technology.

All students under the age of eighteen years are required to have a parent or guardian sign the Technology Code of Ethics before student access is gained.

Communications

Resource and volunteer solicitation is communicated via technology. Parent and community volunteers facilitate and support technology activities as well as other student activities. Parents and teachers use e-mail and phone

communication to share information and report student progress. Student technology use is discussed in parent-teacher conferences, documented in student progress reports and visible through students' work product. Parents are also informed of technology use in classroom and school newsletters distributed to students and via e-mail to parents.

The office sends school-related e-mail communication to parents via two hundred, seventy-one e-mail addresses. E-mail communication is possible with all staff and school board members. Communication with vendors, businesses and outside organizations is also completed via e-mail and the Internet. Online surveys have been conducted by the office to collect parent feedback.

The school's web site (<http://www.annarborlearningcommunity.org>) is linked at Michigan Association of Public School Academies (<http://www.charterschools.org>) and Eastern Michigan University (www.emich.edu/charter). The site content continues to be updated by staff with a parent volunteer's assistance. Digital images on the website and in other publications document students' activity and the school. Enrollment information and forms are posted for prospective parents while registration forms are also available for parents of enrolled students. Directions for joining the AALC parents' yahoo group moderated by parents are also available on the site. The technology plan is among the documents available at the school's site.

Resources used to develop June 2009 plan:

Ann Arbor Learning Community Teachers (Cynthia Andrews, Stephanie Schuetzler)

Resources used to develop June 2006 plan:

Ann Arbor Learning Community Teachers (Cynthia Harris, Marissa Kowalczyk, Khajasameion Parks, Stephanie Schuetzler)

Resources used to develop November 2003 plan:

Ann Arbor Learning Community Teachers (Elizabeth Battey, Khajasameion Buchanan, Jennifer Taylor)

Resources used to develop June 2003 plan:

Ann Arbor Learning Community Teachers (Khajasameion Buchanan)

Resources used to develop June 2002 plan:

Ann Arbor Learning Community Teachers (Khajasameion Buchanan, Cathy Boatman, & Kristen Kreiner)

Guidebook for Developing an Effective Instructional Technology Plan V 2.0 (Mississippi State University, 1996)

Michigan Technology Content Standards