

Gregory Gilmore
7366 Assignment 6
Fall 2011
Budget Narrative

Budget link:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0Agl4YAUPDaK0dFVUdThEelZ0d3NnUVdXd1Vza0ExSWc&hl=en_US

Although the readings for this assignment were helpful, I quickly found that no one single article was enough to complete this assignment. Beyond the readings, I found a few sample budgets, a technology budget template, and a total cost of ownership worksheet that I used to compile my budget. If I were creating a technology budget for an actual school district, it would require meeting with the superintendent in charge of the district budget to determine what expenses are covered in other budgets. Things like utilities, paper and toner, professional development, library resources, salaries, and assistive technology may be covered in other parts of the district's budget and would not be required to be included in the technology budget. Other considerations would be line items that are set amounts and can not change based on percentages of the total technology budget. Equipment contracts, service agreements, salaries, and licensing fees are typically locked in. Any reduction in the total technology budget must be absorbed in other, more flexible areas of the budget. I would also need to determine the upgrade schedule for hardware and software or create an upgrade schedule so that hardware and software costs were distributed evenly from year to year. It would be impractical and impossible to upgrade all hardware and software in a single year. It was difficult to create this budget without seeing actual figures for contracts, utility bills, service agreements, and salaries. All of these figures would help determine a more realistic budget.

Despite these factors, this assignment was still beneficial in that it required me to consider what elements are necessary for the technology within a school district, and the costs related to those elements. After determining what items to include, I created a Google Spreadsheet that operates as a calculator to distribute an amount of money across the nine categories I included and the subcategories within them. I based the district-wide budget on \$500,000 as a round figure, and set the categories and sub-categories as percentages of the total budget. The formulas in the spreadsheet allowed me to experiment with different amounts and easily move numbers from one category to another; any change in one area affected the amount of money available for other areas. One of the reading assignments pointed out that budgeting is not a numbers game, but budgeting certainly is a balancing act; more money in one category means less money in another category.

The categories I included in my budget are:

Hardware	This is the most visual part of the budget. Costs in this category should be easily justified and supported by administration, the board, and the public. An upgrade plan would be required to distribute hardware costs evenly from year to year. This could be accomplished through a contract with a vendor for a set number of desktop computers each year at a set price, or the technology coordinator could create a three to five year rotation that replaced all hardware in the district within that time frame.
Supplies	Supplies represents part of the TCO that could easily be forgotten. Some districts may put paper and toner in a separate line item, or include those costs in building budgets. I included them here to indicate that I realize paper and toner are a necessary element of educational technology. Until paperless classrooms are a reality, copier paper will be a staple of education.
Software	Software is included because computers are often shipped with limited software and school districts are increasingly becoming dependent on online communication and record keeping. Part of software expenses may be offset by bundling some software with hardware upgrades or textbook purchases, but network applications for student records will most likely need to be purchased separately from hardware.
Internet Access	Internet access includes fees for the Internet Service Provider, phone service, and possibly the utilities required to run the network. Much of this line item includes set figures for services or subscriptions that would be predetermined outside of the budget.
Information Resources	I included information resources to ensure that the district has access to online databases and video streaming. Money is also included for any needed print resources. Since subscription prices are set, any reductions in this item would require cutting subscriptions, or moving to a lower subscription tier with less services.
Assistive Technology	If not already covered by the special education budget, assistive technology should be included in the technology budget. This line item is here to allow special education staff to purchase equipment and software to comply with IEP requirements.
Utilities	If utilities for running network equipment and climate control of server closets are not included in another district budget, they must be

	included in the technology budget.
Professional Development	In the ideal world, this line item would be given more emphasis that it often is. Administration too often expect teachers to gain the knowledge necessary to operate district technology themselves or “synergize” with fellow faculty members. I also included a line item for substitutes. This could be used for out of district events, as well as allowing teachers to observe other teachers in the district, or meet with other teachers for coaching and mentoring during contract time.
Human Resources	As suggested by the assigned readings, the bulk of the budget is devoted to the people who plan, purchase, and maintain the technology. The amounts in this category were difficult to determine without knowing exact salary figures. In an actual setting, many of the item in this category would not be very flexible due to salary schedules or hourly rates. I did not include benefits such as insurance and sick leave. If benefits are not covered in another district budget, they would have to be included with human resource expenses in the technology budget.

My district does a very good job supplying hardware, software, and network infrastructure to support technology in the classroom. Our biggest need is more professional development opportunities and funds to provide substitutes for release time. We have SMART Boards, reliable internet access, several research and information databases, access to streaming video services, an online gradebook, and a district website that allows teachers to create their own classroom websites. Despite these great offerings, many teachers do not know some of them exist or are not comfortable enough with them to use them in a classroom. Without proper training, a portion of the money spent on equipment and services is wasted when they are not properly utilized.