The South Brunswick Public School District has appointed Aaron A. Bryan as Director of Technology. The appointment was approved by the Board of Education at its meeting on October 28, 2002. Aaron was formerly the Manager of Information Systems for the district. As Director of Technology, he will oversee the information systems and technology of all South Brunswick schools. With over 15 years of experience in designing, implementing, and maintaining computer systems, Aaron hopes to help facilitate and bridge communication between administration, staff, students, parents, and the South Brunswick community.

The Technology Department is pleased to announce that there have been many generous technology donations to our district.

- 50 IBM Think Pads were donated to Brunswick Acres School by the Johnson and Johnson Corporation after they upgraded office equipment. David Eisma, a student’s parent, facilitated the deal.

- Apple Computer donated 10 laptops at an approximate cost of $10,000 to Dr. Stewart for the READ 180 program.

- Pfizer Corporation donated 10 Compaq server cabinets from their decommissioned computer center in New York City. The cabinets are in excellent condition and are valued at approximately $15,000.

- Karen Lanza, a parent of a seventh grade student at Crossroads North, won a computer and the opportunity to recommend a school to receive an identical computer through Stop and Shop Supermarkets’ "Back to a Better School" promotion. Crossroads North received an ACER Windows Computer and Monitor.
Symantec Norton Anti-Virus LiveUpdate should be run monthly on ALL computers. To do this, follow these simple steps:

1. Search in the Hard Drive folder for “LiveUpdate Folder” (i.e., search using the Sherlock search tool).
2. Open the LiveUpdate folder.
3. Double-click on “LiveUpdate.”
4. Click on the second button, “Update Everything Now.”
5. Once the program has finished checking for updates, press the “Quit” button.

Now your machine is up-to-date on all the latest Norton Anti-Virus software. • • •

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

By Lia Daniels

For this issue, the Technology Department will focus on health-related websites of interest. Here are a few websites that dispense medical information to patients and doctors.

WebMD
http://www.webmd.com/

The WebMD Corporation’s website is an online healthcare information network that provides services to physicians and patients through clinical reports and educational tools. The website mentions books, brochures, and newsletters about medical conditions and diseases available for free or for purchase. Other great features are the Internet chats offered daily with doctors and other members of the medical community. Users can even search for doctors near their towns.

MayoClinic.com
http://www.mayoclinic.com/index.cfm

MayoClinic.com, a website founded by the Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, offers information on managing good health. A team of Internet content producers, nurses, doctors, and scientists produces MayoClinic.com to provide useful and up-to-date information about ailments and diseases. All material is based on scientific research and the collective wisdom of practicing physicians at the Mayo Clinic. The website has “disease self-managers” to help patients cope with illnesses and “healthy living centers” that advise on such topics as aging gracefully or preparing for a 5K run. • • •

UMDNJ HealthLink

HealthLink, the monthly online magazine of The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ), offers tips on nutrition and well-being. It documents breakthrough medical technology and new surgical procedures. The feature articles typically report on special surgeries at the University Hospital in Newark, New Jersey. One great item, “Health Bytes from Around the World,” documents international studies on improving health, such as the benefits of tea in China and Taiwan, or Swedish studies about the healthy effects of eating fish. • • •

VIRUS SOFTWARE UPDATES

...
IEP PROGRAM

By Joanne D’Angelo

The Student Services Department is dedicated to supporting students with special needs. In doing so, maintaining confidential data and information is critical to the students and to the district.

Three years ago, the Department implemented the Student Tracker: Special Services Case Management System from Contour Data Corporation. The system, also known as the Individualized Education Program (IEP), can store all student demographic, correspondence, and state-mandated information. IEP tracks information about students from the day they are referred to a Child Study Team (CST) to the day they no longer require services.

Although Student Tracker met state-mandated criteria for confidential use of the program in an accessible, non-restrictive, and timely manner, it came with specifications and requirements that our District, at the time, was not able to handle. The Contour Data Corporation had not implemented their program in a Macintosh environment prior to beginning its work in South Brunswick.

Despite the difficulties of implementing a PC program on a Macintosh platform, Aaron A. Bryan, Director of Technology, and Kevin Fisher of Contour Data Corporation worked together to implement Student Tracker in a Macintosh environment. Through the implementation of the Citrix Independent Computing Architecture (ICA) and Citrix Metaframe, South Brunswick became Contour Data’s first district to use iMacs and wireless iBooks with their system. Thus, South Brunswick allowed users working on a Macintosh platform to access a program normally used on a PC platform. Although this might sound very seamless, behind the scenes, the project took a great deal of time, resources, and effort from the Technology Department before it could be introduced and used efficiently by the child study teams and special education teams.

After Student Tracker was adapted to a Macintosh platform, the secretarial staff was trained to input the data of each of the referred or classified students in the district. Extensive training was provided to the CST members and Special Education Teachers who were then assigned an iBook or an iMac to develop IEPs and access the records of student cases. Because the entire District is networked, it became possible for teams and teachers assigned to more than one school to work on their files from any of the buildings in the district. Teachers and staff could conveniently and more productively communicate and collaborate on a report. Also, additional Airports were installed in school buildings and the Board Office to support the wireless features of the system.

Another great feature about the Tracker program is that when parents participate in the IEP process, changes can be addressed immediately. Documents can immediately be printed out, signed, and handed to the parent before the meeting is concluded. A copy of the IEP can be delivered to the teacher(s) within the same day. Students benefit from a timely process that in the past could have taken from two weeks to several months.

To date, IEP documents are being produced in less time and with fewer staff resources. The outcome of using the Contour Data Tracker system has resulted in improved communication with written notices, letters to parents, testing results, and IEPs. • • •
By Maribeth Edmunds

In September of 2002, the Board of Education directed the District Communications Committee to examine existing practices, identify current needs, and to develop a District Strategic Communications Plan. The purpose of the plan is to set forth a series of tangible actions that will move the school system’s communications methods from its current status to one that better serves the progressive nature of a district moving into the 21st Century.

What is a strategic plan?

A strategic planning process is an open, disciplined, systematic method of analyzing needs, creating a mission statement and goals, and, based upon this framework, developing activities to reach those goals within a given period of time. Maribeth Edmunds, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, coordinated the initiative and organized the stakeholders in committees to begin this work. Three planning sessions were held to oversee several committees who met during October, November, and December. The committees are working now to create action plans that are to be presented to the Board of Education in January.

All members of the committee contributed to decisions regarding the procedures and elements of the plan, and all members of the Board of Education received ongoing opportunities to provide feedback to Anna Tupé and Marty Abschutz, who represent the Board and serve on the committees.

What is the process?

The members of the District Communications Committee began with an examination of existing practices in their respective buildings. Ann Jahr, Technology Staff Developer, created charts with the following information: (1) Internal Communications within the School, (2) External Communications between the School and the Public, (parents, media, etc.), (3) Communications among Schools and the Board Office, and (4) “What’s Missing? What Else Needs to be Done?” Once completed, the committee reviewed the inventories together and shared their responses.

From the review of the inventories and a discussion of “Where do we want to go from here?” the Committee developed the mission statement and goal statements for the plan. In essence, the members felt that although there is a need to promote and improve the web presence across the district, there remains a desire to retain the personal nature of South Brunswick in our communications plan whenever possible.

Mission

The Mission of the Strategic Communications Plan is to build, articulate, and promote a continuous, open, and reliable system that allows for a flow of information responsive to the needs of a dynamic and diverse school district and community. Through increased knowledge and awareness, this system will assure continued support of the school district’s goals.

Goal #1

To manage information and to communicate our good news in timely, accurate, and highly visible ways to all members of the South Brunswick community.

Goal #2

To create an internal and external communication system that values personal interaction while optimizing the use of technology and mass media.

Although the Mission and the Goals are still in draft, the members of the committee believe that these statements will provide direction for the completion of the Strategic Communications Plan. • • •