

Vision Paper

A Vision Statement for Atlanta International School

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Technology Vision Statement for Atlanta International School (Shortened)

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The community of Atlanta International School will meet the challenges and opportunities of our interdependent, fast-changing world through judicious use of technology. We aspire to develop inquirer creativity, collaboration and communication in young people with a rigorous, hands-on, experiential, problem solving and constructivist technology curriculum across academics and balanced personal lives to produce knowledgeable and engaged 21st Century life-long learners.

Technology Vision Statement for Technology at Atlanta International School (AIS)

Revised: October 2013

At Atlanta International School (AIS), the focus of technology will be to support and enhance student learning through all grade levels and across all subjects as part of our “Creativity, Collaboration and Communication” Technology Program (C3). Integrated into the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP), our program will continue to pursue excellence using the International Standards for Technology (ISTE Standards) and ISTE’s wider gamut of planning tools for all stakeholders including teachers (ISTE Standards T), students (ISTE Standards S), administrators (ISTE Standards A), and coaches (ISTE Standards C), as well as transparent stakeholder understanding in the parent and wider local and international community. As a Google Apps School, infrastructure will support a flexible, reliable learning platform that extends beyond the school campus to facilitate the seeds of a life-long passion for learning and address “a community that nurtures and celebrates disciplined and myriad intelligences” (Atlanta International School, 2011) Students will hone skills in their responsibilities as a digital citizen in online identity and footprint and given access to devices that will enable their ability to use technology to solve authentic problems across many different contexts and enable practice in locating, accessing and critically evaluating sources of information that “build knowledge structures in their minds rather than have the knowledge implanted by the teacher” (Creighton, 2003)

A holistic part of teaching and learning in the MYP is the Design Cycle, a part of MYP Technology. This shall be applied across all programmes at an age appropriate level, offering a cohesive approach to problem solving across curricular areas with a view to taking action outside of the classroom setting, with a comprehensive offering of co-curricular activities that will further scaffold student technology learning in the academic sphere.

Dedicated planning and collaboration for faculty will be further supported by a comprehensive, structured professional development schedule, developed in the near-term with the goal of supplementing excellence in teaching and learning in the classroom to develop faculty technology competencies aligned with professional development goals and modeled by the school leadership team.

Rationale for revised Technology Vision Statement in Atlanta International School

Technology use at Atlanta International School to support student achievement

Currently, the Creativity, Collaboration and Communication (C3) Program at AIS is the capstone of technology integration in our school community K3 – 12.

C3 aims to:

- Focus on how we are learning, not what we are learning
- Movement from teacher centric to constructivist, problem solving content
- Technology to promote student autonomy in learning
- Authentic student engagement
- Access to technology that allows students to capitalize on and develop skills that will allow for their personal achievement across their academic studies.

Creativity

Students will be able to:

- Design for a purpose
- Explore sustainability in the wider world context
- Use visible thinking to assess the impact of learning
- Operate organic synthesis of ideas that allow for dynamic solutions to problems to be sought
- Learn using technology in the conceptual framework – content becomes supporting mechanism in understanding the bigger picture

Communication

Students will be able to:

- Recognize that knowledge is now a two way street and not a one way transfer
- Learn in a technology rich environment; ideal for supporting differentiated learning and assessing their own approaches to learning
- Reconcile that technology that will enhance access to communicate in the multiple spoken languages in our school community and access communication with speakers from across the world to hone proficiency in language use

Collaboration

Students will be able to:

- Access deeper levels of thinking via electronic conversation and collaboration
- Forge academic and collegial conversation based on mutual engagement and interest
- Foster a wider community of learning beyond the physical boundaries of AIS
- Hone ability to develop acumen in collaborating in a world of thinkers that are not perhaps transparent or accessible at AIS

- Access technology that might not normally be available in a very specialist area for student use

International Baccalaureate (IB)

While explicit in the MYP through the subject area of technology, the integration of Technology (as an MYP subject area) across subject areas is pertinent in the Standards and Practices that foster verification and authorization as an IB World School. In a previous verification visit, a matter to be addressed in this context was the evidence of teaching Technology as a subject to the mandated 50 hours. Technology is now a stand-alone subject on the schedule for all students 6 – 10 (Years 1 – 5 of the programme) and tangents of this course proliferate across subject areas by use of The Design Cycle. Technology has been renamed Design in MYP Next Chapter but it's value to technology integration across other subject areas remains critical.

Outside Accreditation

As a school in the State of Georgia, AIS holds accreditation from other local and international stakeholders. One of these is AdvancEd, who recommended in a recent visit to the school to:

“Investigate ways to accelerate opportunities for the integration of technology into the classrooms, both by securing additional computer technology and by more effectively utilizing the technology already in place”. (Atlanta International School, 2011)

The Council for International Schools (CIS) is a highly sought after accreditation for international school environments like AIS. On their visit in 2011, they noted the following recommendation:

“The school takes measures to support student learning with adequate and appropriate technology” (Atlanta International School, 2011).

Embarking on C3 with one to one laptop programmes in 6 – 11 Grade, BYOD in 12th Grade and wide community access to MAC platforms and other peripherals in PYP combined with additional hires of two ICT specialists has addressed these recommendations in the interim.

Near / Far Horizons

According to the 2013 NMC Horizon Report there are six likely focuses that need to be in our purview ongoing as we develop a technology plan for AIS.

Near Term (within 12 months) - Mobile and Cloud Computing

Mid Term (2 – 3 years out) - Learning Analytics and Open Content

Far-Term (4 – 5 years away) - 3D Printers, Virtual Labs

All of the above mentioned on their timelines have “clear and immediate potential for teaching and learning” (The New Media Consortium , 2013) Conclusions are made around a benchmark of questions that point to trends.

Much of this attends to our current thinking in C3 and our revised vision including:

- Shifting use of online learning, hybrid and collaborative models – exchange of new information in spare time or otherwise fostering independent learning. Flexible learning sites and breaking the walls of the traditional school
- Social media – routinely embracing the use of this in a learning paradigm. Use of this communication to connect global knowledge bases for teachers and students – and a new way of interacting with students remotely as wider and interactive professional community of IB teachers.
- Open sourcing – free speech and materials
- Cost dropping frees up access – C3 and BYOD to supplement learning in school and shifts in attitude to technology in the classroom
- Revisiting the traditional education role

The role of the school leader ongoing is morphing to challenge this paradigm in attitude and policy. For example as Massive, Online, Open Course (MOOC's) become more common, need to insure that great knowledge is not missed due to reluctance to change and the challenges of fitting everything into the massively complicated AIS schedule rotations. Having embraced already the recommendations of the near term in cloud computing (use of Dropbox and Google Drive), AIS is already practicing the use of the platform as a service (PaaS). Removal to this kind of remote base lessens risk of losing data in a catastrophic event. Equal to local school adoption, national technology plans are embracing this technology to the extent that "42% of K-12 schools and organizations surveyed are currently implementing some form of cloud computing solution" (The New Media Consortium , 2013)

Mobile Learning is already impacting the humble, physical text-book with students accessing Lib-Guides and ring-fenced and very well peer edited material with a view to scaffolding and enhancing their learning. Students are now used to much more rich platforms that include gaming and sensory constructs to inform their knowledge base.

Learning analytics, open content, 3D printers and virtual labs all seem to be pipe-dreaming for the average school – but considering the touch technology was not even present in the hands of students five years ago and is rapidly becoming a technology norm in schools, it is acceptable to say that it is this kind of thinking that will migrate our technology vision to a heightened level.

The Technology Vision in practice in AIS

- Continue the roll out of one-to-one laptops so that all students 6 – 12 have their own, school specified MacBook Pro devices
- Continue ongoing Professional Development strategy to onboard new faculty and to enhance skills of existing faculty in technology integration. This includes

- funding support for faculty electing to attend external classes and presentation at local and national conferences
- Pioneer and sandbox technology integration for changing IB environments in teaching and learning across the globe with involvement in curricular pilots and leading professional development through the International Baccalaureate Educator Network (IBEN)
 - Review the teaching load of the ICT specialists so that release will assist coaching of faculty in technology integration
 - Reconcile and explore the use of the ISTE Standards S in assessment benchmarking across IB Programmes of study
 - Reconcile and explore the use of ISTE Standards T in professional development goals for AIS
 - Reconcile and explore the use of ISTE Standards A in the 360 reviews of administrative leaders
 - Deepen the focus of technology integration by development of an international tool for assessment and coaching of existing technology integration through collaborative Professional Learning Communities (PLC's)
 - Develop student engagement with Google Apps by creating Personal Interactive Portfolios (PIP)'s using Google Sites
 - Encourage subject research and communication using Google Docs

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Appendix

At AIS, the focus of technology is to support and enhance student learning throughout all grade levels and across all subjects. Our program is based on ISTE-NETS Standards and is aligned with the IB PYP, MYP and DP frameworks, and is founded on a continuum of age-appropriate skills and competencies that are taught explicitly and applied throughout all subject areas. Technology is not something that only happens in computer labs, taught by technology teachers, but is embedded throughout the learning environment and utilized by all teachers. The program includes both vertical (technology taught as a standalone subject) and horizontal (technology integrated across other subjects) components, and dedicated time is made available for both. Students learn how to become responsible digital citizens, developing positive digital identities and footprints, applying modern technology tools to solve authentic problems in different contexts, and becoming well-versed in finding, accessing, critically evaluating, and using information from a variety of sources in a variety of media. Design is an important element of the technology program, and the MYP Technology Design Cycle is a framework that is applied to problem-solving, both in the technology curriculum and throughout other MYP courses. The school offers a continuum of co-curricular activities that support technology learning.

Technology is an integral part of horizontal and vertical collaboration among teachers and is supported by dedicated planning and collaboration time. While teachers may begin at different levels along a continuum of technology competencies, they are continually supported throughout their development through a comprehensive, structured program that is incorporated into the school's existing Professional Development schedule. Ongoing professional development includes a mixture of large group, small group, and one-on-one training, and is supplemented by a wide variety of resources, including video tutorials, online documentation, and a peer-mentoring program. Teachers are encouraged to use technology to become self-directed learners and to collaborate with colleagues, both within the school and with other schools, extending professional development beyond conferences and workshops. Technology use is supported and modeled by school leadership. Technology expectations are aligned with student core competencies and are incorporated into curriculum planning, teacher hiring, appraisal, and retention.

Our technology infrastructure is a flexible, reliable learning platform that extends beyond

the school campus to facilitate anytime/anywhere learning. A variety of age-appropriate technology tools are used throughout the instructional environment and are available for appropriate use at all stages of learning