



Committee of the Whole (Public)

11 May 2021

Report 21-038

**Business and Learning Technologies Appropriate Use of Technology
Policy P.100.IT Review**

Key Contact: Shawn Lehman, Superintendent of Instruction, ext. 8391

PURPOSE:

1. To seek approval of the proposed consultation plan to update Policy P.100.IT, Appropriate Use of Technology.

CONTEXT:

2. District Policy, P.100.IT, Appropriate Use of Technology Policy (Appendix B) was originally written in November 2001 and was titled the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy. In February 2012 it was revised and retitled the Appropriate Use of Technology Policy. With rapidly changing technology and the movement to virtual learning there is a need to update the policy to reflect these new considerations. The companion procedure will also be reviewed and updated. The consultation will invite feedback from interested individuals or groups via email in June. In the fall, there will be focus groups for student and staff users, which will allow for more direct discussion about the user experience.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

3. **Overview of Policy and Procedures Relating to Appropriate Use**
The Appropriate Use of Technology policy outlines the standards and expectations for the use of District technology, including networks, software, email, apps, devices, and infrastructure. The policy governs both students and staff and is supported by a comprehensive procedure. Many of the elements of

the policy are relevant, but there is a need to update the policy. There is an important connection between this policy and the recently approved security policy which will inform some of the updates. The following provides an overview of some of the additional key areas in need of review.

i. **Role of Technology in Curriculum**

Since 2012, Technology has evolved from being a subject in the curriculum to being an integral part of all curricular areas. As the Ministry revises curricular documents, expectations for technology use are embedded throughout each subject area. Students are expected to use critical thinking skills to use technology appropriately to achieve curricular expectations.

ii. **Digital Citizenship**

The current policy uses the work of Mike Ribble's "Digital Citizenship: Using Technology Appropriately" as its foundation. In 2012 the District felt this work best met the needs for creating an understanding of digital citizenship principles for the students and staff of the OCDSB. Since that time there have been updates to Mr. Ribble's work and it is still considered a reputable source for a Digital Citizen model within K-12 education. There are also several other models which should also be considered:

- **Remote Learning**

When the District shifted to remote learning in Spring 2020, educators and school administrators spent a great deal of time educating students and families about online etiquette. To reflect the remote learning environment we need to ensure the language in the policy clearly reflects both in-person and virtual learning.

- **Working At Home**

The Stay-at-Home order also has brought forward a need to have in policy a statement regarding employees working at home and their requirement to use the board technology appropriately.

4. **Electronic Communications Policy**

P.049.IT Electronic Communications Systems (Appendix C), was issued in 1998 and is a short policy which overlaps with the Appropriate Use policy. Business and Learning Technologies (B<) is recommending the relevant policy statements be incorporated into the Appropriate Use policy and the Electronic Communications Systems policy be rescinded.

5. **Best Practices Review**

While consultation is a critical component of any policy review, equally important in this case is a review of best practices and alignment with our security practices and protocols. Staff will be reviewing past experiences to identify any patterns or

trends, reviewing other school district policies, and reviewing best practice guidance from relevant organizations and/or institutions including the Information and Privacy Commission, and the professional guidelines of the Ontario College of Teachers and other professional organizations.

6. Considerations in Updating the Policy

The following questions are provided to support the discussion of this item by the Committee.

- Are there elements of the current Policy which are out-of-date or no longer relevant?
- What is missing from the current Policy in order to reflect appropriate use in our current environment?
- Does the policy sufficiently address the issues of appropriate use for both staff and for students?
- Does the consultation plan represent all the stakeholders?
- Are there any additional questions that we should be asking as part of the consultation plan?

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

7. The resources required to carry out this work will be part of the B< departmental budget.

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

8. A consultation plan is attached as Appendix A. The consultation period will begin in June and continue in the fall. The first part of the consultation will include building awareness about the policy review and inviting feedback from interested stakeholders. This includes staff, students, parents and guardians, school councils and any other interested parties.
- In addition, there will be a focus group discussion with staff in Business and Learning Technologies in June. The purpose of this focus group is to discuss issues that routinely arise in the course of supporting the District's technology infrastructure, devices and clients. This focus group discussion is key to ensuring the business and security aspects of the policy are addressed.

In the fall, there will be focus group discussions with key users, staff and students. These sessions will allow users the opportunity to share their experiences and needs. This phase of the consultation will also include discussions with the federations as well as any follow-up discussions or focus groups which may be identified based on the feedback received in June.

Given the pandemic we will leverage technology to conduct the consultations through online surveys and focus groups through webinar formats. The full consultation plan is located as Appendix A in the package.

STRATEGIC LINKS:

9. This policy revision is aligned with a Culture of Caring through championing and nurturing a safe, caring, and respectful workplace. The policy also fosters a culture of innovation by guiding staff and students on how to modernize their instructional and working processes in an appropriate and safe manner. It also promotes a culture of social responsibility by promoting a responsible use of the district's technical resources. The Business and Learning Technology Plan sets out a desired outcome under the pillar of Privacy and Security where both staff and students demonstrate the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of living, learning and working in an interconnected digital world and make mindful, ethical choices. This policy serves as a guide to help staff and students reach that outcome.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board approve the proposed consultation plan for the update of Policy P.100.IT - Appropriate Use of Technology, attached as Appendix A to Report 21-038.

Shawn Lehman
Superintendent of Instruction

Camille Williams-Taylor
Director of Education
Secretary to the Board

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Consultation Plan

Appendix B - P.100.IT - Appropriate Use of Technology

Appendix C - P.049.IT Electronic Communications Systems