



The Northwest Catholic District School Board

INFORMATION SYSTEMS – YEAR-TO-DATE

Throughout the year, our IT department has worked hard behind the scenes to keep everything running smoothly and safely for our schools. We're always looking for new ways to make our systems better and more secure, whether it's rolling out the latest tech or making sure everyone can rely on their devices and data. Thanks to a team that's willing to tackle challenges head-on and think a few steps ahead, we've been able to support staff and students in a digital world that never stands still. During the 2024-2025 school year, our department handled over 1824 help desk tickets, achieving over a 98% resolution rate.

CYBER SECURITY

- **Cyber Rails Project - Wave 2:** Collaborated with the Ministry of Education Cyber team to advance our cyber security initiatives, strengthening our ability to protect data and systems.
- **Vulnerability Management:** Implemented vulnerability insight software, enabling comprehensive scans across all network devices. This revealed and allowed us to address previously undetected vulnerabilities, ensuring our devices are secure.
- **SIEM (Security Information and Event Management):** Deployed SIEM to aggregate and analyze data from servers, firewalls, and Microsoft Defender, enabling us to identify and respond swiftly to unusual or potentially dangerous activity.
- **SASE Solution:** Rolled out Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) on all staff laptops and student Chromebooks. This setup lets staff and students safely use apps and data from anywhere, making it easier to work and learn remotely. It also helps us move to cloud services while keeping everything secure.
- **Microsoft Sentinel:** Integrated Microsoft Sentinel as a digital security guard for TNCDSB. It monitors all systems—computers, servers, emails, and cloud services—for suspicious activity, raising alerts and supporting automated threat responses through playbooks that we are actively developing and refining.

BACKUPS AND DISASTER RECOVERY

- We upgraded our backup strategy to include server replication. All servers are now fully replicated offsite, allowing for quick restore capabilities should a disaster occur.
- Offsite backup of critical servers to a cloud service that provides air-gapped protection, safeguarding against ransomware attacks that might attempt to overwrite backups.
- Continued use of onsite backup appliances with air gapped backups further strengthens our data protection framework.

HARDWARE REFRESHES

- Smartboard Refresh: Completed the replacement of the last six smartboards at SHS with ViewSonic boards, finalizing the migration to modern touch screen TV-style boards across our schools.
- Document Camera Upgrades: Initiated testing of new smart document cameras, specifically the ELMO unit at St. Joseph's, to replace obsolete and failing models and ensure compatibility with classroom needs.

DEVICE UPGRADES

- Successfully upgraded all TNCDSB Windows devices to Windows 11 over the summer. This significant undertaking involved over 200 devices and was accomplished thanks to the dedication and expertise of our department, managing a smooth rollout despite the scale and inherent challenges.

GOOGLE CHROMEBOOKS

- To ensure students have access to up-to-date technology, we are actively continuing our Chromebook replacement initiative across all grade levels. Each student receives a Chromebook at the beginning of the school year, supporting their learning needs in a modern digital environment. This year we will focus on replacing Grade 1 and Grade 5, where students are provided with brand new devices as part of our ongoing four-year refresh cycle. By systematically replacing Chromebooks every four years, we help minimize technical issues, promote equitable access, and ensure that students and teachers benefit from the latest features, improved performance, and enhanced security. This proactive approach underscores our commitment to providing reliable, effective technology tools that empower students to achieve their academic goals in an ever-evolving educational landscape.

CONCLUSION

This past year, the IT department has made substantial progress across cyber security, backup and recovery, hardware modernization, and system improvements. These achievements have positioned us as leaders in educational technology, and we remain committed to upholding the highest standards of service for our staff, students, and entire school community.

Submitted by:
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