Is IT Outsourcing Right For Me?

SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT

Most educators understand that technology-driven learning doesn't happen on its own. So how is your school making it happen? Are you satisfied with the planning, leadership, tools, and support your school offers? Maybe you could use a little help. Maybe you could use a lot of help. This objective checklist will help you determine how well your IT solution is meeting your school's technology needs and whether partnering with professional technology providers makes sense for you.

IT Leadership

How well does your team define and communicate a vision and direction for your school's technology?

Which of the following statements best describes…

the structure of your IT staff?

A. Our team structure is clear. Each member understands his or her role, responsibilities, and goals.

B. Our team structure needs clarity. Some team members have overlapping, ambiguous, or undocumented roles and/or we have tech-savvy teachers filling gaps the IT team cannot cover.

C. Our team structure is clear, but we need to add one or more trained professionals to fill gaps in the team's expertise.

the state of your school's technology plan?

A. Our IT leadership team has documented and shared a comprehensive plan with the IT staff and external stakeholders. It includes goals, a timeline, a schedule, a budget, and personnel allocation.

B. Our school has had difficulty creating, communicating, and/or implementing a technology plan.

C. Our team has created a plan that is shared with team members and external stakeholders but lacks the personnel or distinct skills required to execute it effectively.

how well your IT leadership team sets the direction of your school's technology strategy?

A. Our IT leadership team communicates a clear, actionable vision that the IT staff embraces and implements.

B. Our leadership team struggles to present a clear, actionable vision to staff.

C. Our leadership team communicates its vision clearly, but the team is unable to execute the vision due to staff limitations (hours, skills, or personnel).

Technology Integration

How well are your teachers prepared to confidently use educational technology in the classroom?

Which of the following statements best describes...

your IT leadership team's approach to providing ongoing technology training for teachers?

A. Our IT leadership team is organized and has a documented training strategy that includes regular professional development sessions.

B. Our team lacks a thorough plan for professional development and/or is poorly equipped to provide adequate teacher training.

C. Our IT staff has a clear plan to provide necessary professional development sessions, but we need more personnel to administer the sessions effectively.

how well teachers integrate technology into their lessons?

A. Teachers regularly incorporate the latest technology. They are trained to use the available resources and integrate them into their lessons.

B. Teachers are unable to integrate technology into their lessons. They are unaware of the technology available, uncertain how to use it, skeptical of its reliability, or insufficiently supported by the IT staff.

C. Teachers are limited in their ability to integrate technology in their day-to-day classroom activities due to a lack of timely support; there is not enough staff to respond to all support requests.

Budget and Hiring

How efficiently does your school manage funds to consistently provide needed technology and support?

Which of the following statements best describes...

how your school's IT budget is managed?

A. Our IT staff follows a comprehensive budget, making appropriate investments in devices, equipment, and staff and effectively managing a five-year asset refresh cycle.

B. Managing the IT budget falls to other school leaders or administrators. As a result, IT budget needs sometimes arise unexpectedly.

C. Our staff manages the budget well, but IT leadership foresees a need for new staff with specific skills.

the impact of your state's pension plan on your hiring strategy?

A. Considering the pension program in my state, my team has the budget to hire and train new IT personnel.

B. Pension changes are compromising our ability to employ an effective IT team. We are looking for a more efficient solution to serve the school's IT needs.

C. While the budget supports our current personnel, hiring additional team members is prohibitively expensive.

Asset and Software Management

How well do your school's assets support technology goals?

Which of the following statements best describes...

your school's asset and software management?

A. Our team finds and uses devices that fit our IT strategy, budget, and the needs of the students. We have a plan to ensure technology is always up to date and running smoothly.

B. Our team lacks an asset refresh plan and struggles to stay current with the devices, software, and infrastructure needed to drive student success.

C. Our team has a plan but not the skills or bandwidth to optimize the performance of the school's assets and infrastructure.

Tech Support

How does your team support the daily operational needs of your school?

Which of the following statements best describes...

your team's ability to respond to IT support requests?

A. Our team responds to and resolves support requests quickly, minimizing downtime for students.

B. Our staff has difficulty consistently resolving service requests in a timely manner. They lack training to resolve problems or need help prioritizing service tickets—and we do not have an effective ticketing system.

C. Our staff generally handles requests well but may be overwhelmed during peak usage times, such as online testing periods. Specific problems may require outside expertise.

Now that you have evaluated your IT team, look at your answers: Did you answer mostly A, B, or C?

If 3 or more of your answers were "A," congratulations! Your IT team seems equipped to provide effective technology support and leadership. It sounds like you are able to provide the devices, infrastructure, and technical expertise that students, teachers, and staff need to create technology-rich learning opportunities.

If 3 or more of your answers were "B," it might be time to consider a full IT outsourcing solution. This is the most reliable way to meet your school's IT needs and make the most of your IT budget. With this option, a team of highly qualified IT professionals takes responsibility for IT operations in your school, providing a strategic plan and the right number of staff to support your technology needs.

If 3 or more of your answers were "C," you may benefit from staff augmentation. This targeted approach adds certified IT professionals to your team to fill gaps in expertise and increase the effectiveness of your existing staff.

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