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The EdTech Journal is the official publication of the California Educational Technology Professionals Association (CETPA). EdTech Journal is published three times a year as a service to our members and information technology managers across California’s K-12 and secondary education school systems.

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When many people in K-12 think about leadership, their thoughts go immediately to the superintendent or the superintendent’s cabinet. The traditional idea is that one must have a title, or position, to exercise leadership within an agency. However, the most effective positional leaders are the ones who developed their leadership skills long before they acquired the title. Even of those who have the positional title, the most effective leaders are ones who operate from their abilities to influence, and not from the power granted by their titles.

The first step in developing non-positional leadership skills is understanding what a leader is and what a leader is not. A leader is, to put it very simply, an influencer. Every person with a title is not necessarily an influencer. Some people in organizations are followed simply because they have the title, but do not truly influence anyone. Other people, however, are seen as the person to be consulted before moving forward on an initiative, regardless of their title. These are the people who are true non-positional leaders.

It is especially important for those of us who support technology in the education industry to embrace and exercise the concept of non-positional leadership. Why? Because technology, for so many of the stakeholders we support, is still an enigma. We do have some stakeholders who are technically savvy and excited about developing technologies; they are always open to learning new and innovative ways to use technology in performing their jobs. But we also have stakeholders who see technology as a necessary evil and would rather interact with it as little as possible. Whether our stakeholders love or hate technology, we have opportunities to influence them in a positive and effective way, regardless of our own title. As the importance of technology in education grows, so does the importance of strong leadership in the area of educational technology.

Practicing non-positional leadership within an organization is not advocating for anarchy or chaos. There are three key components we must adhere to for non-positional leaders to be effective. The first is that all non-positional leaders must understand the organization’s mission. Some K-12 organizations are better than others about clearly articulating their mission. Whether the mission is clearly defined and widely communicated or not, it is a safe bet that the mission of every K-12 organization is centered on providing effective learning experiences for their students. Thus, each non-positional leader in K-12 technology must understand that our ultimate goal is not creating a faster network or increasing the number of Chromebooks in our classrooms. These goals may be a means to an end, but not the end itself. Everything we do should tie back to how we are enhancing the educational experiences of our students, whether we do it directly or indirectly. When our stakeholders see that our goals align with those of the whole organization, and that we are not operating within a vacuum, their trust in us grows exponentially and with that, our influence with them.

The second component of non-positional leadership that we must master is truly understanding the business. One of the biggest mistakes that those of us supporting technology in education make when defining what we do is in thinking of ourselves solely as technology professionals. However, our business is education; our specialty is technology. It is not only imperative for us to stay current in the specific technical areas we support, but with education in general. We should all understand the basics of what is being communicated when we hear the terms “personalized learning,” “maker spaces,”
“pedagogy,” STEAM and STEM, “flipped classrooms,” SAMR, and a host of other terms used in our industry. We should know what a LCAP is. We don’t need to be experts in these areas, no more than our teachers need to know how to configure a router. But, we should understand the basics of the business of education. When we take the time to do so, our stakeholders are more likely to see us as allies, and not as a group of people to work around. They are more likely to work with us, not against us, and to include us in their decision-making processes early on. They are also more likely to listen to our advice, and thus our influence with them grows.

The third area that we must understand and continually develop is that of our relationships with people. Quite frankly, for those of us who work with technology, some days it would be much easier to lock ourselves away with the equipment. Sometimes, even complex technical problems are easier to figure out than some people. Most of us have encountered at least one person in our careers who dislike us or avoid us not because of any animosity towards us personally, but simply because we are the “tech guy” or the “tech girl” and their opinion/comfort level with technology is not very high. However, these are the very people we should seek out and build relationships with. Remember, our business is education, and education is a people-centric business. Although we don’t have the time to go out to lunch or have coffee with the various stakeholders in our organizations, we can take the time to get to know something about them as people and as individuals, even in routine conversations or service calls. We can take the time to allow them to know something about us as individuals. We can take the time to say something that might brighten their day, or to let them know we understand the challenges they are facing. The transformation in how we are thought of when our stakeholders see us as people and not just the “tech guy” or “tech girl” can be significant. And once that relationship is established, the influence flows naturally. The person will seek us out, value our advice, and include us in decisions because they value us as people and as professionals.

Why should we have all of this non-positional leadership activity going on? Isn’t that the responsibility of the CTO? An effective CTO is actually encouraging non-positional leadership skills in every member of the technology division. Each of us are experts in our specific technical areas. When each member of the technology team shares this expertise through the exercising of non-positional leadership skills, the entire organization, and especially our students, are the winners.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

LEAD, FOCUS, RETHINK, ABANDON, INNOVATE

BY ANDREA BENNETT

Recently, I was visiting Claremont Colleges in California. They have a building there that is named after Peter Drucker. This building (pictured) is part of the Drucker Institute at the Claremont Colleges. Peter Drucker is considered a visionary for management education and is known as the “founder of modern management” (Wikipedia). Many of you were probably required to read some of his works in school. He wrote 39 books and contributed articles to several publications. He started storing his archives at the Claremont Colleges before he died and in 2006, it became the Drucker Institute. I have not read all of his books or articles, but I remember the respect my teachers in business school had for his work.

The Drucker Institute is not part of the Claremont Colleges, per se, but is located on the graduate school campus. I walk by this building often and am always struck by the words they chose to put on the outside of the building: Lead, Focus, Rethink, Abandon, and Innovate. “Lead,” “focus,” “rethink,” and “innovate” are all “positive” words. They are words of action that conjure a feeling of strength, at least for me. But “abandon” seemed at first to be out of place. A more negative word that makes me think of a baby on church steps or a vacant building with broken windows.

But as I thought about it, and after reading more about the institute, I realized that “abandon” could be used as a positive word, especially with the other words there. One must abandon the “old way” in order to rethink, focus, and lead others to innovate. We hear so much about the “pace” of change and how we are increasingly unable to adjust to the change as people and as societies. Perhaps we do need to abandon in order to adjust and embrace change more quickly.

When I looked at their website (https://www.drucker.institute/) one project caught my eye. It’s called City of Life Long Learning. They are building a program in South Bend, Indiana to provide resources for residents that will help them get training, do research, and ultimately become employed. They are not entirely starting from scratch but are attempting to integrate the resources more fully to make it easier for residents to find what they need.

It sounds intriguing. They did the research and found that while unemployment was low in South Bend, many people were in jobs that put them at risk for unemployment. Those people had no plan or resources to help them change that. Others have left the workforce and are no longer counted in the unemployment numbers because they have lost hope of finding work after the manufacturing jobs were gone. Instead of looking at the unemployment rate as one figure, they are dividing them by census tracts and finding up to 15% unemployment. South Bend was traditionally a manufacturing town but has rebuilt its economy and some people have not yet been able to make the transition.

They are talking with employers to determine what skills are needed and to discuss what issues employers are seeing with the current workforce. Their pilot includes using school teachers, religious leaders and others as “Lifelong Learning Ambassadors” to help people overcome the challenges of being from a low-income neighborhood.

According to the website, this year they are focusing on four areas:

1. Gathering information about what those in South Bend need and want to learn, as well as how they like to learn.
2. Establishing trust and building momentum for lifelong learning throughout all parts of the city.
3. Forming key partnerships with local and national resource providers.
4. Early planning to replicate the model across the country.

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PROVIDING ESPORTS WEBSITES TO K-12 STUDENTS

WHILE NAVIGATING THE CHILDREN’S INTERNET PROTECTION ACT (CIPA) AND OTHER CONCERNS: ONE DISTRICT’S JOURNEY

BY JEREMY DAVIS
I want to initially give significant credit to Chris Santos (former Network Engineer in my former department who now works for SAIC) who did most of the work on this project and a significant majority of the technical write-up that we eventually turned into a whitepaper for the Samueli Foundation, the Orange County Department of Education, and University of California, Irvine. If you have read their how-to guide, you will notice many similarities to the content of this article.

I also want to start out by saying that a huge majority of our tech department was beyond excited by the idea that eSports was a thing. “You mean you can letter in video games?” “Wait, kids can get scholarships for gaming?” “Where was this when I was in high school?” As a group of techs, most of us have ever grown up playing video games or still game on the weekends, so we were all-in on the idea of getting students going on eSports. We didn’t want to be the department of “NO” that would stand in anyone’s way. That being said, my hope is that this article can be shared with Cabinet members of all departments as a lesson in the complexity of implementing new programs. CETPA has been a strong advocate of ensuring that district technology leadership has a seat at the highest cabinet levels, and eSports is a great example of how technology and curriculum have continued to cross-pollinate. Technology impacts every department and many decisions being made on a daily basis at the highest levels of each district. My hope is that everyone can take away a number of lessons learned from our experience, and apply those to their current district practice.

I am currently the Assistant Superintendent of Innovation and Instructional Support for the Fullerton School District. Being a K-8, we have not delved into the world of NASEF and league play. We do, however, work with sites to have coaches for Mario Cart. A few months ago, we had an event at the Anaheim Hilton where one of our many events was an eSports competition with ten schools participating. There was live-streaming, team brackets, colored t-shirts for each school, and a full three-hour grind-it-out competition to crown a winner. We had combined a live streaming internship for elementary students to learn how to operate equipment, create live events from multiple angles, and host live shows for the eSports competition. That was a very easy program to start, it didn’t require much research or whitelisting, the level of violence in the game was minimal, and the students had a great time cheering each other on.

However, this article is dedicated to the introduction to eSports I experienced when I was the Chief Technology Officer of Capistrano Unified School District. The idea of eSports came to our department through Educational Services and Career Technical Education. Capistrano is one of the state’s leaders in Career Technical Education programs, and their leadership across Educational Services is exemplary. We wound up with student scholarships to college for eSports at the end of this process and students were engaged with school in ways they had not been before. Which, to me, means it was all worth it. We should all be here for the students as our number one priority, and gaming gives a new set of students the ability to excel in an area that has not been lifted up by public education in the past. I also want to lift up the Orange County Department of Education for their willingness to listen to concerns, adjust when they could, search for answers with us as we struggled, and for working to develop an English Language Arts curriculum tied directly to eSports that will interest and engage students by meeting them where their passions lie.

When we first were approached with the idea of students playing League of Legends against other districts in Orange County, and possibly in the state, the biggest concern was the turnaround needed (about 20 working days from first notice to students needing to be registered and practicing). It was communicated that it was a pretty simple program to implement. Teams actually wanted to start practicing within days. In discussions with other districts around Orange County, some tech departments only received a few days of notice to implement. Five days after the first notice was given, we received the technical specifications which are summarized below:

### TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

League of Legends Minimum System Requirements

**PC Computers:**

- **OS:** Windows XP (Service Pack 3 ONLY), Vista, 7, 8, or 10
- **Processor:** 2 GHz processor (supporting SSE2 instruction set or higher)
- **Video Card:** Shader version 2.0 capable video card
- **Memory:** 1 GB RAM (2 GB of RAM for Windows Vista and newer)

**Mac Computers**

- **OS:** Mac OS X 10.8.5 or higher

An educator for 18 years, Jeremy has extensive experience from CTO to Assistant Superintendent of Innovation and Instructional Support. Having served on the CETPA board for 3 years, Jeremy has presented at over 60 local, national, and international conferences.
• Processor: 2 GHz processor (supporting SSE2 instruction set or higher)
• Video Card: NVIDIA GeForce 8600M GT / ATI Radeon HD 2600 or better
• Memory: 2 GB RAM (4 GB is strongly recommended)

The computer should be equipped with video conferencing capability using Skype, Google Hangouts, or a similar type platform. Exact requirements will depend on which video conferencing is determined.

Verified access to the following websites on the team computers for use during the league season. Please note that this list is not exhaustive and additional access needs may be shared throughout the season.

- na.leagueoflegends.com
- www.twitch.tv
- www.ochighschoolesports.org
- discordapp.com
- www.myteamspeak.com
- www.youtube.com

**REQUIREMENTS AND CIPA**

As technicians focused on security, and as administrators with an understanding of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), we had a few immediate concerns. One was the technical specifications of the required computers. Whoever had put together the technical specs had probably done so off of the software company’s website. This is a common-sense approach but many software companies want consumers to purchase their games no matter how slow it will run, and their minimum specs are often not appropriate.

Being 2018 at the time, Windows XP and Vista machines should have been salvaged as e-waste years earlier. Machines with XP, 2GB processors, and 1GB of RAM can barely run Microsoft Office much less support competitive playing of fast-moving, graphics-intensive games against students who may have high-end gaming machines with 8GB Graphics cards, i7 processors, and the latest operating system. It would be like sending your football team out with leather helmets and expecting them to win.

The eSports conversation at each district should have multiple facets, but one of them is the expense of running proper equipment. This may mean running dummy terminals with nice graphics cards and playing off a server, it may mean County Offices of Education stepping in to offer server-based play, or it may mean buying high-end gaming machines with a refresh plan as part of the sporting equipment budgets for sites.

Another major consideration for us was opening Twitch, Discord, and MyTeamSpeak to our students. If you are an educator who is not familiar with CIPA, please get familiar.

"Schools and libraries subject to CIPA may not receive the discounts offered by the E-rate program unless they certify that they have an Internet safety policy that includes technology protection measures. The protection measures must block or filter Internet access to pictures that are: (a) obscene; (b) child pornography; or (c) harmful to minors (for computers that are accessed by minors)."

“Harmful to minors” and “obscene” are harmfuly vague to education, as there is no
single definition of what is harmful to minors or what is obscene. One person’s priceless artwork may be considered obscene by someone else. YouTube is one of the greatest educational websites available, yet you can find videos of terrorists trying to recruit minors, which I would think is harmful. But, until the Federal government fixes the language in CIPA, we have to abide by it and do our best to allow as much as we can without violation. In the case of Twitch, a quick search for various words that might lead to pornographic content revealed an adult streamers community, a “school room sex” channel, 99+ channels with the word breast in the title, and 99+ channels with the word sex in them. We felt that we could not open this program to minors. We reached out to the County Office and they quickly worked to ensure that all gameplay would be posted to YouTube rather than Twitch. As a district, we had a legal opinion on opening YouTube to students not violating CIPA and we were grateful with their quick change to the program.

Discord and MyTeamSpeak caused concern as well. (The rest of this paragraph is based on these two technologies at the time of implementation, they may be updated now.) Both programs allow teams to communicate to each other during gameplay. They are both great platforms for gamers with incredibly quick response time, excellent sound quality, and allow both voice and chat. However, neither program is moderated and neither allows any kind of control over who participates. Our students could be having un-moderated and un-managed chats with adults from around the world. This may seem like an overreaction, but we decided as a district to utilize Google Hangouts for teams.

Another consideration that needs to be addressed by any district is ensuring stakeholders understand that the students will be playing violent games. While League of Legends is not a first-person shooter, Fortnite and Overwatch are both first-person shooter games with violence including headshots. Districts should ensure that parents and board members understand that these games are being played as part of a school program and the benefits of these programs.

I hope that those reading are starting to see that sometimes program implementation that seems easy or seems like it may only take a few steps can often have multiple issues that need to be addressed. It may not only take significant man-hours (105 for us), but may require either significant overtime or a shift in priorities. The role of the CTO, or Assistant Superintendent over Technology, is vital in communicating to stakeholders all concerns with any program and all the possible solutions, so you are not standing in the way of progress or students being engaged or learning through their passions and interests. The rest of the leadership needs to understand the high-level concerns and must be willing to take a step back to make decisions regarding these programs and implementations.

Communication is vital, and most technicians are at least bi-lingual. Some even tri-lingual or more as they have computer language, networking language, and potentially a few database or coding languages that they need to understand with semi-fluency. Often we as technologists (or former teachers who have learned the technology side) struggle to communicate effectively the most important aspects without getting into technological terms that make people’s eyes glaze over. The concerns I have outlined so far can be summarized for my fellow leaders in this way:

“We love this program and will do everything we can to make it work. We need to ensure the students have computers that are fast enough that they can compete.

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Unfortunately, the specs they gave us are old. If they play on really old computers, their ability to compete will be hampered. So, we have to decide if we are buying new systems. We did some quick research and found inappropriate adult videos on one of the sites that they are suggesting we open so we need some time to come up with alternatives. If we open one of the sites they gave us, bad actors could bring our network down or hijack our data with ransomware. So, we need some time to come up with alternatives. The students will be playing some first-person shooters with the goal being to kill other players. We should discuss how to communicate that to stakeholders. We love this program and will do everything we can to make it work."

Now, we get a bit more into “tech speak” as we delve into the programs themselves. League of Legends isn’t a simple whitelist. It is a piece of software that requires the student users to be administrators on the systems they are using. As a district, we did not allow students to have admin rights as they could do some significant damage. Most districts have technology repair departments that are handling 1500-3000 devices per technician and giving students administrative rights could cause significant increases in repair tickets and repair times. Some students love to push the boundaries with technology, and administrative access gives keys to the kingdom. League of Legends is also not a software that can be mass deployed without customization, so you must account for individual touches to computers if you are on a tight timeline. When we installed the program and watched the traffic on the firewall, we found that the software called out to at least fifteen other websites that needed to be whitelisted. Because of some of the other games located on these pages, we decided to use Active Directory to create a special group with these sites opened. We created an extra-curricular in the Student Information System so site office staff would move students into that extra-curricular group so the scripting in the system would move the students to a special filter group when on certain machines.

The install needed to be customized. We ended up creating a customized System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM) package that would create a task sequence to install the program into the Program Files so it wouldn’t self-install in the root location. It would then create a file copy of the data the game needs to work (8GB file). We worked with our programmers to create a custom .exe to allow users to “run-as” other users. This allowed the student accounts to mimic an administrator on the computer for the purposes of this game. Group Policy was used to take a generic LoL Service basic user account and set is as an “admin only” on the specific lab gaming computers. We also created AD groups for the specific computers in order to authenticate to our Network Access Control (NAC) appliance.

We also worked with students on mouse acceleration settings for better gameplay, and we worked with the site admin and the eSports coach to give them the basic idea of what was happening from a tech perspective. We worked with the Teacher’s association and created a signature page for the coaches who would be supervising students on a more open Internet so they were reminded of their responsibilities and of the greater access students had been given.

Often in the world of technology, there is a lack of understanding of how much goes on behind the scenes in order to make a simple website work. It is like when I used to overhear technicians who were frustrated that a kindergarten teacher had made a silly mistake with tech. I would ask them “Do you know what a phoneme is?" They would say no, and as a former kindergarten teacher myself, I would tell them that they didn’t have to know, but that kindergarten teachers were magic people who taught children to read. Just like technicians are magical people who make all the tech work. We just need to make it work so children can learn, and we all need to understand that there are complexities to everyone’s job. Just because we don’t understand all of their work doesn’t mean their work is easy. As the tech departments, we all have to consistently keep in mind student safety, the Children’s Internet Protection Act, various federal and state regulations, as well as basic student privacy while prioritizing innovation and student creativity on devices. While often it is as easy as whitelisting a website to make a program work, sometimes implementing a new program for 40 students causes significant disruption to current projects for 50,000 students. It is our job as CTOs to diagnose all issues, figure out alternatives, and communicate all concerns to our fellow leaders so they can make informed decisions on how to move forward. When CTOs have a seat at the table we can help keep students safe while lending a voice of expertise to ensure projects are feasible and tested before commitments are made.

I love eSports. I love engaging students in ways that weren’t possible in the past.
Since then we grew into a traditional Microsoft district with Windows desktops in every single classroom, office, and lab, backed by domain controllers, a robust Active Directory design, locally hosted application servers, and Exchange. VOIP phones, T1 lines later replaced by fiber, projectors, and document in every classroom were the norm. Teachers were taught to replace their transparencies with PowerPoint and live content from the Internet. Business departments were engrossed in Excel and calendars, conference rooms and global address books were managed in Exchange. All department and staff files were stored on file servers allowing us to image/replace a broken desktop with no effect to the user.

Any mention of non-Microsoft compatible technology was quickly shunned and discouraged. The only Mac island was our award-winning video production program, and an island they were with running their own support.

The technology department was focused on Microsoft as a question of survival and ability to meet the district demands. Education always required robust and dependable technology or it simply wouldn’t get used. IT departments that struggled to provide quality were often minimized and under-supported. Only by standardizing and reducing technical variety could we provide the dependability that was required. This often required us to decline several requests. Cabinet leadership often reluctantly agreed, understanding the delicate balance between standards and the wild west adoption of unproven technology.

We started to see slight dents in the armor when iPads came on the scenes. We weren’t sure how useful they would be in our environment but they were sexy, sleek, and Cabinet wanted them. That year all directors, Cabinet, and principals received the newly released iPad 2. The IT department was tasked with putting district valued apps on the devices, but there weren’t really any. As a Microsoft shop, iWork was only somewhat compatible and didn’t connect easily with our on-premises user files. Nevertheless, we were determined to use this new portable (and honestly, the first decent) handheld tablets in our environment.

One of our elementary schools caught the iPad bug and developed a growing 1:1 program, successfully finishing a few short years later having a cart of iPads and an Apple TV in every upper-grade classroom and

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curriculum changed based on the SAMR model. It was an amazing model for the rest of the district, however, it was hard to reproduce, challenging for staff, and the technology was time intensive to maintain.

Despite the challenges, this proved there was a need for redefined instruction using technology and some fledgling options. Microsoft had yet to deliver and the equipment manufacturers were still building devices that were far outside the budget or technologically inferior. We dipped our toe into various options but quickly found out that the underpowered netbook devices had relatively short life spans, traditional Windows devices were difficult to use easily in a classroom by teachers and students, 5+ minute startup times, weekly operating system, and anti-virus and general application updates were severely impacting the minimal instructional time in our secondary grades.

Around the same time, Google Docs for Education (GAfE) was released. It wasn’t the robust tools of Microsoft Office we were used to, but the entire concept of completely online files, collaboration, and enterprise manageability showed this might be what we were looking for. In January of 2012, we signed up.

Traditional on-premises user files allowed desktops to be swapped out without issue, eliminated the fear of personal backups, and was completely managed by our department. Yet they were trapped within our network and didn’t operate well with devices other than Windows. The traditional collaboration was cumbersome or expensive. GAfE made this so simple that not only did it work amazingly but the training was almost non-existent.

Manageability was very similar to our Active Directory environment. Tools like Google Active Directory Sync (GADS) and Google Apps Password Sync (GAPS) allowed us to manage the environment with the comfort and ease were already use to. We mirrored most of our AD structure and only deviated where reasonable. Our IT staff used the knowledge they already were accustomed to and easily jumped into running this new ecosystem. We also used the same domain and conventions as our Windows environment, helping staff transition and align with our single user credential standard.

Microsoft had started to dabble with the initial offerings of Office 365 (O365) and the question arose: should we abandon GAfE or stick with Google? Fortunately, several peer districts were on similar paths and after much discussion, we chose to offer both GAfE and O365 accounts to all staff and students. The concern of confusion turned out to be largely a non-issue. Staff used the environment they were most comfortable with and students easily navigated the dual environments without difficulty.

GAfE was already showing the feasibility with our district-wide vision and a few months later the first Chromebooks started entering the market. From a rich technology standpoint, these were flimsy and underpowered Chrome browsers and our department had a lot of skeptics. Nevertheless, an entirely cloud-based device with sub-10 second start-up times and minimal maintenance was very attractive. It was certainly worth a try to test out a few of these devices.

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In November 2012, we purchased four Chromebooks. With the Google Admin Console, we could easily manage the devices much like our Windows machines. Within months we knew these were worth a larger pilot, extending our purchase to 800 Chromebooks and carts the following spring, and 5,000 the summer of 2013. This matched ~25% of our student population and aligned us with a reasonable four-year refresh cycle.

We started GAfE/Chromebook professional development, training up our technology teachers to be GAfE experts and advocates, and started a tour of trainings across the district. Teachers young and old were both misty-eyed and overwhelmed, seeing Chromebooks passed out to them from a cart. However, soon the vision started to unfold with our education staff.

Very quickly teachers asking how to provide instruction with these new devices and new classroom management issues were appearing, but these concerns were balanced with many of the benefits. Suddenly IT was more of a partner in instructional practices than ever before. The quantity of simple wireless devices suddenly made state testing more manageable. Other surprising unexpected benefits became available such as running registration wirelessly with little IT assistance, departments utilizing Chromebooks for staff training, and even employee onboarding.

During this time, however, IT was set upon with more repairs than we could handle. Chromebooks were taking longer to repair and return and general support requests were also suffering. While devices had grown, the technology department had not. It became a mathematical issue with far more growing support debt than staff. It was once again time for IT and Cabinet to align the district vision with resources.

We discussed the growth in devices and the constraint that IT’s small staff was putting on the vision. We started to champion the notion that “an investment in IT is an investment in the organization” and Cabinet requested a JET Review. Fortunately, backed by district data, feedback, and the JET Review findings, leadership agreed and staffing was expanded with additional field technicians and a newly created entry level engineer position. Not quite enough to meet the overall demand but a huge improvement. This validated the need to invest in IT support along with devices and professional development, setting the path for additional future growth.

Support and service once again improved and the benefits of G-Suite and Chromebooks were easily becoming a norm. Departments were using the technology as well making use of Google Team Drives, collaborating on cross-department documents, building processes with Forms and spreadsheets, and many other uses.

At this time, Microsoft was really starting to enter the discussion with advancements in Office 365, OneDrive, and Intune. Suddenly our business teams, some of whom were more comfortable with advanced features of Excel and other tools, were able to make much of the learning and practices already in use in the education areas of the district.

Now in the present, we have a healthy dual Microsoft/Google environment, ~25,000 Chromebooks, 1,300+ Windows laptops for teachers and mobile staff, wireless displays in classrooms for mobile instruction and classes offered in G-Suite, Google Classroom, and O365. We have utilized many back end tools that help sync our G-Suite inventory with our library and IT Service Management systems. Students grades 1-12 all take home their devices year round, including summer, and receive new devices in grades one, five, and nine following our four-year refresh plan. Seniors, upon checkout for graduation, are encouraged to buy their devices for only $10 for use in their future education.

This adventure has truly been a culture change within our department and district, filled with many questions and hard conversations. Ultimately, it has resulted in an incredible joint vision and understanding of what current successful graduates require of us. With the growing support of the technology department fueling our ability to adapt and merge technology, we have become a strong partner with our district’s education and business visions. As a result, our students are thriving in an environment that constantly adapts to meet, and hopefully, exceed, the goals to be college and career ready. ■

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INTERVIEW WITH CETPA MEMBER
KELLY VOLLMAR

WHAT ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AT DSUSD?

As the Chief Innovation and Information Officer, I oversee the Computer Network Services manager and his team, the Student Information System Manager and her team, and I personally manage the Ed Tech team. I also work with leaders and directors across the district to ensure that technology is used in a way that promotes innovation leading to greater efficiency and productivity.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN THE TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION INDUSTRY?

I am just finishing my third year as the CIIO for Desert Sands, however, I have worked for the district since 2004. For three years. I was an elementary school principal before taking the position of CIIO.

WHAT DREW YOU TO THIS INDUSTRY?

The desire to help drive innovation in our classrooms. Our district was at a crossroads and transitioning from a traditional director of technology to a CIIO position. As an educator at heart, I saw the tremendous opportunities to effectively use technology in our classrooms in a way that would impact student achievement and I was thrilled as the opportunity.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT IT?

I love working with administrators to help them model technology use and plan PD that will enable their teachers to use technology in a meaningful way. I also love the opportunities to find innovative solutions to areas of need within the district. I work with the most amazing team, it is an absolute joy to come to work every day!

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN THE INDUSTRY THAT HAS SURPRISED YOU IN THE LAST 2 YEARS?

I am surprised that we have not made more progress in changing what instruction looks like.

HOW HAS CETPA ASSISTED IN DEVELOPING YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE INDUSTRY?

CETPA is a huge support to me. I value my PLN! It is so reassuring to know that I have a network of people that I can lean on and learn from.

WHERE ARE YOU FROM AND WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

I am from the thriving metropolis of Truth or Consequences, NM., which means I am a green chili snob. I love to read and spend time with my huge family, we have 6 kids, two daughters from marriage, a grand baby on the way, and two big dogs! I also love to go fly fishing with my husband and go to baseball games.

Introducing #CETPA2019 President’s Keynote:
A Conversation with Bill Nye!
ETPA is pleased to announce that we have completed the RFP process for a new Licensing Solutions Provider (LSP) for the CAMSA Program (ETPA and Microsoft Strategic Alliance). Over the past few months, CETPA interviewed and reviewed several bid respondents. We focused on factors such as service and pricing. We are confident that members will be receiving the best of both with the new LSP and we are very excited to introduce Softchoice!

A MESSAGE FROM SOFTCHOICE TO CETPA MEMBERS

Softchoice is honored to be selected to manage this agreement starting in 2019. The CETPA and Microsoft Strategic Alliance (CAMSA) is a critical purchasing vehicle that offers the best pricing and simplified decision making, while allowing schools to reduce the amount of time and effort spent on management and record keeping.

We have already begun to align resources with this contract (as seen at www.softchoice.com/camsa) and will continue to do so with the intent to provide the highest levels of service to all schools participating in the contract. All schools will have an account representative as their main point of contact that will manage their agreement, with the support of a dedicated Microsoft Licensing Specialist and a Senior Microsoft Solutions Architect, not to mention an operational support team to ensure quoting, ordering, and contract management is done efficiently and effectively.

Softchoice is trusted with managing more than 6,000 Microsoft agreements spanning both the public and private sectors of the United States and Canada, which is more than any other Licensing Solution Provider in North America. In addition, Softchoice successfully manages large Microsoft Framework Agreements for various organizations upward of 3,000 people throughout the US and Canada, which are some of the most advanced and complex Microsoft agreements in the world. That experience is crucial when managing an agreement with the size and the scope of CAMSA.

Our team of Microsoft experts utilize deep knowledge and a broad base of expertise to deliver an optimized solution to our schools.
customers that both meet their needs and exceeds expectations. We offer high-tough services including roadmap consulting, deployment support, licensing advisory, implementation services, and cloud viability assessments.

As a 13-time recipient of Microsoft’s Operational Excellence Award, Softchoice will bring to bear the accuracy and efficiency of our licensing agreement processing and management capabilities for the CAMSA constituents. We follow a unique Microsoft Agreement management methodology that is comprised of multiple tools, resources, and processes designed to help CAMSA schools identify the most cost-effective licensing models to best support and help in building your environment.

We believe that the only true way to achieve ongoing cost savings and efficiencies within your technology portfolio is by having a partner that knows your organization: the people, the processes, the agreements, the upcoming projects, and overall objectives. Softchoice has a proven formula for successfully achieving these overall objectives through account management, asset management, maintenance and support management, knowledge of Microsoft licensing programs, and Microsoft professional services. Softchoice is one of a rare breed—both an authorized Microsoft Licensing Solutions Provider and a national Systems Integrator.

As a trusted Microsoft partner for more than 20 years, Softchoice is committed to maintaining the highest status and relationship with Microsoft. Softchoice has maintained accreditation for 20 years and is continually represented at Microsoft award ceremonies.

**MOVING FORWARD**

CETPA is excited to have Softchoice onboard as the new LSP for CAMSA! Over the next few weeks, Softchoice will be contacting members, with the highest priority and focus being placed on those who are within the August renewal window. Clear communication is our highest priority as we shift to the new LSP and CETPA is working closely with both Microsoft and Softchoice to make this transition as smooth as possible.

For more information please visit our sites www.cetpa.net/camsa or www.softchoice.com/camsa or email camsa@softchoice.com or libbi.garrett@cetpa.net •

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STATE OF THE STATE: A RENEWED FOCUS ON BETTER DATA

BY: NICK ROMLEY AND BARRETT SNIDER

Upon assuming office, Gavin Newsom had just days to propose his first state budget as Governor of California. The single most important piece of work done by both the Governor and Legislature every year, Newsom’s first budget proposal reflected his progressive campaign, but also emulated the same fiscal restraint that made Governor Brown popular with many fiscally conservative/moderate voters. For example, 89% of the new, year-over-year spending proposed by Governor Newsom is one-time.

While Newsom is taking a page from the Jerry Brown playbook on fiscal prudence, he is making a remarkable departure in his perspective on state data systems.

Anyone who attempted to engage the Brown Administration on expanding or improving statewide data systems may recall the ardent opposition Governor Brown had towards data systems, generally. His own staff, whom Brown respected immensely, often described attempts to convince him to focus on data systems like banging their head against a table. He couldn’t be persuaded.

A NEW DAY FOR DATA SYSTEMS

One of the more relevant proposals from Governor Newsom’s budget is his interest in an expansion and recasting of California’s current longitudinal student data system, CalPADS. Specifically, Newsom proposes to spend $10 million to develop a statewide Longitudinal Data System that links Pre-K, K-12 education, higher education, employers, workforce development, and health and human services data systems. As this goes to print, the Senate and Assembly are trying to shape this proposal, but both agree to spend $10 million on the effort, so it appears something will move forward as part of the 2019-20 Budget Act.

While the Senate and Assembly have rejected Newsom’s proposal, they adopted identical alternative proposals to use $10 million to require the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research to establish a Longitudinal Data System Workgroup to provide additional feedback. The Legislature’s plan would prioritize funding into the following phases:

Phase 1: K-12 and higher education
Phase 2: Workforce development
Phase 3: Early Care and Education
Phase 4: Health, Human Services, and other data

Much of the pitch for linking these systems comes from Newsom’s focus on what his Administration is calling “The Parents’ Agenda,” which attempts to break down many of the silos between traditionally separate segments of state government (K-12, higher ed, workforce, mental health, health, etc.).

Whether the 2019-20 Budget Act contains funding for improving and linking data systems, it is clear we are dealing with a new political dynamic where data isn’t a taboo topic with the Administration. This likely means we can expect positive developments in the near future.

Improving state data systems continues to be an area of advocacy for CETPA and we will continue to update members of those efforts. If you have any questions, please contact Nick Romley (nick@capitoladvisors.org), or Barrett Snider (Barrett@capitoladvisors.org), who make up our Government Relations team at Capitol Advisors Group.

Nick Romley has been working in government relations on behalf of public schools for nearly a decade. He supports CETPA by tracking legislation, analyzing bills, monitoring various committee hearings.

Barrett Snider has spent nearly two decades working in California politics and is a founding partner of Capitol Advisors Group, where he manages the daily government relations operations of the firm.
I love the end of the school year, not because many of our kids get out of school but because our annual conference really begins to come together. The core of our annual event is always the content: the professional development sessions, the new experiences shared by school districts, and our highlighted keynote speakers. We’ve spent hours on small teams since March reviewing content, discussing options with speakers, and building our schedule. We are excited to announce our first wave of approved sessions and our latest keynote speakers.

OPENING KEYNOTE: SCOTT BERKUN

Have you ever felt as though “innovation” is something beyond your reach? That you understand conceptually but struggle to find a way to actually call yourself an innovator? Shifting the idea of innovation from a lightning-bolt-to-the-brain to one you can grasp is the topic for our opening keynote, Scott Berkun. I am personally thrilled to have Scott join us, as his lessons on technology project management permanently changed the way I looked at how I complete my work. Join us on Tuesday, November 12th, at 1:30 p.m. for his thoughts on “The Myths of Innovation.”

CLOSING KEYNOTE: SARAH T. ROBERTS

We’ve seen a lot of debate in the past several years around what types of content is shown to specific audiences via social media. Professor Sarah T. Roberts of the University of California, Los Angeles delves somewhat deeper: what is the story behind those who are actually reviewing and moderating the content that makes its way online? How do the experiences of content moderators filter into the experiences of those who view the results of that work—especially our students? Sarah will close out our conference on Friday, November 15th at 10:00 am with an engaging look at her cutting-edge research around social media construction.

CONFERENCE DISCOUNT PROGRAMS

While you are thinking about the conference, we wanted to remind you about our discount program for attending our conference (which is still the best conference deal around, considering the number of meals we provide in addition to cutting-edge sessions!) Our first Early Bird deadline ends July 31, and provides $100 off the prevailing rate, and our second ends September 30, with $50 off the conference rate. Separately, those bringing teams from their organizations can save by bringing a team of 2-4 people or saving the most by bringing a team of 5 or more. For more information and to register, go to cepta.net/2019conference

NEW! CETPA AFTERPARTY

We listened to the requests of many attendees and this year are replacing our annual golf tournament with what we’re calling the CETPA Afterparty. We’ll be holding a lunch and networking event after the end of the conference at Splitsville, the retro bowling alley located within Downtown Disney. A ticket includes your bowling shoe rental, parking, refreshments, and more. Join us on Friday, November 1st from noon to 4:00 pm by registering at eiseverywhere.com/afterparty.
As a young girl growing up in the Bronx, Dena Simmons, Assistant Director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, was ever-aware of the importance of personal safety and community. Today, she works with her colleagues to ensure that “our young people have safe spaces to learn”—hence the research and effort she’s put into spreading social-emotional learning (SEL) and helping students learn to navigate and manage their emotions, relationships and well-being.
However, according to Simmons, the world of SEL isn’t all hearts and stars. Without proper consideration schools and districts are at risk of delivering a “very flawed narrative” when it comes to SEL. Here’s why.

**When Social-Emotional Learning Becomes “White Supremacy With a Hug”**

First, Simmons describes the fact that when SEL is taught to students—particularly students of color—without context, it can become inherently problematic. “What’s the point of teaching children about conflict resolution skills,” she asks, “if we’re not talking about the conflicts that exist because of racism or white supremacy? Without that nuance, SEL could very well turn into ‘white supremacy with a hug.’” According to Simmons, SEL teaching needs to happen within a socio-political and racial context.

“People’s lives are at stake and so we have to approach anything we do with them—SEL, project-based learning, any of the sort of big names, fatty things or trendy things—responsibly. We just can’t do it for the sake of doing it,” she says, later adding, “I worry that sometimes because of the trend, we do it for the sake of doing it and not because it could enhance people’s lives.”

**Beyond the Defensiveness: Starting with Educator Self-Analysis**

At the heart of this all, however, is a need for educators—those folks ultimately in charge of SEL instruction—to recognize and confront their own internalized racism and sexism, defensiveness and lack of true SEL understanding as it applies to their own awareness and biases.

Simmons, who gives trainings on equitable social-emotional learning to districts and schools across the United States, oftentimes sees defensiveness and white fragility (a concept first coined by scholar Robin DiAngelo) firsthand.

“The second flawed piece about SEL is that some group of children need it more than other children. When I sometimes do SEL trainings, it’s like ‘kids with special needs need this more,’ ‘our black and brown children need this more’, as if they’re not calm enough…” Simmons says.

But what teachers really need to do, she explains, “is to understand themselves, recognize their power, privilege, and identity” and “what that means in the work that they do and the people with whom they often work.”

And that, as Simmons adds, takes humility, time and most importantly—effort.

Dena Simmons will be keynoting the EdSurge Fusion Conference on November 4-6, in the San Francisco Bay Area. The conference will highlight EdSurge’s years of reporting and researching best practices in education and technology from around the country. To learn more visit: fusion.edsurge.com •
The project is part digital with a portal that is meant to help citizens understand the skills that employers need and give them the resources to learn them. Walmart and Google are involved and providing funding. Schools, libraries, and local businesses are all involved, as is the city’s government which is already having success with some infrastructure projects to help rebuild the city.

The portal is set to launch in 2020 and the St. Joseph County Public Library system will administer the system. Three quarters of South Bend’s residents have library cards and most are within 15 minutes of a library.

Number 4 above will be a big challenge, in my opinion. Creating a model that other cities can use when cities and populations are so different, is kind of like creating an administrative system for schools and expecting it to work perfectly for everyone. The plan will need to be broken down into components that can be used in different ways to be effective.

It makes perfect sense to me to involve the whole community when building something that will affect, and hopefully benefit, the whole community. This is exactly the kind of work Peter Drucker would want an organization bearing his name to do. I hope it is successful and can be replicated. And, I hope the public schools are fully involved as thought leaders and changemakers. A free education is the cornerstone of our society and if it can be made life-long and lead to happier, productive, peaceful lives—that is the functioning society that Peter Drucker strived for in his work.

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