Strategic Role at Westside High School as building director of technology.

In my ten years of service as Westside High Schools' director of technology, we have experienced drastic changes and advancements in instructional technology.

In 2001, laptops and wireless internet were not as commonplace as they are today. Therefore, when our district purchased laptops for each of our high school's staff members and purchased equipment for complete wireless network coverage, it was a big deal.   Creating a master software image, planning and managing the inventory of each of the many pieces of equipment, and preparing the laptops for use was a daunting task that required a team effort.   Planning the wireless network for maximum performance and reliability was also a challenge. This was especially true since WI-FI was a relatively new technology.   Using color-coded icons to represent wireless channels on 3 overhead transparencies with maps of each of its three levels, I was able to best plan and place the access points within our building with minimal channel overlap.

The summer and fall of 2004 saw new levels of complex preparation as we prepared for the implementation of Nebraska's first public school 1 to 1 laptop program.   Nearly 2000 laptops were prepared along with a new wireless network designed to support this drastic increase in network clients.   Planning for training, managing troubleshooting and repair issues, and dealing with student usage issues became a great challenge. Managing and creating policy on the fly was a great learning experience.   A team of teachers, technology support staff, administrators, parents, and students performed admirably and implemented a laptop program that is a model that has been examined by many school districts from across the country.

In the fall of 2008, we began the 2nd cycle of our 1 to 1 laptop program with new servers, laptops, software, and wireless network.   The implementation of the new wireless network has been the greatest challenge, with the huge escalation of the quantity of data that teachers and students want to download from and upload to the internet.   New applications and uses for informational technology are continually being discovered and implemented in our building.

Our high school has become a "flagship" of technology for our school district, as all teachers throughout our district have been provided laptops and wireless connectivity. Our middle school's 8th graders will soon begin to enjoy the benefits of a 1 to 1 laptop program as well.