BCSD I.T. Needs Assessment Survey
Online Survey
Winter 2017

Baldwinsville Central School District
Achieving our full potential together.

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In the fall of 2017, Baldwinsville Central School District (BCSD) partnered with Research and Marketing Strategies, Inc. (RMS) to conduct an information technology needs assessment. BCSD wanted to better understand from key stakeholders, their needs for IT hardware, software, and professional development. Additionally, the market research sought to determine current IT perceptions and identify areas of interest/need for additional products and/or services.

RMS worked with the BCSD team to develop two 5 minute online surveys – one which was distributed to staff, and one which was provided to students. RMS also developed an in-depth interview script, and conducted telephone interviews with recent alumni. Fieldwork lasted from November 15th, 2017 to January 12th, 2018.

The online student survey resulted in 2,066 completions. The online staff survey resulted in 169 completions, and 10 in-depth interviews were conducted with alumni.

A similar study was conducted by the RMS research team in 2013.

Any questions or comments regarding this market research study can be directed to Erica Winters, Supervisor of Research Analytics for Research & Marketing Strategies (RMS) at 1-866-567-5422 or email at EricaW@RMSresults.com.
## Agenda

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Executive Summary

Student Survey

- Nearly three-quarters (69%) of student respondents in grades five or higher are satisfied with the current educational technology at BCSD, while 72% of those in third or fourth grade are satisfied with the school technology. A majority (89%) indicated that they are “good” at using technology (7-10 on a 1-10 scale).

- Chromebooks are the most preferred technology device for students when used for learning purposes (70%). When asked to further specify whether they prefer iPads or Chromebooks, students still favored Chromebooks (76%). When asked about the size preference of a school-supplied Chromebook, respondents were almost evenly split between a preference for the current (14”) Chromebook (48%) and a smaller, lighter (11”) Chromebook (44%). Seventy-five percent of student respondents use a computer, Chromebook, or iPad in school for “some of the day.”

- It’s clear that students value classroom technology use. Many (74%) feel that technology in the classroom can improve their learning, and 69% believe that computers and technology improve their daily life. Two thirds (66%) are more engaged when using technology. Nearly all respondents (91%) know how to use technology to find information.

- Regarding online safety, most respondents (88%) stated that a teacher or family member has talked to them about the importance of being nice to others online, while (86%) indicated that a teacher or family member has talked to them about online safety and security.

- Accessing school work remotely is important for 85% of student respondents. More than three-quarters of respondents (78%) do some, most, or all of their homework on a computer. Student respondents most commonly use computers (74%), mobile phones/smartphones (74%), tablets (60%), and gaming consoles (60%) at home. Nearly all students respondents (96%) have home internet access.

- Half of student respondents (50%) are dissatisfied with the Wi-Fi access within the school, while 31% are satisfied.
Executive Summary

Student Survey (Continued)

- Google Classroom, Kahoot, Prodigy, and Safari are the iPad apps that student respondents like using the most in the classroom. When asked what other technology they would like to use in the classroom, student respondents suggested having more Chromebooks and iPads available in each class, being able to use their cellphones for learning purposes, and upgraded computers such as iMacs or MacBook's. Students also indicated that they would like to use the Virtual Reality Goggles that were recently acquired by the District.

- A majority of student respondents (81%) plan to enroll in college following graduation, and more than a quarter (27%) plan to pursue a technology-focused career. Of those who will seek a technology-focused career, nearly half (47%) believe their access to the current educational technology at BCSD is preparing them well for a technology-based field.

Staff Survey

- Most staff respondents (74%) are satisfied with the current educational technology offerings at BCSD. Staff respondents feel they are proficient (69%) or advanced (18%) in their expertise with technology. They most commonly use mobile phones/smartphones (99%), computers (99%), and tablets (82%) at home for personal use.

- Nearly half (48%) of respondents use educational technology in their classroom for most of the day, while 31% use it every period. Respondents were evenly split when asked whether they often encounter issues accessing educational technology tools when needed (47% yes, 47% no). The educational technology which teachers have the most trouble accessing when needed are iPads, Chromebooks, SMART Boards, and Wi-Fi/internet access.

- Half of staff respondents (50%) feel they have adequate access to technology outside of the classroom (for planning, preparation etc.), while 40% indicated they do not have adequate access. Most respondents (76%) believe BCSD students have adequate access to technology.
Staff Survey (Continued)

- The most commonly used educational technology tools (hardware) are SMART Boards (86%), Desktop PCs (65%), Chromebooks (65%), and iPads (49%). The educational technology programs utilized most for teaching are SMART Notebooks (73%), Google Classroom (60%), Google Apps (55%), Microsoft Office (54%), and iPad Apps (50%). Among respondents who use Google Apps or Google Classroom, nearly all (95%) are satisfied with the Google suite of products. Similarly, most (97%) of those who use Microsoft Office are satisfied with the Microsoft Office products offered.

- Chromebooks, laptops, iPads, and educational technology training were the programs, tools, and resources most requested from educational staff. The most desired educational technology training topics are effective utilization of devices for teaching (iPads, Chromebooks, SMART Boards), and how to use the Google suite of products. Group training (85%) and video tutorials (41%) are the most preferred method for receiving technology tips and training.

- Between iPads and Chromebooks, staff feel that Chromebooks are more useful for educational purposes (59%). More than half (55%) are familiar with the current iPad educational app offerings. Chromebook touch-screen capability is important to half (50%) of staff survey respondents, but not required if it means buying fewer devices (42%). Many respondents (60%) feel the quantity of iPads and Chromebooks is not sufficient to support the student population at BCSD.

- Many staff respondents (41%) were unsure whether the current offering of educational technology is sufficient in preparing students that wish to enter a technology-based field after graduation, while 39% feel students will be well-prepared.

- When asked to consider a one-to-one device program, most respondents (82%) felt the program would be impactful on students’ educational achievement.
Alumni Interviews

- Nearly all respondents (90%) were satisfied with the general education they received at C.W. Baker High School (rating of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale). More than half of alumni respondents (67%) felt that high school prepared them well for their post high school plans. All but one respondent enrolled in college as their next step after high school, and half are employed while the other half indicated that they are currently full-time students.

- All employed alumni respondents feel that their access to educational technology in high school prepared them well for their use of technology in the workplace. Respondents noted that access to computers, iPads, programs (such as Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Blackboard, Google Drive, Microsoft PowerPoint, Google Docs), SMART Board, and databases/websites (such as WebMD, Blast) were particularly helpful in preparing them for their post high school plans.

- Respondents were split in opinion regarding how the technology experience at C.W. Baker High School compares to other high schools. Nearly half felt the technology experience was about the same as other high schools (40%), while 40% indicated it was somewhat better, and 20% stated it was significantly better than other high schools.

- To improve the technology instruction experience, alumni respondents recommended providing more visual instruction (demonstrations) rather than worksheets from textbooks and lectures using whiteboards/projectors. Interviewees feel that students would respond better to instruction which incorporates routine use of modern technology, and the opportunity to explore the technology during instruction. Nearly all (90%) respondents felt the high school teachers were engaged in educational technology.

- More than half of alumni respondents (70%) felt that more technology programs should be offered to help students be more prepared for their post high school plans. Respondents recommended providing courses which teach in-depth functionality of Microsoft Excel, Photoshop, and Microsoft Word.
Alumni Interviews

- Alumni respondents agreed that **during their time at BCSD they learned: how to use technology to find information, about online safety and security, and about the importance of being nice to others online.**

- When asked about the perceived impact of the proposed **one-to-one device program**, nearly all respondents (90%) felt it would be impactful to students’ educational achievement. Some noted that **not all students have access to technology (including internet) at home**, so this would be highly beneficial if restrictions were implemented to keep students on task.
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NOTE: In an effort to prompt discussion and future action steps, RMS has reviewed the research findings and has proposed the following next steps for BCSD to consider. These suggestions and recommendations are supported by the research findings and actions undertaken by other similar organizations. RMS recognizes that these recommendations may have been implemented or may be in the process of being implemented by BCSD. Each next step needs to be thoroughly reviewed to ensure it is relevant and evaluated against the BCSD operational and market knowledge base.

- RMS recommends that BCSD add to its current suite of educational technology offerings. Students, staff, and alumni noted the importance of using technology to support learning activities, but access to these tools is often difficult or restricted. BCSD should aim to add additional iPads, Chromebooks, and SMART Boards, as many students and staff mentioned that there are often not enough of these for every classroom, as well as upgrade (if possible) existing tools to ensure high-quality functionality. A long-term goal would be to allocate an iPad or Chromebook for each student to use during classroom time. Students and Staff specified a preference for Chromebooks over iPads, so BCSD should take that into consideration when making future technology purchases. Touch-screen capability for the Chromebooks is an important feature to staff, but not at the detriment of having fewer devices. There was not a clear preference for screen (device) size, so a mix would be appropriate to purchase.

- Staff survey respondents specified an interest in professional development and training opportunities focused on the effective use of educational technology in the classroom (iPads, Chromebooks, SMART Boards), and how to use the Google suite of products. Group training and video tutorials are the most preferred training method for these topics. RMS recommends that BCSD provide a pre-test and post-test survey for these trainings to gauge effectiveness and determine further areas of opportunity. BCSD may also want to create an internal list of individuals who can be consulted as “content experts” on given devices and/or programs.
Next Steps & Recommendations

- The proposed one-to-one device program was well received by alumni and staff. Both audiences felt the program would have a positive impact on students’ educational achievement. Alumni felt this would have an even larger positive impact on the students who do not have internet access at home. BCSD should feel confident in moving forward with further exploration of this program.

- BCSD should also seek to improve the Wi-Fi access and functionality within the District. Staff and students indicated frequently encountering difficulty obtaining and maintaining a Wi-Fi signal when using educational technology. Similarly, there was a desire among students and staff to reduce the restrictions to web access. Students and staff felt that appropriate restrictions could be in place while still allowing access to more online content for learning purposes.

- There was an acknowledgement, particularly among recent grads, that there should be more training and education on the use of Microsoft Office, Excel, and Word applications. Employed alumni mentioned that greater knowledge and in-depth use of these programs help them in the work environment. Alumni also suggested providing more Photoshop training.

- Alumni also suggested that technology instruction incorporate more visual instruction and demonstration regarding the use of technology. This could involve presenting students with more “case study” situations and then having instructors coach students to use technology to develop solutions. The process of incorporating the technology application and adapting software to problem solve is an added technology skill that is valuable.

- BCSD should look for ways to incorporate more IT education training and applications to cell phones and mobile devices. The technology industry continues to move in this general direction and the students undoubtedly will be early adopters.
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