



School District 8
Kootenay Lake

Information Technology

A Review of IT Growth 2018-2020



Information Technology Review

A Look Back

Introduction

Looking back over the last 3 years, the IT Department has shown incredible growth in alignment with District goals. Major initiatives have been completed to build a foundation for student success, while continuing to improve day-to-day support services.

Technology in SD8 looks very different than it did 3 years ago. Many of the recommendations listed in the “IBM Report” from 2018 have been implemented, plus there have been many other service improvements throughout the District.

Roles and knowledge in the IT Department has become more formalized, and staff have increased their effectiveness and acquired new skills.

The IT Department has shown its focus through continued professional development and learning improvements, while it strives to excel and support in the success of our students.



IT Department Mission Statement

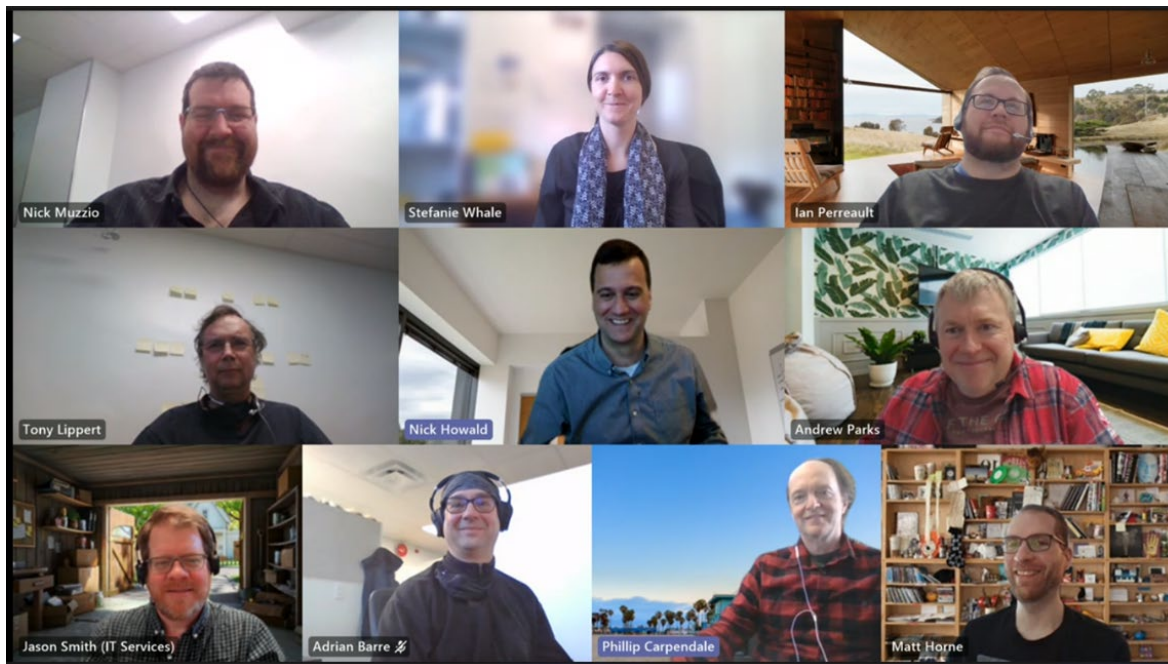
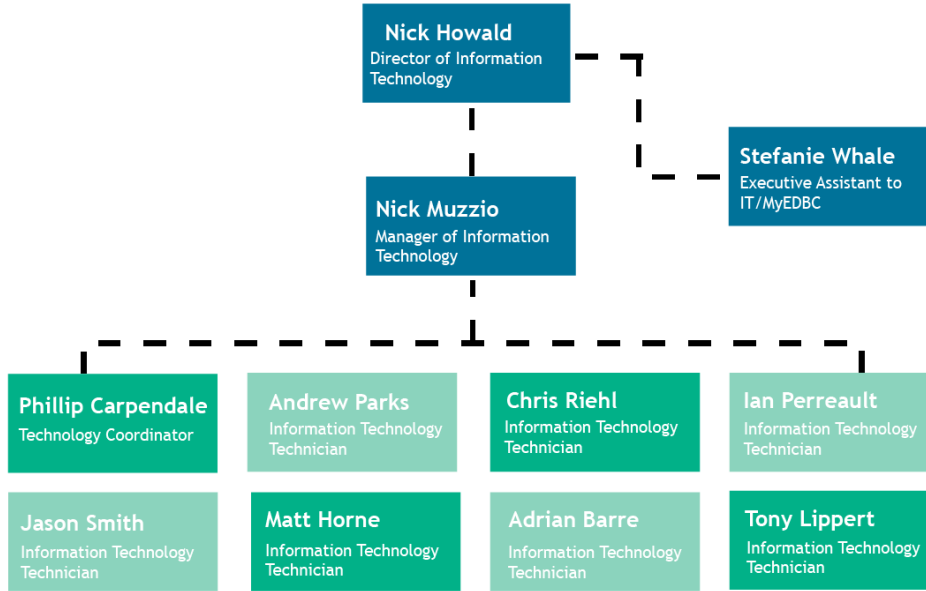
To provide proactive, superior technological support to empower users by giving them confidence in technology to help them succeed.

Vision

- Ambassadors of Learning by providing seamless systems to foster learning and creativity.
- Approach our days with empathy and compassion within our team and towards staff, students and the School District Community.
- Foster the growth of student life skills.
- Committed to supporting personal and professional development.
- Privacy and security of our users.

Strategic Planning & Governance

Our Team

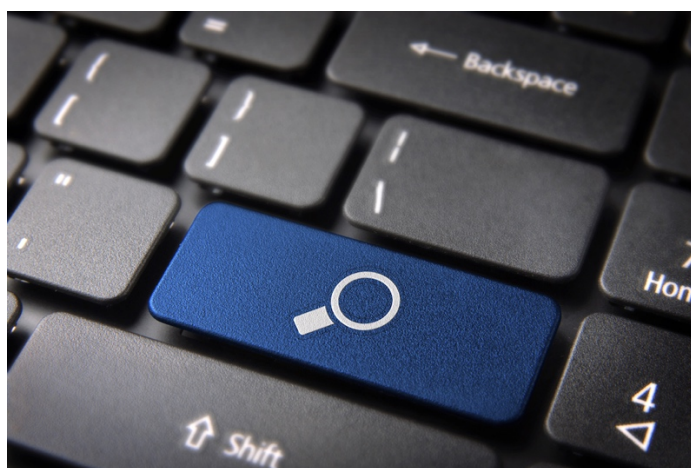


Following the hiring of the IT Director in 2018, the Information Technology Department has grown and changed over the last three years with one retirement, the addition of 4 new team members, including an IT Manager and Executive Assistant.

Team members have centralized to better support the entire District and worked on building in-depth knowledge of key technologies implemented throughout the District. This has not diminished our onsite work as we continue to visit families of schools regularly to provide the onsite support that schools appreciate.

Planning & Performance

Technology is consistently being integrated in the learning process. Complete feedback cycles have been developed through meetings with PVP and the creation of the Technology Planning Council that includes representation from teachers, PVP and senior leadership.



Team members have taken lead roles in support of technology specialities, with training upgrades positively impacting IT's ability to support the District in the following:

- Networking
- Server support
- Cloud
- MyEdBC

Monthly newsletters let all hear about the happenings in the IT Department and technology projects District wide. It also includes tips and tricks for all users.

The IT Services SharePoint site provides access to FAQ information and a growing library of how-to-videos. Content is being added from other internet sources to provide a great starting point to help staff with their technology needs.

The IT team is learning Systems, Software and Service Process Improvements. Three times a week, 15-minute SCRUM meetings are held to discuss goals, challenges and support needs so that each team member knows what is happening for the rest of the team. Monthly meetings expand on these concepts and provide deeper dives into new IT trends, technologies, processes and ongoing projects.

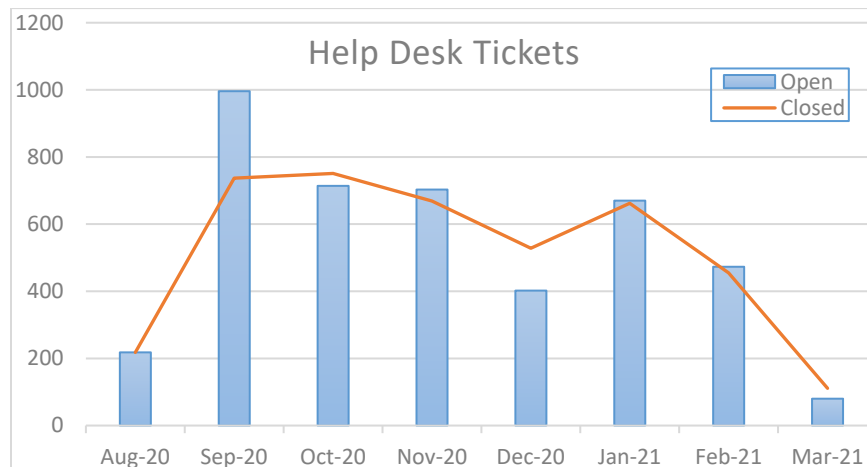
Service Improvement

Many new solutions have been added to improve support and consistency across the School District. A district wide inventory of all devices has enabled the IT Department to track the age and condition of all technology.

This has led to upgraded computer/media arts labs and laptop refreshing throughout the District. Students can experience cutting edge software solutions in graphic and game design.



Solutions such as Follet Resource Manager and Web Helpdesk provide tracking of the assets throughout their lifecycle. IT uses Microsoft Configuration Manager and Endpoint Manager to control configuration and software on all iPads, laptops and Android devices.



Updated helpdesk processes allow users to submit and check on the status of their individual requests.

Service levels for many types of tickets have been improving. Staff now have visibility into their ticket requests and can see them progress.

A dedicated phone number and associated tree also connects users to all technicians who are available to help them.

Students and staff are benefitting from the improvement in network and WIFI connections, with access points being installed in every classroom. Network redesigns at schools have increased capacity and security for staff and students. This multiyear project has increased the District's ability to reach out to the world for learning opportunities in ways that were not possible before.

Upgrades to the Provincial Next Generation (NGN) has increased security and reliability for the District's connection to the internet. The IT Department was active in firewall and switch upgrades along with 'traffic shaping' that allows for important network traffic (like learning tools) to have priority on our networks.

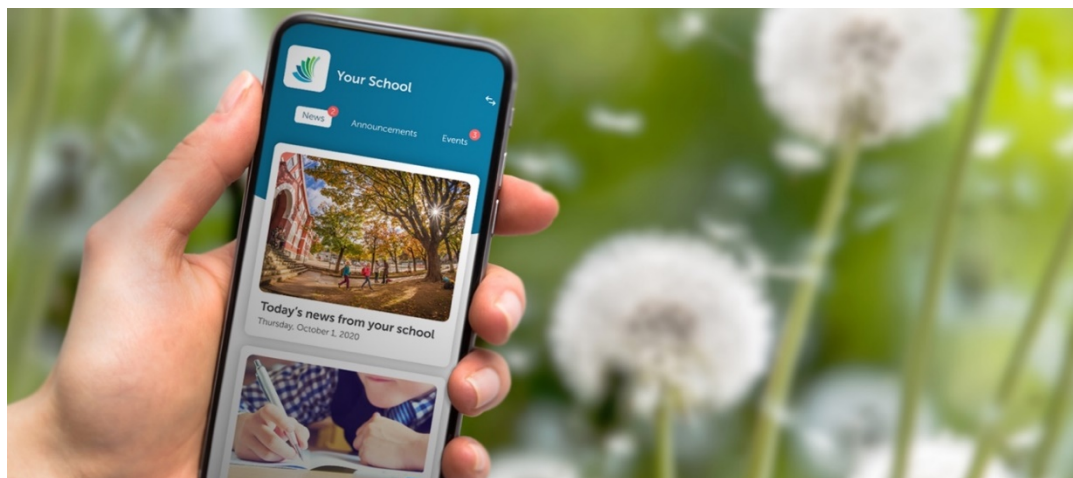
With improved WIFI, the district has also increased availability of technology directly to students. Three years ago, many schools had as little as one device for 6 students, now some schools approach 1 device for every student, with a district wide average of 1.8 devices per student. All devices are centrally managed within the IT Department allowing for greater safety and security for our students.





With the review and launch of the District’s new web presence in 2018, all schools now have modern, professional websites with integrated content sharing capabilities. This has created efficiencies for staff across the District, giving them the ability to easily publish and manage information to effectively communicate with parents and students. Easy access to school calendars and other resources including Board Policies and meeting notes are available to the public. The website project has also put the District on a sound footing in terms of its web hosting, support structure and future scalability in web development.

In 2020, the Schoolkit Hub mobile app integration was rolled out. The mobile app is directly linked to school and District websites, so content is managed in one place and automatically pushed to the app whenever a newshub post is published. Schools are empowered to provide announcements, news stories, blog posts and upcoming events to parents and their communities. Communication with parents and the community has never been better or clearer!



Special Projects

The previous 3 years have had their share of excitement and spawned many great improvements in district technology. COVID pushed the need for solutions to allow remote teaching options. Video conferencing and collaboration software like Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Hangouts took off as solid teaching and learning tools.

In the spirit of collaboration tools, Microsoft Office 365 was rolled out as an option available to all staff and students. There has been a huge increase in usage of Google classrooms that has supported students during the pandemic.

The IT Department, in consultation with teachers, has been working on standardization of software available for use by students and staff. This has allowed for common installation across all schools within the District and software being available when it is needed.

