THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

School of the Future

Overview

Country or Region: United States
Industry: Education

School Profile
School of the Future is a citywide admissions high school in West Philadelphia, which opened in 2006 to create learning that is continuous, relevant, and adaptive, reimagining the urban high school experience using one-to-one technology.

Number of Students: 650
Gender: Mixed
Age Range: 9–12
School Leader: Tim Stults
School Website: http://sof.philasd.org

School of the Future has been selected to participate in the Microsoft Innovative Schools World Tour for being a showcase example of the following Innovation Topics:

1. **Physical learning environments.** Focus on physical spaces, seating, and atmosphere to encourage collaboration, creativity, and learning.
2. **1:1 learning environments.** Students work on their own devices and can use technology at any time to access educational tools.
3. **Accessible learning environments.** Use of technology to make learning accessible for all students, including those who have disabilities or learning difficulties.

Microsoft

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

Microsoft Innovative Schools World Tour

"Using Microsoft technologies at School of the Future helps us fulfill our mission to bridge the digital gap that exists for many of our learners. By exposing our learners to Microsoft software, such as Office 365 with a focus on OneNote, and giving them around-the-clock access to learning activities through our one-to-one laptop program, we are able to create an innovative learning environment and push the boundaries of learning for our children and school community."

Tim Stults, Chief Learner & Principal, School of the Future

Physical learning environments

School of the Future is a partnership between the School District of Philadelphia and Microsoft. The school was designed to make innovative use of space, everything from the materials used to the classroom furnishings was considered with the potential for learning in mind. Key features include:

- Each classroom is flexible, many of which have partitions that connect two adjoining spaces to create an even larger space.
- Furniture in the classrooms is easy to configure, allowing educators to adapt the space depending on the type of learning engagement.
- Almost all classrooms are configured to be lit exclusively by natural light.
- As a LEED Gold Certified building, it too serves as a learning object with features such as a green roof, photovoltaic cells, and reclaimed wood from the parkland.
- A unique, flexible and transformative Performance Pavilion (auditorium) where two wings sit on rotating hydraulic platforms that spin to create an enclosed lecture hall separated from the rest of the main space. The back stage doubles as a classroom for performing arts and music. There are two further rooms just off the stage designed to be used for a range of activities.

Key Technology

Every classroom is equipped with a Panasonic projector, Promethean interactive whiteboard, DVD player, 360-degree document camera, and Audio Enhancement sound system. The flexibility in technology in each classroom space pairs beautifully with flexibility with the physical space of the classroom.

1:1 learning environments

Each learner receives a full-featured laptop running the Windows operating system and Office. Students are issued this laptop at the beginning of the year and turn it in at the end of the year. The device is not just an information resource, organizational tool, or personalized instructional tool; it is a tool used to participate in a curriculum in which educators design rich learning experiences around.

Microsoft OneNote is a major feature of the school's approach to unit design. Many learners do not have access to the Internet at home, but with shared OneNote notebooks, content can easily be created and synced to devices during the day in order to be accessed at home. In addition to this, the school makes use of a plethora of creation-based software, such as Microsoft Expression Studio, Audacity, Steinberg Sequel, Windows Movie Maker, AutoCollage, and Photosynth.

School of the Future invests a lot of time on unit design over technology training. It believes that with the correct approach to designing learning activities, an educator will naturally seek out a variety of resources for their learners to use, including digital tools. This approach is based on 21st Century Learning Design from ITL Research.

Key Technology

Knowledge-based products are defined as artifacts created as a result of a learning activity where learners are asked to analyze, synthesize, interpret, and evaluate information. Having a full-featured laptop running Windows is essential for the school to execute this approach.

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

Microsoft Innovative Schools World Tour

Students manage their own learning so that they can discover how to use their skills to shape the future.

Accessible learning environments

At School of the Future, Autistic Support classrooms, Life Skills classrooms, and learning support students are all integrated into the learning environment. These students participate fully in the technology available to make their learning and communication easier at school. Technology is employed to ensure that these students can access content at their level and grow their technology skill set.

Students can engage in specially designed instruction co-created by the Special Education teacher and the schools Technology Teacher Leader to learn Windows Movie Maker and create tutorial videos on important social and professional skills necessary in their specific classroom environments. Learners plan their videos by using OneNote and share files with one another using Microsoft SharePoint.

Learners who are autistic work together to create "Personal Shopper" surveys and send them to all of the school's educators using the SkyDrive survey tool. Additionally, students use Kinect and Xbox 360 to help build social skills, such as sharing, turn taking, encouragement, and kinaesthetic coordination for learners who have disabilities. Students learn how to interact in a digital school environment through an easy-to-access instructional management system called Edmodo.

Behind the scenes, educators use SharePoint tools to help with progress monitoring for learners who have disabilities. These tools allow educators to upload examples of student work that showcase the achievement of IEP goals or the lack of progress and need for further intervention. Educators can input their comments and suggestions on the form, as well. This simply designed system serves as a model for the entire School District of Philadelphia.

Key Technology

The special education students are challenged to create knowledge-based products using the same skills as their peers throughout the school and, therefore, use the same technology. Students also make use of Xbox 360 and Kinect.

Improving student outcomes

School of the Future believes that good pedagogy and thorough unit design is at the heart of positive student outcomes regardless of the level of technology adoption; technology integration is about increasing student achievement and increasing the breadth of rich experiences. The school uses technology as a way of increasing access to information to a demographic that is typically disenfranchised from it and providing essential skills to this demographic, with the aim of bridging the technology gap.

Driving leadership and a culture of innovation

The culture of School of the Future is based on knowing what's necessary for 21st century success. Staff is encouraged to incorporate best practices into instructional projects. Leadership tends to be distributive, based on open communication, and staff is empowered to create programs and systems.

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

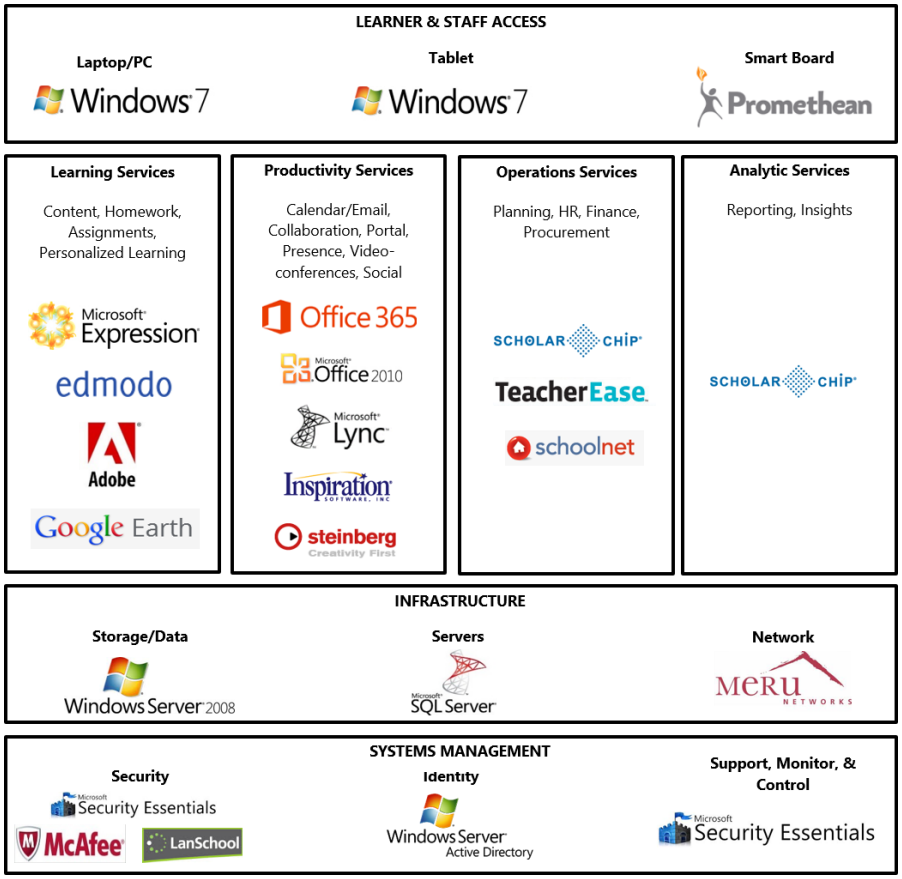
Microsoft Innovative Schools World Tour

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft in Education, visit: www.microsoft.com/education/ww/solutions/Pages/index.aspx

For more information about School of the Future, visit: http://sof.philasd.org

Technology Infrastructure



Document published December 2013

Microsoft