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A Study of Parent Perceptions of the Home/School Connection with Technology in Georgetown-Ridge Farm CUSD #4

Andy Weathers
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This research is a product of the graduate program in Educational Administration at Eastern Illinois University. Find out more about the program.

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A Study of Parent Perceptions of the Home/School Connection
with Technology in Georgetown-Ridge Farm CUSD #4

BY
Andy Weathers

FIELD EXPERIENCE
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
SPECIALIST IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION
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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS FIELD EXPERIENCE BE ACCEPTED AS
FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

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Abstract

The last three years has brought dramatic changes in implementation of technology for the Georgetown-Ridge Farm Unit District #4 (G-RF Unit #4). Since 1995 the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has initiated increased grant funding for schools in the areas of technology deployment, staff development and software purchase and upgrades. ISBE has placed special emphasis on the home/school connection with technology. Districts are required to assess what ISBE refers to as their “current reality” in these areas and take steps to close the gap in the inequities that exist. Districts were required to use gap analysis data to prepare an approved technology plan before federal or state grant funding would be issued.

G-RF Unit #4 began development of a technology plan in the 1995-96 school year with the formation of a technology committee comprised of administrators, teachers, board members, a high school student, parents, a local library board member, and business representatives from the community. This committee was required in order to apply for funds ISBE was awarding to financially challenged districts within the state. The committee was given the tasks of completing a district needs assessment and creating a 3-year technology plan within a 4-month period. The needs assessment was completed and a 3-year plan was developed based on the needs present at that time. Grant funds were secured and the 3-year plan was completed in 18 months.

With the rapid advances in technology and increased grant application requirements it had become necessary to begin planning for the next 3- to 5-year period. Before planning could begin, there was a desire to look at “current reality” in the district. This study investigated the perception of parents in the area of home/school connection with technology. The problems addressed by this study were to determine G-RF Unit #4 parents’ (a) access to a modern home computer; (b) access to CD-ROM, Modem, Internet and online services;
(c) perceptions regarding technology in their child's home school; (d) perceptions regarding their child's access and use of a computer outside the classroom; and (e) perceptions regarding parent access, use and skill in personal use of a computer.

The study took place in the fall of 1997 utilizing a survey instrument developed by the Illinois State Board of Education. The survey was distributed to all parents representing five building locations within the district. Data from a total of 297 responses to the parent survey were gathered and analyzed.

The study revealed that students and parents have limited access to home computers. The study revealed that parents have limited hardware capabilities. Also of note was that parents have a discrepancy in their perception regarding the adequacy of technology in the school and what technology their child is actually utilizing. It was discovered that parents might not resolve the lack of computers in the home for years to come. The study also found that parents have a desire for technology training classes.

The following recommendations were made based on the conclusions of the survey: (a) provide laptop computers for check out to students who do not have access to computers outside of school, (b) coordinate efforts in developing community awareness regarding the importance of connecting with the school via the Internet or e-mail, (c) communicate technology advances by identifying persons to coordinate dissemination of information to all parents, (d) provide technology training classes at each of the five building locations, and (e) frequently examine the perception of parents regarding the home/school connection with technology.
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Chapter 1
Overview of the Problem

New technology, often thought of as a solution to problems, may give rise to new problems associated with the equal access to the technology. Warren-Sams, in the publication from Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), has referred to technology as a second language. Those who fail to learn this new language have been perceived at risk of suffering educational, economic, and social disadvantages (NWREL, 1997, p. 2). Because technology plays such a large role in modern society, all segments of the community need ample opportunity to learn how to use and enjoy it (1997, p. 2). Since 1995 the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has initiated increased grant funding for schools in the areas of technology deployment, staff development and software purchase and upgrades. ISBE has placed special emphasis on the home/school connection. Districts are required to assess what ISBE refers to as their “current reality” in these areas and take steps to close the gap in the inequities that exist. Districts must also use gap analysis data to prepare an approved technology plan before federal or state grant funds will be issued.

The present system for funding public education presents a formidable barrier to equal educational opportunity in technology. Districts will continue to experience substantial differences in the financial and educational resources available to them. However, educators with a commitment to equity have done and can do much more to reduce or overcome financial barriers by developing plans to spend their dollars wisely with a technology plan that addresses local inequities. Further technology plans are now required for state and federal grant eligibility.

Background

Georgetown-Ridge Farm Unit District #4 (G-RF Unit #4) began development of a technology plan in the 1995-96 school year with the formation of a technology committee comprised of administrators, teachers, board members, a high school student, parents, a local library board member, and business representatives from the community. This committee was
required in order to apply for funds ISBE was awarding to financially challenged districts within the state. The committee was given the tasks of completing a district needs assessment and creating a 3-year technology plan within a 4-month period. The needs assessment was completed, and a 3-year plan was developed based on the needs present at that time. Grant funds were secured and the 3-year plan was completed in 18 months.

In September 1997, ISBE developed new guidelines for district technology planning. These progress guidelines, called the “Blueprint,” integrated the state and federal criteria used to review district technology plans in a peer review process. To ensure a school district’s eligibility for state and federal technology program dollars, the district’s technology plan had to be approved through the local area hub and a peer review committee.

G-RF Unit #4 began development of a new 3- to 5-year technology plan in the fall of 1997. Part of the ISBE guidelines required a survey of parent perceptions of the home/school connection before a gap analysis could be developed. Once the gap analysis was completed, plans could be made to address these gaps in the technology plan.

**Statement of the Problem**

The problems addressed by this study were to determine G-RF Unit #4 parents’ (a) access to a modern home computer; (b) access to CD-ROM, Modem, Internet and online services; (c) perceptions regarding technology in their child’s home school; (d) perceptions regarding their child’s access and use of a computer outside the classroom; and (e) perceptions regarding parent access, use and skill in personal use of a computer.

The Parent Home/School Connection Survey instrument was developed by ISBE with the help of the 1995-96 Challenged Districts’ Technology Coordinators, which included the G-RF Unit #4 coordinator. The instrument was placed on computer disk and mailed from ISBE to all districts to assist in gap analysis activities prior to development of the technology plan.

The Parent Home/School Connection Survey was of special interest to the G-RF Unit #4 Technology Committee. The group was interested in ascertaining what technology existed in the
communities and to what degree parents could connect with the school via e-mail or the Internet. Answers to these questions would benefit the development of the 3- to 5-year technology plan and would give the committee a chance to realistically plan for the coming years.

Research Questions

The objectives of this study were to examine existing parental perceptions regarding the home/school connection with technology. Specifically, this project examined the home/school connection with the following research questions:

1. What is the current availability of modern computers in the home?
2. What is the current availability of CD-ROM, modem, Internet and online services in the home computer?
3. What are the current perceptions of parents regarding technology in G-RF Unit #4 schools?
4. What are the perceptions of parents regarding their child's access and use of a computer outside the classroom?
5. What are the perceptions of parents regarding parent access, use and skill in personal use of a computer?

Assumptions

It was assumed that parents would respond to the survey. To the researcher's knowledge, no requests have been made from parents regarding their perceptions in the use of technology. The survey may have caught the parents off-guard, or they may have been embarrassed to admit they did not have computers for their child and discarded the survey.

It was further assumed that the survey was taken seriously by the parents responding and reliable responses were given.

Limitations

The data from the Parent Home/School Connection Survey could be obtained only from parents in G-RF Unit #4. Therefore, caution needs to be exercised when generalizing the
findings to parents in other schools. Further, as descriptive statistics were used, the study design limits determination of reliability and validity.

Delimitations

The researcher chose to study only factors in technology deployment in G-RF Unit #4.

Definition of Terms

The following presents operational definitions as used in this study:

**Blueprint** – A document that supports school districts as they work with their communities in designing a plan for improving learning and bringing new opportunities to communities through technology and telecommunication.

**Current Reality** – The present state of data relating to hardware, home/school connection, and staff development, based on data collected from a variety of instruments.

**Educational Community** – Students, teachers, staff, administrators, parents, and representatives of educational organizations, e.g., PTA/PTO, School Board, and employees.

**Equitable Access** – Equal access to the technology tools.

**Gap Analysis** – The difference between the current reality and the district’s vision for technology, based on data analysis from a variety of instruments.

**Goal** – A broad, general statement for closing the gap area, complete with timeframe. Goals are the achievement of milestones reached toward an ultimate vision.

**Peer Review** – A process that allows representatives of the local technology team to present their technology plan to a panel made up of an expert and technology team members from at least two local schools.

**Phase** – A segment of time to be determined by the district based on variables (funding, technology, deployment, professional development, etc.).

**Stakeholder** – Anyone who has a vested interest in the operations and functions of a school district. This may include taxpayers, business entities, cultural groups, service groups,
special populations, and any other person or group who directly or indirectly pay for support of or use the services of the school district.

**Strategy** – An activity that leads to the accomplishment of the goal.

**Technology Plan** – A 3- to 5-year document that addresses all components of the Illinois State Board of Education’s School District Technology Plan Blueprint.

**Time Frame** – A specific period of time, e.g., January 1997-February 1998.

**Vision** – A clear, unique statement of the principles and beliefs of an organization.
Chapter 2
Rationale, Related Literature and Research

Rationale

The author's interest in this study centered on the fact that Georgetown-Ridge Farm Community Unit District #4 (G-RF Unit #4) had been actively involved in the purchase and use of computers and other technology since 1993. Title I had been the main source of funding for computer purchases before 1993 and the elementary buildings in the district had been the main beneficiaries to that point. In 1993 the superintendent had requested and received a rather large amount of money ($100,000.00) to upgrade the high school computer labs. Plans for future purchases and upgrades were not made at that time and within two years the computers purchased in 1993 were on the verge of being obsolete. The mistake of not having a plan became evident as newer educational software became available that required more hard drive space and multimedia capabilities. The budget did not allow for a line item that looked at replacement and upgrade costs.

In 1995 G-RF Unit #4 began development of its first technology plan in conjunction with the first Challenged District Grants being awarded by the ISBE to districts with a poverty level above 40%. This initial 3-year technology plan was developed, grant funds were secured, and the 3-year plan was completed in 18 months.

In September 1997 the ISBE developed new guidelines for the development of a 3- to 5-year technology plan. The author had been involved in the initial planning and began the process of developing realistic goals based on surveys, inventories and communication with the public. It was the author's sincere hope that the mistake in 1993 would not be repeated due to a lack of planning. Part of the ISBE guidelines required a survey of parent perceptions of the home/school connection with technology. It was this survey that convinced the author that parents played a key role in the development of the technology plan.
With the recent approval of G-RF Unit #4’s Technology Plan (1998) the district has been able to expand the available technology to staff, students and communities. The Parent Home/School Connection Survey has provided an opportunity to assess current capabilities of supporting the district’s technological advances and the future plans parents have in keeping pace with the deployment of technology. Parents have been involved in the planning stages, have sought training and advice on purchases for the home, and have been provided the opportunity to communicate with the school through Internet connection. It is the opinion of the author that other districts might benefit from the information in this study. It is also hoped that this study would provide information to encourage the development of a technology plan that would include the parent home/school connection survey as a means to gathering support from the communities the district might represent.

Review of Related Literature and Research

Technology Plan

The 1990’s evidenced strong support from government leaders in the area of technology. The Office of Educational Research and Improvement (1991) funded 12 studies to examine various aspects of educational reform including parent and community involvement and uses of technology. Each study produced cumulative findings that provided a basis for forming broad and general perspectives on reform. A thirteenth study called Fitting the Pieces looked across the 12 major studies and identified the essential elements of planning, implementing, and sustaining reform. The 12 areas studied included (a) Assessment of Student Performances, (b) Curriculum Reform, (c) Early Childhood Education, (d) Parent and Community Involvement, (e) School-Based Management, (f) School to Work Transition, (g) Student Diversity, (h) Students-at Risk, (i) Systemic Reform, (j) Professionalism of Educators, (k) Technology, and (l) Uses of Time.

In 1993, President Clinton and Vice President Gore stressed their support for telecommunications reform. Clinton emphasized the importance of every classroom in America
being a site for the information and technology revolution. The Clinton administration took advantage of many events to announce its technology policy initiatives (Dougherty, 1998). In his State of the Union Address (1996) Clinton issued a challenge to schools to ensure technological literacy for all children.

Clinton also supported legislation to bring educational technology into every classroom. The main legislation that highlighted this goal was the Telecommunication Reform Act of 1996. In remarks to the Nabob Convention 1995, Federal Communication Commissioner, Reed Hundt emphasized Clinton’s support to ensure that schools and libraries had access to advanced telecommunication services. He emphasized Clinton’s goal of every classroom being connected to the Internet by the year 2000. Clinton wanted all students to have the opportunity to access knowledge without barriers (Hundt, September 1995).

Ongoing governmental support for technology can be observed through the use of the Internet. The United States Department of Education has established a web site for the Office of Educational Technology to promote the challenge of President Clinton and Vice President Gore in the area of technology and the 21st century. Four pillars hold up this challenge to assure that all children are technologically literate by the dawn of the 21st century and equipped with the communication, math, science, reading, and critical thinking skills essential for enhancing learning and improving productivity and performance. The four pillars of challenge include (a) Modern computers and learning devices will be accessible to every student, (b) Classrooms will be connected to one another and to the outside world, (c) Educational software will be an integral part of the curriculum and as engaging as the best video game, and (d) Teachers will be ready to use and teach with technology (U.S. Department of Education, 1995).

The push for integrating technology into the school system prompted a study of statistics regarding what resources were available. In 1997 members of the Software Publishers Association (SPA) compiled a summary of existing national research in regard to K-12 technology implementation. The Market Overview found (a) the 1996-97 total K-12
expenditures were $261.7 billion, which was an average per pupil expenditure of $6,148 (National Center for Education Statistics), (b) the total estimated computer and related product expenditures for K-12, higher education, industry government training centers in 1996 was $10.96 billion (T.H.E. Journal), (c) estimates of the installed base of computers in K-12 education ranged from 5.5 million (Market Data Retrieval) to 7.44 million (CCA Consulting, Inc.), and (d) the typical public school would spend approximately $90.95 per student in 1996-97 for hardware, software, and training (Quality Education Data).

The United States School Market Overview found (a) enrollment in U.S. public elementary and secondary schools was estimated to increase from 51.7 million in 1996 to 53.7 million in 2000 (NCES).

The Funding, Expenditures, and Decision Making Overview found (a) districts with technology plans or technology committees had more personnel involved in making decisions (Curriculum Administrator), (b) administrators were actively involved in determining technology needs, selecting and ordering technology, and recommending technology to other educators (Curriculum Administrator), and (c) educators believe that technology highly impacts students’ attitudes toward learning, students’ self-concept, and student achievement (CCA, Tenth Planet).

The Computer and Software Overview found (a) the computer installed base in K-12 public schools has more than doubled in the past seven years (QED, CCA, Market Data Retrieval), (b) computers were powerful motivators for learning in the classroom, according to teachers who believe that using computers for teaching will make them more successful as teachers (Tenth Planet), (c) the top reasons for using computers include teaching formal computer literacy courses and as a tool for students to use in writing and analyzing data (QED), (d) more computers were being placed in the classroom rather than labs with the emphasis centered on “learning the computer” rather than on the superior goal of “learning with the computer.” To make that happen, teachers and students need vastly improved access to computers in the classroom and the home (CCA, QED, Tenth Planet, Apple Computer). (e) the student per
computer ratio was better than the pupil/teacher ratio. The nationwide ratio was about 10
students per computer. The student to multimedia computer ratio was 35:1 (NCES, QED, Market
Development Research), (f) school districts were investigating and planning to integrate the home
use of instructional software into school curriculum (CCA), (g) in U.S. K-12 schools, 54% to
86% of schools owned one or more computers with a CD-ROM drive. Multimedia computers
represented 17% of the installed base (QED, CCA), and (h) computers with CD-ROM drives
were primarily located in the library/media center (MDR).

The Internet and Other Technologies Overview found (a) K-12 school local area network
(LAN) ownership estimates ranged from 38% to 63% in school year 1995-96 (QED, MDR), (b)
estimates of schools with Internet access was about 50% with only 9% of instructional rooms
having access (NCES), (c) more than half of all schools had access to the Internet in only one
location, or no access at all. Students had limited Internet access (NCES), and (d) schools were
using the Internet and on-line services for research, to access the World Wide Web, e-mail
communications, and curriculum instruction (U.S. Department of Education, Apple Computer,
MDR, NCES). No data were presented regarding the home access and utilization of computers
(SPA, 1997).

Educators are finding the stakes increasing as the market for technology use in school
expands rapidly. As a result technology planning is becoming a priority among schools. A well-
thought out plan is something that takes time and must consider short-term and long-term goals
(Lamb & Johnson, 1994). It must also be kept in mind that flexibility must be written into the
plan to take account of the changes that take place during the execution of the plan. According to
the North Central Regional Technology in Education Consortium (1995) districts that do not
"engage in thoughtful technology planning face the risk of making expensive mistakes and
jeopardize the education of their students" (p. 1).

In recent years planning documents have been published to aid in the long process of
technology planning. In 1995, six Regional Technology in Education Consortia were funded by
the Office of Educational Research and Improvement. The North Central Regional Technology in Education Consortium (1995) developed seven categories that organize a technology plan in the document entitled Guiding Questions for Technology Planning. These seven categories included (a) Creating a Vision: What is your vision of learning?, (b) Designing for Learning: How will you use technology to support your vision of learning?, (c) Designing the Infrastructure: How will you develop a supportive infrastructure?, (d) Context of Planning: Do you understand the context of your technology planning process?, (e) Garnering Public Support: How will you garner public support for your plan?, (f) Implementing a Plan: How will you implement your plan?, and (g) Ongoing Evaluation: How will you evaluate the implementation of your technology plan? The categories are not steps but areas of consideration before planning begins.

Technology planning must center on how that technology will impact students. In 1995, a report entitled Technology and Education Reform: Technical Research Report was issued. This report stressed that reform calls for a shift away from organizing instruction around short blocks of time devoted to lecture or practicing discrete skills in specific academic disciplines toward an emphasis on engaging students in long-term, meaningful projects. Technology can provide significant support for project-based teaching and learning approaches. The report emphasized that engaged learning had been studied in nine school sites and noted that teachers found that technology supported their efforts by (a) adding to students’ perception that their work is authentic and important, (b) increasing the complexity of tasks with which students can deal successfully, (c) enhancing student motivation and self-esteem, (d) creating varying roles of student specialization in technology, (e) instigating greater collaboration, and (f) giving teachers additional impetus to take on a coaching and advisory role (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1995).

Other publications stressed the importance for engaging students with technology. In 1996, the Council for Educational Development and Research (CEDaR) established the EdTalk
publication series to inform policymakers, educators, and local community leaders about significant topics in education. One of these publications, Plugging In, described how to choose and use educational technology and related the efforts to "engaged learning" of the students involved in the process. Engaged learners can be defined as students who are (a) responsible for their own learning, (b) engaged by learning, (c) strategic, and (d) collaborative. The only real measure of the effectiveness of technologies and technology-enhanced educational programs is the extent to which they promote and support students' engaged learning and collaboration (Jones, Valdez, Nawakowski, Rassmussen, 1996, pp. 1-5).

The National Study of School Evaluation (1996) also published a manual entitled Technology: Indicators of Quality Information Technology Systems in K-12 Schools. In this publication a four-step process was described in the planning of technology utilization. These four steps included (a) Establishing a vision for student learning in technology, (b) Looking for indicators of the capacity of the school's instructional system, (c) Looking for indicators of the capacity of the school's organizational system, and (d) Using the indicators to develop or evaluate your school's technology plan.

The State of Illinois responded to the national call for technology research and implementation. A Statewide Technology Survey done by the ISBE (1996) found that 704 of 905 school districts had developed technology plans. While this figure seemed comforting, the information did not indicate what quality existed in these plans (pp.1-8).

The ISBE (1997a) recognized and stated in its K-12 Information Technology Plan document that the K-12 system had reached a point where technology and telecommunications were ever increasing key elements in improvement of student learning in this and the next century (p. 42). The ISBE (1997a) published the K-12 Information Technology Plan with the purpose of providing guidance to school districts in developing a local technology plan (pp. 39-46).

The ISBE issued the School District Technology Plan Blueprint (1997b) and the Technology Plan Progress Guidelines (1997c). Both of these instruments were meant to be used
together to help districts develop or revise a 3- to 5-year technology plan. The dissemination of these instruments and an accompanying floppy disk to every school district was accomplished in 1997. This act gave indication that the ISBE was giving direction and support in the area of technology planning.

In the attempt to guide developers of a technology plan the ISBE’s School District Technology Plan Blueprint (1997b) covered the 16 component areas of a technology plan in the State of Illinois and included information in the area of Criteria, Reflective Questions, and Guiding Elements. The ISBE gave brief descriptions, sample formats and a glossary of terms.

The ISBE’s Technology Plan Progress Guidelines (1997c) were developed through a cooperative effort between Regional Offices of Education, Area Learning Technology Hubs, and Intermediate Service Centers. This instrument was to be used by peer reviewers to evaluate technology plans created from the Technology Plan Blueprint. Each of the 16 components from the Technology Blueprint was ranked by the categories that include Beginning, Emerging, Advancing, and Exceeding. These guidelines proved to be valuable in that when the developer looked at the technology plan, he/she could rank each of the 16 components before the plan was given to the Area Technology Hubs for the peer review process. The developer knows that each of the 16 components must meet at least the Emerging category to ensure eligibility for federal and state allocations in the future.

In December 1998 the Telecommunications Act of 1996 had become reality. The first and second wave of funding for Internet access for schools and libraries had been accomplished. With the final wave of funding to be announced in January 1999, new applications for funding could proceed for schools and libraries that did not qualify in the initial phase.

Home/School Connection

Research has shown that while several technology and technology-enhanced programs do involve parents and local community members, most do not. Consequently, many parents, community members, and business people do not understand the educational shift toward
technology use. They do not understand its significance in their children's schooling and on their children's later capability in the workplace. Additionally, many people fear and misunderstand technology itself. The solution is to bring parents into partnership with the school and the teachers, to explain programmatic goals and to draw on parental resources. Increasingly, researchers are looking beyond individual schools to entire communities as agents of change (Jones, et al., 1996, p. 33).

A number of strategies have proven effective in promoting strong partnerships. The degree to which strategies are related to the needs and interests of parents and to the unique situations of schools and teachers influences the level of success. Home visits, conferences, parent centers, telecommunication, involvement in the classroom, participatory decision making, parent and adult education programs, home learning activities, and family-school networking are some of the many strategies that have effectively engaged parents and teachers in supportive and collaborative roles (Swick, 1991, p.16).

National studies have focused on the future of educational networking. In November 1995 the United States Department of Education called together a small yet diverse group of Internet experts, including teachers, online service developers, researchers, and computer scientists. They were brought together to articulate a concise new vision of what policy makers, network developers, educators, and the community in general can do to further define the role of networking in the classrooms of tomorrow. Their findings indicated that community-based efforts to implement technology in schools have become the driving force in technology policy. They also concluded that state agencies must take a leadership role and encourage bottom-up, locally driven technology solutions when possible, while offering outreach and matching support to help community efforts catch hold. The conference expressed their desire for a stronger relationship between schools and their communities, including business, higher education, and individual citizens. This relationship ensures that all parties would stand to gain from the experience. In evaluating the project members concluded that consideration must be given to the
issues of technology equity and access, professional development, links with community resources, and cost effectiveness. In closing remarks it was stated “schools are isolated, that’s why none want to change,” and “changes cannot be forced from the outside, except by parents and by the students themselves” (U.S. Department of Education, 1998, p. 6). Final comments from the group suggested that instead of educators isolating the learning process within the confines of the school walls, they should forge links to the outside community to find ways of imparting and sharing their knowledge with others (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

Recent major legislation, such as Goals 2000, has made parents’ involvement in their children’s education a national priority. School districts nationwide are being encouraged to reexamine their parent involvement policies and programs and to demonstrate innovative approaches in order to obtain federal education dollars. In particular, eligibility for Title I funding, available to school districts in high poverty areas, is now contingent upon the development of compacts in which families and schools agree to assume mutual responsibility for children’s learning (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

Project Appleseed addressed the need for effective parent-school partnership by providing a checklist describing successful types of parental involvement. The checklist included (a) parenting that established home environments to support children as students, (b) communication designed for more effective school-to-home and home-to-school information sharing, (c) learning at home that involves helping students at home with homework and other curricular-related activities, and (d) decision making that included parents in school decisions (Epstein, 1996).

While most practitioners and researchers support the policy direction of increased parent involvement, few agree about what constitutes effective involvement. Confusion persists regarding the activities, goals, and desired outcomes of various parent involvement programs and policies because there is a lack of scientific rigor in the research informing practice and policy. Because of this, less is known about parent involvement than is commonly assumed. Early
studies suggesting the importance of parent involvement are treated as definitive, regardless of
the nature of the data, and they are used to support the position that all types of parent
involvement are important. Future parent involvement studies must overcome the limitations
identified above in order to increase their accuracy and utility. Including parents in the
development of measures and protocols may ease the concerns and also provide a mechanism for
obtaining valuable input (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).
General Design

The problems addressed by this study were to determine G-RF Unit #4 parents' (a) access to a modern home computer; (b) access to CD-ROM, Modem, Internet and online services; (c) perceptions regarding technology in their child's home school; (d) perceptions regarding their child's access and use of a computer outside the classroom; and (e) perceptions regarding parent access, use and skill in personal use of a computer.

ISBE staff members and technology coordinators, from the 1995-96 Challenged District Grants, participated in the development of the survey. Parent surveys were handed out to (a) all parents attending parent/teacher conferences at the elementary and junior high buildings, and (b) all high school students for a take home and return assignment. The G-RF Unit #4 is comprised of Ridge Farm Elementary (grades kindergarten-4), Pinecrest (grades pre-kindergarten-3), Frazier (grades 4-5), Mary Miller Junior High (grades 6-8), and Georgetown-Ridge Farm High School (grades 9-12). The survey was field tested by members of the G-RF Unit #4 Technology Committee. An additional parent survey field test was done with the staff at Ridge Farm Elementary. No statistical analysis was done for reliability.

The study was designed to provide parent perception data to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the current availability of modern computers in the home?
2. What is the current availability of CD-ROM, Modem, Internet and online services in the home computer?
3. What are the current perceptions of parents regarding technology in G-RF Unit #4 schools?
4. What are the current perceptions of parents regarding their child’s access and use of a computer outside the classroom?

5. What are the perceptions of parents regarding parent access, use and skill in personal use of a computer?

Sample and Population for the Parent Survey

The sample was the 297 parents who completed the survey. The sample was representative of the overall population of the district and included parents who attended parent/teacher conferences at the elementary and junior high buildings and parents responding to a take home survey from the high school. All five buildings in the district were surveyed. Although there was a high response rate, the representativeness of the sample is not certain.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

The Parent Home/School Connection Survey (see Appendix A) was developed by ISBE. The survey was mailed to each district in Illinois to aid in gathering gap analysis data at the local level, prior to the development of the 3- to 5-year technology plan. The Parent Home/School Connection Survey was piloted by the G-RF Unit #4 Technology Committee and the staff at Ridge Farm Elementary.

The Parent Home/School Connection Survey was handed out to elementary and junior high school parents in November 1997, during parent/teacher conferences. The high school Parent Home/School Connection Survey was handed out to take home and return. Cover letters (see Appendix B) requesting only one form per family were presented at the same time. Upon completion, parents were instructed to leave the survey with their building principals. The researcher collected all surveys from the building principals.

Data Analysis

Data were collected using the Parent Home/School Connection Survey to answer specific research questions. Research Question 1 was “What is the current availability of modern
Research Question 2 was “What is the current availability of CD-ROM, modem, Internet and online services in the home computer?” Survey question 3 provided data to answer that research question.

Research Question 3 was “What are the current perceptions of parents regarding technology in G-RF Unit #4 schools?” Survey questions 4 and 5 provided data to answer that research question.

Research Question 4 was “What are the perceptions of parents regarding their child’s access and use of a computer outside the classroom?” Survey questions 6, 7 and 8 provided data to answer that question.

Research Question 5 was “What are the perceptions of parents regarding parent access, use and skill in personal use of a computer?” Survey questions 9, 10, 11 and 12 provided data to answer that research question.

Descriptive statistics using frequencies and percentages were used to present the results. The analysis of the data was presented through tables.
Chapter 4

Results of the Study

Overview

The Parent Home/School Connection Survey (H/S Connection) had 297 responses and represented surveys from all five building locations within the district. Data were analyzed for each of the following research questions:

1. What is the current availability of modern computers in the home?
2. What is the current availability of CD-ROM, modem, Internet and online services in the home computer?
3. What are the current perceptions of parents regarding technology in G-RF Unit #4 schools?
4. What are the perceptions of parents regarding their child's access and use of a computer outside the classroom?
5. What are the perceptions of parents regarding parent access, use and skill in personal use of a computer?

To simplify the reporting of data, Agree and Strongly Agree responses were combined and Disagree and Strongly Disagree responses were combined. The analyzed data for each research question were presented in tables.

Results for H/S Connection Research Question 1

Research Question 1 was: What is the current availability of modern computers in the home? Responses from survey questions 1 and 2 provided data for that research question as shown in Table 1. As indicated in Table 1, in response to survey question 1, 44% of those answering do have a computer in the home. Forty-three percent of those responding do not have a computer at home. Twelve percent of those responding had no opinion on this research question.
Survey question 2 addressed the type of computer in the home. In response to survey question 2, 14% of those responding indicated owning an IBM computer.

Table 1

**Availability of Modern Computer in the Home**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
<th>Percentage of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you have a computer in your home?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion/Neutral</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What kind of computer do you own?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBM</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tandy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macintosh</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Percentages were rounded and did not always total 100%. Respondents did not always state the type of computer in the home.

Results for H/S Connection Research Question 2

Research question 2 was: What is the current availability of CD-ROM, modem, Internet and online services (e.g., America Online, CompServe, Prodigy) in the home computer?

Responses from survey question 3 provided data for that research question. As shown in Table 2, in response to survey question 3, 24% of the respondents had CD-ROM drives in the home computer, while the vast majority (76%) did not have CD-ROM drives in the home computer.
Modems were reported in 20% of the home computers, while a vast majority (80%) did not have modems in the home computer. Respondents were given the opportunity to specify the speed of their computers. Of those 20% reporting modems present, only two responses were given about the speed of the modem. One reported a 14.4 rating while one other response indicated a 28.8 rating. Internet access was reported in 15% of those parents responding to the question. Online services, (e.g., America Online, CompuServe, Prodigy), were reported in 18% of those responding to the survey, while 85% did not report any online services.

Results for H/S Connection Research Question 3

Research question 3 was: What are the current perceptions of parents regarding technology in G-RF Unit #4 schools? Survey questions 4 and 5 provided data for this question. Responses were evenly distributed regarding the adequacy of technology. As indicated in Table 3, in response to survey question 4, 43% of those responding strongly agreed or agreed that technology in their child’s school was currently adequate. Forty-three percent of those responding disagreed or strongly disagreed that technology in their child’s school was adequate. As indicated in Table 3, in response to survey question 5, 59% of those responding strongly agreed or agreed that their child is encouraged to use technology at school. Thirty-one percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that their child is encouraged to use technology at school.

Results for H/S Connection Research Question 4

Research question 4 was: What are the perceptions of parents regarding their child’s access and use of a computer outside the classroom? Survey questions 6, 7, and 8 provided data for this question. As indicated in Table 4, in response to survey question 6, 65% strongly agreed or agreed that their child has access to a computer outside of school. Twenty-six percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that their child has access to a computer outside of school. As indicated in Table 4, in response to survey question 7, 25% strongly agreed or agreed they assisted their child in using the home computer for school projects. For those parents responding, 50% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they assist their child in using the home computer for
school projects. Twenty-three percent had no opinion on the subject of assisting their child in using the home computer for school projects.

Table 2

**Availability of Hardware and Internet Access**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
<th>Percentage of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Does your home computer have:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD-ROM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Access</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America Online</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prodigy</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CompuServe</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

Adequacy of Technology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
<th>Percentage of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Technology in my child's school is currently adequate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agreed</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreed</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response/Neutral</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My child is encouraged to use technology at school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agreed</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreed</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response/Neutral</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The total number for each question may be less than 297 if no response was given.

Percentages were rounded and may not total 100%.

As indicated in Table 4, in response to survey question 8, 45% of those parents responding strongly agreed or agreed their child plays games on the home computer. Thirty-three percent of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed their child plays games on the home computer.

Results for H/S Connection Research Question 5

Research question 5 was: What are the perceptions of parents regarding parent access, use and skill in personal use of a computer? Survey questions 9, 10, 11 and 12 provided data for
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>No. of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. My child has access to a computer outside of school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agreed, Agreed</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreed, Strongly disagreed</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion/Neutral</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I assist my child in using the home computer for school projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agreed, Agreed</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreed, Strongly disagreed</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion/Neutral</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. My child plays games on the home computer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agreed, Agreed</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreed, Strongly disagreed</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion/Neutral</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The total number for each question may be less than 297 if no response was given. Percentages were rounded and may not total 100%.
As indicated in Table 5, in response to survey question 9, 54% of those parents responding strongly agreed or agreed they use a computer in their profession. Thirty-one percent of those parents responding disagreed or strongly disagreed they use a computer in their profession. As indicated in Table 5, in response to survey question 10, 39% of those parents responding agreed or agreed they will be purchasing a computer in the next few years. Thirty-two percent responded that they disagreed or strongly disagreed they will be purchasing a computer in the next few years. As indicated in Table 5, in response to survey question 11, 33% of those responding strongly agreed or agreed they would be interested in technology training classes at the school. Thirty-nine percent responded they disagreed or strongly disagreed they would be interested in technology training classes at the school. As indicated in Table 5, in response to survey question 12, 10% of those responding strongly agreed or agreed they have the ability to electronically communicate with their child's school. Thirty-two percent responded they disagreed or strongly disagreed they have the ability to electronically communicate with their child's school.

Table 5

Parent Access, Use and Skill in Computer Usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. I use a computer in my profession</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agreed</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreed</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion/Neutral</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
10. I plan to purchase a computer in the next few years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agreed</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreed</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion/Neutral</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. I would be interested in technology training classes for parents at the school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agreed</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreed</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion/Neutral</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. I have the ability to electronically communicate with my child’s school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agreed</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreed</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion/Neutral</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The total number for each question may be less than 297 if no response was given. Percentages were rounded and may not total 100%.
Chapter 5

Summary, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

This study investigated the perceptions of G-RF Unit #4 parents regarding (a) access to a modern home computer; (b) access to CD-ROM, Modem, Internet and online services; (c) technology in their child’s home school; (d) their child’s access and use of a computer outside the classroom; and (e) parent access, use and skill in personal use of a computer. A Parent Home/School Connection Survey instrument developed by the ISBE was handed out to (a) all parents attending parent/teacher conferences at the elementary and junior high buildings, and (b) all high school students for a take home and return assignment.

The specific research questions addressed by this study were:

1. What is the current availability of modern computers in the home?

2. What is the current availability of CD-ROM, modem, Internet and online services in the home computer?

3. What are the current perceptions of parents regarding technology in G-RF Unit #4 schools?

4. What are the current perceptions of parents regarding their child’s access and use of a computer outside the classroom?

5. What are the perceptions of parents regarding parent access, use and skill in personal use of a computer?

This study was based on data collected from a parent survey with a total of 297 responses from all five building locations within the district. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data collected for each specific research question.

Findings

Results for research question 1 revealed that availability of computers in the home was almost evenly divided with 44% of respondents having access to a home computer while 43% did
not have access to a home computer. Twelve percent had no opinion or were neutral in the response given. The study revealed that 14% of the respondents had an IBM model computer.

Results for survey question 2 revealed that 76% of the respondents did not have a CD-ROM, while 24% did have a CD-ROM for the home computer. Eighty percent did not have a modem, while 20% did have a modem for the home computer. Eighty-five percent of the respondents did not have Internet Access, while 15% did have Internet access. Eighteen percent of the respondents did have some form of online services (e.g., America Online, Prodigy, CompuServe).

Results for research question 3 revealed that 43% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed technology in their child’s school was currently adequate, while an even 43% disagreed or strongly disagreed technology in their child’s school was currently adequate. Fifty-nine percent strongly agreed or agreed that their child was encouraged to use technology at school, while 31% disagreed or strongly disagreed that their child was encouraged to use technology at school.

Results for research question 4 revealed that 65% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed their child had access to a computer outside of school, while 26% disagreed or strongly disagreed their child had access to a computer outside of school. Fifty percent of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they (parents) assisted their child in using the home computer for school projects, while 25% strongly agreed or agreed that they (parents) assisted their child in using the home computer for school projects. Forty-five percent strongly agreed or agreed their child played games on the home computer, while 33% disagreed or strongly disagreed their child played games on the home computer.

Results for research question 5 revealed 54% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed they (parents) used a computer in their profession, while 31% disagreed or strongly disagreed they (parents) used a computer in their profession. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed they (parents) plan to purchase a computer in the next few years, while 32% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed they (parents) plan to
purchase a computer in the next few years. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents strongly disagreed or strongly disagreed they (parents) had an interest in technology training classes at the school, while 33% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed they (parents) had an interest in technology training classes at the school. Thirty-two percent disagreed or strongly disagreed they (parents) had the ability to electronically communicate with their child’s school, while 10% strongly agreed or agreed they (parents) had the ability to electronically communicate with their child’s school.

**Conclusions**

The researcher concluded that GRF Unit #4 students and parents have limited access to a home computer. This limited access prevented parents from assisting their child in using the computer for school projects. Referencing Table 1, results indicated that although 44% of parents had a computer in the home, only 25% indicated they assist their child in using the computer for school projects. This results in a limited number of parents who have the ability and confidence in assisting their child for school projects in the home. At the same time Table 5 results indicated that 39% of respondents plan on purchasing a computer in the next few years and 33% of the respondents indicated they would be interested in technology training classes. The researcher concluded that the importance of having a computer in the home and the need for parent training is on the mind of many parents.

The researcher concluded that GRF Unit #4 parents have limited hardware capabilities and Internet access. Table 2 results indicated that 80% of parents did not currently have a modem. Results also indicated that 85% of respondents did not have Internet access. Those 20% of parents that do report having a modem are almost all (18%) subscribing to an online service (e.g., America Online, CompuServe, Prodigy). This high modem to online service ratio indicated the priority of parents to connect to the Internet and/or e-mail as the reason for purchasing a modem. The researcher concluded that once the importance of connecting to the school via the Internet and e-mail service was conveyed to the communities, it was almost certain that all who
purchase a modem will have the ability to connect to the school through online services of some kind.

The researcher concluded that GRF Unit #4 parents have a discrepancy in perception regarding adequacy of technology in the school and the use of that technology by their child. Table 3 results indicated that only 43% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed technology is currently adequate in their child’s school, while 59% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that their child is encouraged to use technology at school. The results of these two questions indicated that a discrepancy exists between the perception of what technology is adequate for each school and what technology the students are actually utilizing.

The researcher concluded that there was a lack of computer availability in the home and that plans to purchase a computer for the home may be years in coming. As indicated before, Table 1 results reveal that only 44% of respondents currently have access to a computer in the home, while Table 5 indicated that 39% of respondents plan on purchasing a computer in the next few years.

The researcher concluded that GRF Unit #4 parents have a desire for technology training classes. Table 5 results indicated 33% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they would be interested in technology training classes at the school.

**Recommendations**

The researcher recommended that the GRF Unit #4 Technology Committee should keep track of the level of computer availability in the home and address the problems of (a) homes that do not currently have a computer, and (b) parents’ limited ability to assist their child on the computer for school projects. If student assignments revolve around the use of the home computer, it would become necessary to provide a laptop to be checked out for that purpose in homes that do not have a computer available. By providing a laptop for student use GRF Unit #4 would be addressing the issue of (a) providing a computer for those who cannot or will not be purchasing a computer for a while and (b) providing the opportunity for students and parents to
gain skills in technology. The check out policy would also be getting the message out regarding the importance of technology in everyone's life and may increase the confidence of parents in assisting their child for school projects in the home.

The researcher recommended that the GRF Unit #4 Technology Committee coordinate efforts in developing community awareness regarding the importance of connecting with the school via the Internet and e-mail. This could be accomplished by designating members of the committee to speak at public functions such as Lions Club, Rotary, church meetings and regularly scheduled public gatherings in the communities. Parents could be informed through each of the schools monthly newsletters regarding the capability each school has in communicating with parents by Internet or e-mail. By providing information to these groups regarding the ability of each school to communicate with parents via the Internet or e-mail the awareness of need to purchase modems for home computers would be emphasized.

The researcher recommended that the GRF Unit #4 Technology Committee more effectively communicate technology advances by identifying persons to coordinate dissemination of information, regarding district technology efforts, to all parents. This could be accomplished by displaying technology and products of that technology at district Technology Fairs, parent/teacher conferences and regularly scheduled programs throughout the year. The communication regarding district deployment of technology and products would address the discrepancy of perception regarding adequacy of technology in the school and the encouragement of their child to use technology that existed in Table 3.

The researcher recommended that training classes at each district building location be provided to parents at no cost. By providing the opportunity to train locally, parents would not have to travel long distances and pay high cost for technology classes. The environment would not be as intimidating as classes at local community colleges and hours for training could be adjusted to fit the needs of parents.
Based on the findings and conclusions of survey results, the researcher recommended that the GRF Unit #4 Technology Committee should frequently examine the (a) level of home computer accessibility, (b) availability of hardware and Internet access in the home, (c) perception of parents regarding the adequacy of technology in their child's school, (d) perception of parents regarding access to a computer outside the classroom, and (e) parent's access, use and skill in computer usage.

A follow-up study of the conditions listed above should be conducted in two years to see where gaps exist and identify areas where improvements need to be made.
References


HOME/SCHOOL CONNECTION
Parent Survey

One survey per family, please:
Name of school your child attends: ____________________________

Do you have a computer in your home? YES NO

What make and model of computer do you own? ____________________________

Does your home computer have:

- CD ROM YES NO
- Modem YES NO

If yes, speed? ____________________________

Do you have Internet access? YES NO

Do you subscribe to On Line Services such as America On Line, CompuServe? YES NO

Technology in my child's school is strongly agree agree disagree disagree opinion strongly agree strongly disagree no opinion currently adequate.

My child is encouraged to use technology at school. strongly agree agree disagree disagree opinion strongly agree strongly disagree no opinion

My child has access to a computer outside of school. strongly agree agree disagree disagree opinion strongly agree strongly disagree no opinion

My child uses the home computer for school projects. strongly agree agree disagree disagree opinion strongly agree strongly disagree no opinion

I assist my child in using the home computer for school projects. strongly agree agree disagree disagree opinion strongly agree strongly disagree no opinion

My child plays games on the home computer. strongly agree agree disagree disagree opinion strongly agree strongly disagree no opinion

I use a computer in my profession. strongly agree agree disagree disagree opinion strongly agree strongly disagree no opinion

I plan to purchase a computer in the next few years. strongly agree agree disagree disagree opinion strongly agree strongly disagree no opinion

I would be interested in technology training classes for parents at the school. strongly agree agree disagree disagree opinion strongly agree strongly disagree no opinion

I have the ability to electronically communicate with my child's school. strongly agree agree disagree disagree opinion strongly agree strongly disagree no opinion

School Year: ____________________________
Completion Date: ____________________________

Prepared for ISBE by Education Technology Planners, Inc.
HSCPS.Dot
Dear Parent:

Please fill out the survey and return to the school (one per family). This information is very important to the district and for future planning in the use of technology. We will be sharing the information with the Illinois State Board of Education.

We will be reporting the results of this survey and other information at our April Technology Meeting. Georgetown and Ridge Farm residents will be invited to participate. Watch for the date and time in the newspaper, district newsletter, school newsletter, and reminder notes from your school.

Thank you for your time and response to this survey.