

Server Work at Grant Elementary Petaluma

From: Ginny Mason

To: Matthew@sonomatechpartners.com; Tracy Lubas <tracy@sonomatechpartners.com>

CC: Catina Haugen

BC:

Date: Saturday - June 11, 2011 2:24 PM

Hello Matthew and Tracy,

Grant is in need of some server work. While all could be postponed until August, August is a new budget. So that we don't lose the \$, we would like to have June tasks completed and billed this month, if possible. All work must be done between 8am and 3pm M-F. Let me know if you can accomodate and the dates/times as the office has a few days where the hours above won't work.

In addition to the identified tasks, there are some changes at Grant that will affect how things are done.

<http://grantlab.pbworks.com/STP-Tasks>

I apologize for such a long email, if you'd like to cut to the chase on tasks, please follow the link above for June and August identified tasks. Others may come out of the June tasks or early August discussion. if you'd like to add items you discover to the list to help us track, please make a request to join the wiki. You'll be added as writers (cannot delete pages or folders, but can edit those that you have access to,) I think the goal for August is to have server work done in early August as teachers begin to arrive on campus about the second week. All teachers officially on campus the third week; school opens on Wed the third week.

a) We have a new principal. Cantina Haugen. You've met her as part of the tech committee. She will likely be your main contact moving forward. Her email is [chaugen@pet.k12.ca.us](mailto:chaugen@pet.k12.ca.us). She begins her job in July and will be at the school on July 17, I believe.

b) District is taking some site tech money to hire a technician for more hours--shared across 6 schools. They have committed to supporting the classrooms. It is not yet known whether that includes servicing lab pcs (it will never include servicing our 2 domain controllers and 2 terminal servers--these will always be outside contracted until they are replaced with alternative technology--see district initiatives below.) I don't believe district technicians are familiar with Active Directory. We are the only school that runs a domain, everyone else uses workgroup (if they have a server at all) and middle and secondary schools use Deep Freeze to control updates and lock down pcs.

c) My position is no longer funded. The goal is to hire an outside contractor (probably Tejon through you) to service the lab machines on a regular schedule assuming there is no support from district for this task in a timely matter, swap backup tapes if that is still the operational method - see below, and take care of any items in the

classroom that our district support doesn't get to (installation of printers, pc components, wireless keyboards/mice, doc cameras, other peripherals), etc . Lots of coordination potentially or none depending on how the line is drawn and the money is allocated. Grant is trying to support our site and stretch our dollars at the same time support the district initiative to standardize and support classrooms better--a murky, if not emotionally charged and financially heated line that will need further discussion and coordination. Catina will work with you and the District to try to make the lines simple and understandable. Too many cooks....

d) District Initiatives...

1) Standardization of all equipment. Long term goal. Nothing specific provided although all purchases have to go through them for anything they will support (partially or entirely). Discussion of moving to Apple products for all curriculum-based items (outside the district office and administration).

2) Power savings - we've installed the EZPro Group Policy controlled on the domain. No support from District on our implementation, but the edict is to do something. They are looking into something that the school district gets for free with free licenses for Deep Freeze as part of energy savings grant. Requires coordination and may reduce the need for Active Directory at our site to control settings and lockdown. Much depends on new hardware direction, minimizing effort on aging equipment and timeline.

3) DHCP server on all sites - ours is provided by DCs. If district provides one, this will need to be coordinated. We are likely to be last as all other sites are static ip.

4) File Server per site (?) this one is a rumor and offhanded comment from one of the tech guys (they said each site would get a server, but did not specify DHCP only or to include file sharing services). This would remove Grant's File sharing needs on DCs. Combined with Deep Freeze/Power Savings/Updates locally implemented, we may no longer require Active Directory. Also depends on Terminal Servers which have limited life left--see next item. Implementing the power saver/deep freeze would be the responsibility of the district.

e) Grant Elementary State of Technology

Grant is at a turning point. Outside of one laptop, the youngest PC/Computer on campus is 3-4 years old.

These were the refurbished machines purchased Spring 2010 for teacher systems to replace failing SCOE donated systems of at least 5 years old (Tejon helped finish the deployment with me.). We still have many SCOE machines installed (and a few backlogged), all vintage 2002-2003, I believe. Failures appear to begin occurring with USB bus and potentially hard drives. We use the backlog for parts and whole replacements as necessary. The newest DC is 4 years old. The Terminal Servers and older DC are 8 years old. The terminal servers have had their drives replaced once and more memory added. The original DC is frankly "original" except potentially a motherboard replacement that turned out not to be needed (also potentially done on new DC); motherboard replacement was done under warranty so probably within the third or fourth year (we purchased 3 year extension warranties on servers). The lab PCs are in their 7th year this coming school year. They've been updated in memory and this June, with new network cards (capable of GB if switches get replaced - see below). Over the past two years, most of the lab pcs are fine. Failures have been occurring on connectivity (integrated network card). At this point, we decided to replace the network cards for all 30 pcs.

They all appear to be fine for

now although you'll be able to see the current state and comments of individual pcs on the following page

<http://grantlab.pbworks.com/Computer+Lab+Notes+-+June+2011> (which I am still updating this next week).

f)There is some sluggishness in the network. The network switch and potentially re-wiring project was put on hold as we couldn't get district resources available when you'd be available while we still had a load on the network. Much could be done, but none is really known about the issues. If the district ponies up a DHCP and or Fail Server (NAS or other) and places in the main switch, perhaps some of the sluggishness will disappear. This item was deferred to August discussion.

Grant has some computer system replacement funds, but given the current age of almost all equipment on campus, the new district initiatives and unclear direction, it isn't certain which has higher priority-network switches and rewiring, refurbishing the lab (heavy use), picking a long term classroom replacement strategy (current is terminal server + file servers), file sharing vs cloud computing file services everywhere on campus, etc. If Apple is the way we are going, that adds some costs for hardware, training, etc, but reduces Grant's maintenance needs in the long term. Grant is mostly in a "buy more time" mode in order to bank more dollars and wait until the direction becomes clearer. This year will be the first year in a very long time that Grant has not had a lab coordinator. Usage overall might be down as teachers adjust to life without a tech person on campus and with only their peers to help them learn. While always conservative in technology spending, this year more than ever is about minimizing changes and keeping the system operational until the horizon clears a bit--we are hopeful that January will bring clarity. The last thing the school wants to do is spend money unwisely on hardware, software or even service maintenance with such an unknown future.

Give me a call or send email.

Best,  
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Check out our school technology page: <http://grantlab.pbworks.com>