

Project implementation overview. In Year 1 of Schoolnet implementation, the evaluation focused on documenting the implementation of technology structures, curriculum and assessment development, and professional development opportunities needed to positively affect the quality of teacher instruction and student learning in the district. It is important to determine whether the components identified as critical to the success of the project were implemented as intended to improve the educational outcomes for all Austin Independent School District (AISD) students. This report provides an overview of the project’s implementation during the 2011–2012 school year.

Project accomplishments. Throughout the school year, the project was implemented according to plan. The creation of a cross-functional implementation team consisting of senior level staff from the technology, curriculum, assessment, professional development, and schools offices was a key factor in the successful implementation of Schoolnet. This team was able to secure resources and make critical decisions in timely and strategic ways.

Technology. Beginning in Spring 2011, the AISD technology team began supporting Schoolnet, and they continue to support the system’s daily operations. Technology team support included the following activities:

- loading current and past years of student data;
- connecting more than 6,000 staff members to Schoolnet, with appropriate security controls;
- refreshing student data on a daily basis;
- creating a compatible scanning system for the implementation of student assessments;
- piloting and creating online testing for more than 60,000 AISD students;
- addressing user questions and technology issues via the AISD Help Desk;
- working with Schoolnet staff to provide a more detailed usage analysis;
- working with Schoolnet and Curriculum staff to load the 2012–2013 school year curriculum road maps (CRMs) and yearly itineraries (YIs); and
- completing all system updates throughout the year.

Curriculum. AISD’s curriculum team was responsible for providing a variety of resources in Schoolnet that teachers were to use in their planning, daily instruction, and monitoring of students’ learning. The curriculum team continues to develop resources and provide them to school staff through Schoolnet. Curriculum team loaded more than 1,700 curriculum and instruction documents and resources into Schoolnet for mathematics

About Schoolnet. Schoolnet’s Instructional Management Suite (IMS) is a tool designed to help district staff at all levels to improve student achievement and create program coherence around curriculum, instruction, assessment, and reporting. With the information provided in Schoolnet, staff can use the district’s standards-based curriculum to ensure consistent and rigorous instruction, administer formative assessments to identify students’ needs, differentiate instruction, and monitor students’ progress. The system features three major components: curriculum management, assessment administration, and reporting.

AISD acquired Schoolnet with funding support from the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF). This funding support from MSDF was intended to help with system start-up costs in the 2011–2012 school year. The district will assume all operating costs in subsequent school years.

(math), English and language arts, science social studies, and physical education and health. In Summer 2012, the curriculum team continued to develop and uploaded approximately 500 additional documents from the following areas: fine arts, social emotional learning (SEL), career and technology education (CTE), languages other than English, and English as a second language (ESL).

Assessment. In 2011–2012, AISD’s assessment team created 125 benchmark and 304 short-cycle assessments and administered them via Schoolnet. Spanish benchmark and short-cycle assessments were created for grades 3 through 5. The middle of year (MOY) II benchmark assessments were modified for special education students. The Intel assessment item bank was reviewed and released to teachers, and an additional 2,430 Texas Math and Science Diagnostic System (TMSDS) items were added to the item bank, bringing the total number of items available for teacher use to slightly more than 20,000 items. District staff received extensive Schoolnet assessment training (e.g., basic navigation training and more in-depth sessions on creating assessments, administering them online, and interpreting the results).

Professional development opportunities. AISD’s professional development team provided professional development opportunities for all AISD teachers and principals throughout the year in a variety of formats to meet diverse user needs. In August 2011, campus facilitators from every school in the district participated in train-the-trainer (ToT) sessions to support teachers’ use of Schoolnet. Subsequently, campus leadership teams and Schoolnet facilitators provided training for all staff in their respective schools. Overall, 6,557 (98%) teachers and administrators from almost all AISD schools completed the initial phase of Schoolnet training prior to the start of school. More than 65 online training modules and learning guides were developed by AISD staff to support the use of curriculum materials, assessment data, and reports at the school, classroom, and student levels. These modules are located on the Schoolnet Training Resources website on AISD’s cloud. Additional training sessions were provided by AISD’s professional development team for district-level personnel, principals, and local campuses in need of follow-up training throughout the year. Weekly emails on Schoolnet were sent to campus facilitators regarding assessments, new training opportunities, and curriculum developments. Schoolnet technology information was provided weekly to all AISD personnel through the Thursday Tech Tips email.

Summary of Schoolnet implementation outcomes. It was expected that the implementation of Schoolnet would influence teachers’ instructional practices in ways that could, in turn, improve educational outcomes for all AISD students. The following questions were explored in Year 1 of the evaluation.

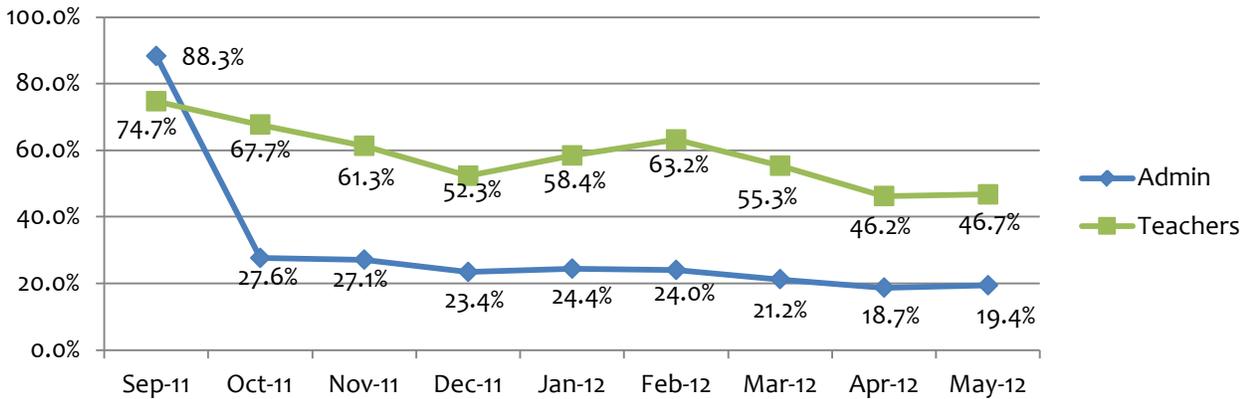
- Did Schoolnet professional development activity participants perceive that they had the information and skills needed to use Schoolnet to improve instruction and monitor students’ progress?
- Did teachers and principals believe Schoolnet provided valuable information to improve instruction and students’ achievement?
- How many teachers and principals used Schoolnet, and with what frequency did they use the system in the first year of implementation?
- Did teachers and principals report using Schoolnet to plan instruction, monitor and assess students’ learning, and adjust instructional practices throughout the school year?

Several qualitative and quantitative data sources were used to answer Year 1 program evaluation questions and included Schoolnet login reports; a district-wide survey containing questions pertaining to Schoolnet;

the District Staff Climate Survey; and online discussion forums (e.g., Net-Talk). In this section of the report, the outcomes for AISD staff are summarized.

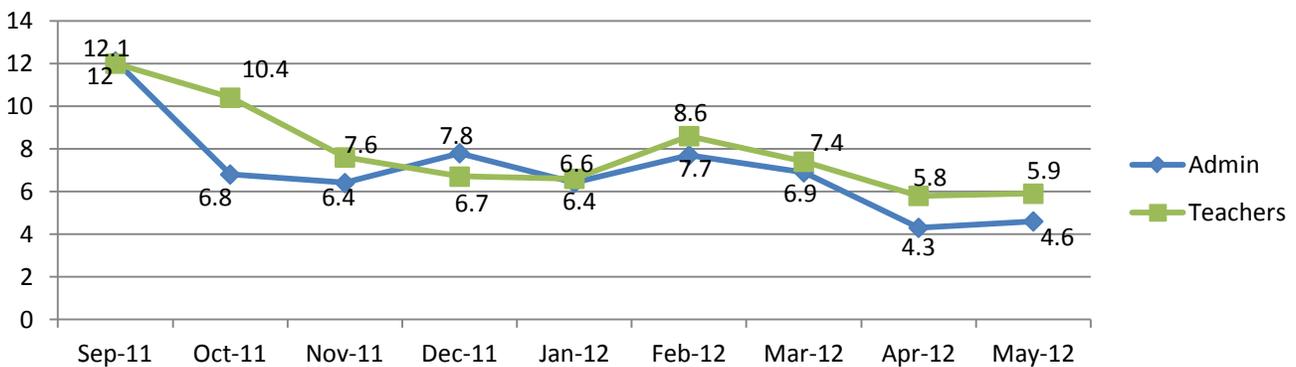
Schoolnet login reports. Schoolnet login reports were examined monthly (Figures 1 and 2). The district’s goals are to increase the percentage of users for each role and to increase the number of times per month s each user logs into the system in the 2012–2013 school year.

Figure 1. In most months, a higher percentage of teachers than of administrators logged into Schoolnet.



Source. Schoolnet Login Reports, 2011–2012

Figure 2. The average number of logins fluctuated throughout the year, and increases in usage appeared to coincide with expected instructional activities, such as staff training, administration of district assessments, and preparation for state assessments.



Source. Schoolnet Login Reports, 2011–2012

Schoolnet focus groups. Focus groups were conducted in the middle and at the end of the year. In December 2011, 21 Schoolnet facilitators representing elementary, middle, and high schools participated in the focus group sessions. On two occasions in late Spring 2012, AISD teachers also participated in a Net-Talk, an online forum in which participants can voice their opinions through submitting an idea or voting on existing ideas. Table 1 provides the most prevalent themes that emerged from those discussions.

Table 1. In focus groups, teachers communicated positively about the value and potential of the program and offered constructive feedback for continuing support.

Highlights	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers often used students' profile information housed within the Schoolnet program. The profile allowed teachers and academic staff to view a student's history and patterns of behavior. This information was useful to academic staff to begin conversations with students about their academic performance, behavior, and attendance. Teachers found that information to be useful in designing instruction. • Teachers often discussed their use of pre-formatted reports. Administrators at some campuses required the teacher to bring printouts to meetings; other campuses had teachers examine these reports in professional learning communities (PLCs) and department meetings. • Instructional videos about the Schoolnet Resources webpage were reported as being very helpful for learning new techniques available in the program. • Schoolnet assisted some teachers in employing simple item analyses, which were considered very helpful to their planning and instruction. • Teachers reported that most staff needed some more time to learn how to use the system before making sweeping changes in their practice. However, they were optimistic about the rollout process and the usefulness of the Schoolnet program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers reported that Schoolnet was often difficult to navigate. It was easy to get lost in the system and difficult to find needed information quickly and easily. • Teachers explained that the reports option available in Schoolnet was difficult to use. They wanted more training about building custom reports because they found report-building time consuming and confusing. • Teachers suggested that the district and the campus increase the number of available reports to reduce their need to build custom reports. • Teachers expressed their concerns with the Schoolnet online testing feature. Some of their most prevalent concerns were related to meeting individual students' needs using the online format. • Teachers reported the system was slow to respond or refresh information.

Schoolnet survey. Annually, the AISD Employee Coordinated Survey is sent to a random sample of AISD teachers and administrators. The survey contained questions pertaining to Schoolnet in 2011–2012. A total of 637 teachers and 109 campus administrators completed the survey. Questions addressed Schoolnet implementation and the ways that the information might have affected teachers' practice. Overall, the teachers' and campus administrators' feedback was largely positive and provided information for continued program support improvement. Survey result descriptions follow.

Schoolnet training and support. Teachers and administrators provided feedback concerning Schoolnet training and support (Table 2). Although most reported they participated in Schoolnet training and knew where to get help, results indicated additional training is needed.

Table 2. Most administrators and teachers responded positively to Schoolnet training and support questions.

Question	Response options	Campus administrators	Teachers
1. I have participated in Schoolnet training this year in my school and/or in a district offered class.	Yes	91%	81%
	No	9%	11%
	I did not know there was any Schoolnet training.	0%	8%
2. I know where to get the help I need to use Schoolnet.	Yes	92%	79%
	No	5%	18%
	I do not need help.	3%	3%
3. The Schoolnet facilitator at my school provides the information and support I need to use Schoolnet.	Yes	Not Asked	65%
	No		7%
	I did not know we had a Schoolnet facilitator at my school.		28%
4. Please indicate the quality of training you have received for Schoolnet use. (All that apply)	It has exceeded or met my expectations.	74%	61%
	The content was completely inappropriate to my needs.	4%	6%
	It was too technical/not practical enough.	8%	8%
	It was too frequent.	2%	2%
	It was not frequent enough.	13%	17%
	Does not apply. I have not participated in Schoolnet related PD.	7%	14%
5. Overall, I am satisfied with the level of support for Schoolnet provided by the district.	Yes	81%	67%
	No	19%	33%

Source. AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, May 2012

Schoolnet use. Teachers and administrators were asked about how they used Schoolnet (Table 3), and their reports varied. Administrators (73%) reported they used the pre-formatted reports, and almost 50% of teachers reported they used the report-building features of Schoolnet. Half of the teachers used Schoolnet to monitor students' progress.

Campus administrators were asked additional questions about Schoolnet that were specific to their campus leadership role (Table 4). Principals selected persons in a variety of campus roles to serve as the Schoolnet facilitator for their campus, and most were satisfied with their selection. Eighty-eight percent of the campus administrators said the facilitator provided the support needed in the school. More than half of them used the assessment results in Schoolnet to monitor, and 87% used it to monitor students' progress.

Table 3. The use of Schoolnet was variable across components.

Question	Response options	Campus administrators	Teachers
1. I use the yearly itineraries and/or curriculum road maps within Schoolnet for instructional planning...	Daily	Not Asked	10%
	Weekly		36%
	Several times a month		15%
	Once a month or less		17%
	Never		22%
2. I use the preformatted reports.	Yes	73%	31%
	No	27%	69%
3. I use the report building features.	Yes	0%	49%
	No	0%	51%
4. I use Schoolnet reports to monitor student progress and provide appropriate interventions.	Yes	Not Asked	50%
	No		50%
5. How do you access short-cycle assessments within Schoolnet?	I access them on my own.	Not Asked	36%
	A department head, instructional coach, or facilitator accesses them for me.		18%
	I do not use short cycle assessments.		45%

Source. AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, May 2012

Table 4. Although administrators used Schoolnet with varying frequencies, most used it to identify students' strengths and weaknesses.

Question	Response options	Campus administrators
1. On my campus, the Schoolnet facilitator is:	A teacher or department head.	47%
	An assistant principal	16%
	An instructional specialist	19%
	Other	18%
2. I am satisfied with my choice in facilitator designee .	Yes	92%
	No	8%
3. The Schoolnet facilitator at my school provides the information and support we need to use Schoolnet.	Yes	88%
	No	12%
4. I use the assessment results in Schoolnet.	Daily	2%
	Weekly	21%
	Several times a month	41%
	Once a month or less	31%
	Never	7%
5. Please indicate the ways your administrative team uses Schoolnet: (All that apply).	To inform conferences with teachers	58%
	To identify student strengths and weaknesses	87%
	To monitor teacher lesson content alignment	33%
	To get up to speed on a particular student's data as an issue arises	48%
	I do not routinely have a need to use Schoolnet	8%
Other systems provide the information needed for my campus.	18%	

Source. AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, May 2012

Finally, teachers and administrators reported their general perceptions of Schoolnet (Table 5). Almost 40% of administrators reported their perceptions of Schoolnet improved as they learned to use the system, but only 26% of teachers reported their perceptions improved. Most respondents in both groups reported they were confident in their ability to use Schoolnet.

Additionally, 200 teachers and administrators provided additional feedback to an open-ended prompt. Three major themes emerged from their feedback, which are listed in Table 6, along with examples of respondents' comments.

Table 5. General perceptions of Schoolnet were mixed; however, most campus administrators and teachers reported they were confident in their ability to use the system.

Question	Response options	Campus administrators	Teachers
1. Overall, has your opinion of Schoolnet changed since the roll out?	My opinion of Schoolnet has improved.	39%	26%
	My opinion of Schoolnet has decreased.	16%	10%
	My opinion has not changed; I have been enthusiastic about Schoolnet since its rollout.	17%	9%
	My opinion has not changed; I did not like Schoolnet when it was rolled out and still do not like it.	3%	7%
	I do not have any feelings, either positive or negative, about Schoolnet.	25%	47%
2. Overall, I am confident in my ability to use Schoolnet.	Agree	83%	70%
	Disagree	17%	30%

Source. AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, May 2012

Table 6. Overall, respondents' comments were constructive in nature and reflected the learning process when a new initiative is introduced.

Theme	Comments
1. Training: There is a need for ongoing training and user support.	"I am thrilled that the district has invested in Schoolnet. It's a very useful tool for teachers. My concern is that many teachers still do not know how to use it. There are limited professional development days and so many initiatives to cover; not enough time is allotted to Schoolnet training."
2. Complicated nature of the system: Schoolnet is not easy to use, and it is difficult to find needed information.	"It is difficult to navigate through the countless numbers of reports, screens, and choices the system offers. It's just not a very easy program to use, and its design doesn't facilitate analysis very well."
3. Technical: The Schoolnet system was reported to run slowly.	"I find my teachers do not use it because it is too slow. When I try to access information or create reports, it operates too slowly on my computer."

Source. AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, May 2012

Conclusions. Overall, district staff engaged in a massive system implementation for all teachers and administrators in the district. The staff responsible for implementation were consistently engaged in the process and used formative data to inform ongoing implementation work and system improvements. As a result, Schoolnet users reported they valued the system, and most appeared to be in the beginning stages of learning how to use it. The issues and concerns that were reported by users were typical of those seen in the beginning stages of any new program implementation. The evaluation results are being used to develop ongoing support systems and prioritize continued rollout of the system in 2012–2013.