

MEMORANDUM

TO: County Superintendents

FROM: Jorea Marple
Assistant State Superintendent of Schools
Stan Hopkins
Assistant State Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Pilot *techSteps* Expansion to 9-12

DATE: November 13, 2009

Over the past year, county administrators, principals and teachers have requested that consideration be given to the expansion of *techSteps* to high schools. Particular enthusiasm supporting this request occurred from a multitude of counties during the *techSteps* presentations at the State Technology Conference. In order to make this resource available to high schools, we have been in discussion with SchoolKiT personnel regarding customization of projects that align to our 9-12 course content requirements in English, Math, Science and Social Studies and in identified vocational technical courses. It is extremely important that expansion of *techSteps* to the high school level provides support for student acquisition of our existing required content standards and objectives (not an addition of more content), as well as supporting student technology fluency.

We are fortunate in West Virginia to have some of the most innovative high schools and vocational schools in the nation. Each day brings news about initiatives that are engaging teachers and students in relevant and rigorous 21st century learning. In recognition of and to support these efforts, the WVDE is in the process of providing counties with access for their high schools and vocational schools to *techSteps* 9-12. *techSteps* 9-12 will provide your high school teachers with the proven technology integration activities they need to comfortably move forward in this important area. So that you can plan accordingly, this memo provides you with early notification of this developing program being customized for West Virginia, along with a brief overview of the implementation plan and availability timeline.

Many high school students are confident technology operators: they use social networks and surf the Web with ease. As educators, we know that these same technologies can also amplify thinking, learning, and research when academic discipline is applied. Taking our expertise into these new learning spaces is essential if we are to prepare all students to be critical consumers, participating citizens, and lifelong learners. In short, our high school students need to be fluent digital learners, and we need to ensure that they exercise these skills in a way that is integrated, systematic, and equitable.

techSteps 9-12 is designed to help with this process. It provides a core and enrichment technology integration projects for each core subject area at each grade level. These projects have been designed to address both the core subject and the 21st Century Learning Skills and Technology Tools CSO's. Each activity presents a curriculum-based challenge, and then shows students how they can use technology to address the task. To succeed, students are required to explore concepts, solve problems, transfer skills, and think creatively. An accompanying assessment rubric provides feedback to the learner and can be used record the demonstration of skills. As students complete each *techSteps* 9-12 project, they generate learning artifacts -- tangible evidence -- that they are acquiring fluency in the use of technology to support learning and other 21st century skills. This evidence is then collated in the form of a fluency profile for each student. The technology proficiencies demonstrated through these projects are assessed and become part of a personal technology fluency profile that follows each student

through his or her 9-12 career. Graduating students may be able to use their technology profile as an indicator of 21st century skill mastery.

Those of you familiar with the highly successful *techSteps K-8* program will recognize a number of similarities. In fact, a significant factor in our decision to develop this new program were the many requests we received for a high school version. There are, however, also distinct differences as *techSteps 9-12* was designed from the ground-up with West Virginia high school teachers, students, and organizational processes in mind.

We are excited about the opportunity to partner with your county, your schools, and your teachers as we implement *techSteps 9-12* on a statewide basis. Three one-day professional development sessions are planned: January 26 at the Waterfront Hotel in Morgantown, February 8 at the Charleston Civic Center, and February 9 at the Charleston Civic Center. We are inviting county teams and a representative from each RESA to attend.

Please forward this correspondence to appropriate county and high school personnel. The county team would be comprised of four teachers from each high school who represent the core content areas (one each for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies). In addition, each county may send one administrator and the principal from the participating high school(s). The teachers will receive professional development focused upon their content areas and led by master teachers. Administrators will focus upon the implementation and leadership process. Participants will be asked to bring notebook computers capable of accessing wireless networks. Counties will be responsible for travel and lodging expenses for participants. Please be advised that the Legislature will be in session in February, so lodging in Charleston may fill up quickly. You may want to reserve your rooms now. Sessions will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Online registration may be submitted at: <http://wvde.state.wv.us/survey/index.php?sid=71184&lang=en>.

We anticipate being able to accommodate all counties that want to participate so that students can begin completing activities and developing their tech fluency profiles during the second semester. As we did with *techSteps K-8*, we will be listen carefully to your recommendations and requests to ensure that *techSteps 9-12* meets your needs, and we will evaluate your utilization of this powerful tool to support 21st century instruction and learning.

Thank you for partnering with the WVDE in the rollout of *techSteps 9-12*. West Virginia has long been a leader in the use of technology to support instruction, and we are absolutely developing the right system for future global competitiveness of our students. West Virginia's 21st century initiative actively engages teachers with current and emerging technologies to capture the interests of our digital native children and ensure that every student is fluent in the use of technology. By integrating *techSteps 9-12* and other technologies into your curriculum, you will provide the opportunity for students to systematically develop, demonstrate, and document the 21st century information and technology fluency skills they need to be successful.

If you have questions, please contact Kathy Boone (kboone@access.k12.wv.us, 304.558.7880), Carla Williamson (cljwilli@access.k12.wv.us, 304.55.5325) or Donna Burge-Tetrick (dtetrick@access.k12.wv.us).

JM:SH:cm

C: County Technology Directors
RESA Directors