



**KEY
TECHNOLOGY
SUPPORT
POSITIONS**

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Ekhaml and Ekhaml indicate (above) the considerable difference in skill set requirements for the key technical support positions of Technology Director and Network Administrator/Supervisor. In The Technology Coordinator, David Moursand (1992) provides a detailed discussion of the Technology Coordinator position, both at the district level and the campus level. In the following excerpts from The Technology Coordinator, TC refers to Technology Coordinator.

“For the March 1984 issue of The Computing Teacher, I wrote an editorial titled ‘The Two-Percent Solution.’ The editorial was an analysis of how a school district might spend two percent of its annual budget in the instructional computing field. It suggested that half of the money might be spent for hardware. A considerable amount would be spent for software and for support staff.”

“In 1984, a typical school district with 10,000 students had a budget of perhaps \$25,000,000 per year, or \$2,500 per student. Two percent of this is a half million dollars per year. Annual expenditures in that range certainly justify and support TC positions at the district and school building levels. Somewhat surprisingly, the basic message of the editorial is still valid.”

“The editorial suggested that over the long run, we may find school districts spending considerably more than two percent of their budgets in the instructional computing field. We are beginning to see that happen. In addition, school spending per student has increased more rapidly than inflation. In 1991-92 the U.S. national average expenditure per pupil was in excess of \$5,000. Thus, a 10,000 student school system that had implemented the two percent solution was spending a million dollars a year to do so. **This level of expenditures certainly justifies having a substantial amount of TC support at the district and school levels.**”

“...a school system making substantial instructional use of computers is faced by a number of tasks that might be collectively assigned to a TC. **This is true even in a quite small district.** The temptation in a small district may be to distribute these tasks to existing personnel, including teachers. **But there is quite a difference between the duties that a TC needs to perform and the duties of a typical classroom teacher.** That is, different qualifications are needed to satisfactorily perform these two types of jobs.”

“There is no simple formula as to when a school or school district needs a TC. Rather, one should examine the tasks to be accomplished as computers play an increasingly

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important role in schools. Some of these tasks will become everyday duties of regular classroom teachers. Other tasks will be assigned to computer teachers, media specialists, technicians, and various school administrators. **In most schools and districts, there will remain a large number of other tasks that are best assigned to a TC.**

“Thus, one would logically expect that the number of people who hold paid positions as TCs would currently be growing relatively rapidly. Unfortunately, that has not been the case in recent years. Tight school budgets in most parts of the country have forced a cutback in TC employment. Many TCs have returned to classroom teaching or left education. Increasingly, classroom teachers are being expected to learn to use quite complex computer and hypermedia facilities in a school environment that does not provide adequate hardware, software, and staff development support. **It is evident that this has been and continues to be a major detriment to increased effective use of computers in schools.**”

“If the predictions prove to be correct, the overall result will be a continued rapid growth in the amount of computer-related facilities in schools. This suggests a continued rapid growth in need for staff development and for providing support staff. **It suggests the need for schools and school districts to have TCs.**”

“At the school building level, it is quite common that a regular classroom teacher or a computer teacher is also designated as the TC. But the duties and time demands of a classroom teacher or a computer teacher differ substantially from those of a school-level TC.”

“The school-level TC can be seen to have four general categories of duties. These are working as a computer facilities manager, working with school administrators and district-level educators, working with teachers, and working with students. The latter activity is often a modest part of the TC’s duties. As compared to a computer teacher, this difference in responsibilities and everyday activities is clear.”

There are other key technical staff positions that must be filled. With the great need for extensive faculty and staff training, the district should have a sufficient number of trainers. By standardizing on hardware and software and by minimizing the number of computer applications to be supported by the district, the number of trainers can be kept to a minimum. But technology will not stand still and applications will change with time, so there will be a continuing need for trainers within the district and continued training will be a permanent part of the teaching profession.

As technology proliferates within school districts and as computer networks become more extensive, there will be an increasing requirement for an adequate complement of technicians within the district to maintain and repair the technology.