

## Detailed Technology Presentation Fielded by Cornerstone Board

December 16, 2020 Regular (Public) Meeting of the  
South East Cornerstone Public School Division (SECPD) Board of Education



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### *Submitted by Norm Park, Contracted Reporter for SECPD*

It was only fitting perhaps that the majority of the South East Cornerstone Public School Division's board members were being hosted online on December 16 when Brian Belinsky, manager of information systems for the division, provided them with updated information regarding his department.

The systems manager took the board through a step-by-step explanation of what, who, why and how the various technology sectors meld together within the Cornerstone community.

Starting with an online listing of his 12 staff members who are assigned to provide network analysis, system analysis, programs and technical services to the division and its 8,300 students and nearly 600 teachers and support staffers, Belinsky outlined how each sector works and what they provide.

The entire network makes use of five security systems as the division sends out hardware management, data management, network monitoring requirements, emails, computers and voice over device support.

Attempting to keep security foremost is often a challenge within the budget, he said. "Wireless pieces are an ongoing challenge as students bring in their devices to the schools," he said.

Maintenance, application management, licensing, troubleshooting, is all within his department's purview, he added.

Naturally there is a desire to ensure the information flows quickly, safely and smoothly, he suggested, and that needs to be ensured even as various roles changes within the school division and people enter and exit the system.

Monitoring and management with required updates becomes one of the major tasks, Belinsky said. "It's a big role to keep up and secure and to maintain a data base system and maintain security for a number of applications. The data warehouse and server changes due to school system changes," he said.

Security issues are a continual strain on the system and budget while data centres and unified communications upgrades and school technology upgrades provide unique challenges on their own.

On the security side of the issue, Belinsky said a three-year contract with one vendor is coming to an end and that vendor is moving away from end user support to move into a focus on law

enforcement agencies so they are now reviewing other vendors who would provide strong security service in a partnership with Cornerstone. He said they currently have six potential vendors under this review.

The data centre support contract is also coming to a conclusion soon. The Cornerstone team is trying to enter into a five to seven year contract arrangement for hardware plans for upgrading the data centre.

On the unified communication front, Belinsky noted 32 of the 37 schools are under shared use arrangements for such devices as phones, intercoms and other shared uses.

Schools that are receiving upgrades this year include Carnduff, Manor, Midale, Pleasantdale in Estevan and the new Legacy Park elementary school in Weyburn that will open with a new system replacing the three systems that had been deployed in that city's other elementary schools that will be closing operations once Legacy Park is open.

Belinsky reported there are 323 legacy laptops in use in the eastern sector of the vast school division: 253 in the south and 411 on the western side. Another 195 student laptops have been purchased along with 25 iPads for student support.

"We sent out 74 laptops to support Cyber Stone students," he said, referring to general support moves as well as reaction to increased needs brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We have 788 devices that can be used to provide provisional support for distance learning," Belinsky stated.

The information systems manager also said Estevan Comprehensive School now has one gigabyte of service available while Weyburn Comprehensive and the head office for the Southeast College share 300 megabytes. Spruce Ridge School, an elementary school has 200 mgb while two schools in Moosomin (high school and elementary) share 150 mgb. A number of other schools use 50 to 125 mgb of technology service with the only exception being Lyndale School in Oungre that has just 10 mgb due to geographic and other challenges. Belinsky said efforts have been made to improve that situation.

Board chairwoman Audrey Trombley said, while thanking Belinsky for the report, that federal government grants may be made available for remote IT infrastructure, so perhaps that might be an answer since she was aware that SaskTel had made an application for part of that grant to increase remote rural connectivity around the province.

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