

## TechSETS Case Study

### Union Middle School Student Technologists

By Debby Pearson, TechSETS Project Evaluator ~ 2007/2008

**Location/Educational Agencies:** Union Middle School, Union School District, San Jose, CA

**Contact:** Janette Adams, Library Media Specialist ~ adamsj@unionsd.org

**Primary funding sources:** MOUSE Squad student program funded by school

**Program Improvement School – No**

**Rural & Underserved: No**

| <b>Demographic Data:</b>         | # of schools | Student Enrollment | # of students per computer | # of paid tech support staff | 2007 API |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------|
| Union Elementary School District | 9            | 4,421              | 4.6                        | .28*                         | 851      |
| Union Middle School              | 1            | 786                | 5.7                        | .32*                         | 819      |

\* *FTE's per 1000 students*

**Primary purpose:** MyTechDesk is being used by the MOUSE Squad, Union Middle School's student technology program, which provides supplemental technology support at the school site. The MOUSE Squad uses MyTechDesk to document technology problems and report on resolutions. Using MyTechDesk provides accountability, a showcase for student accomplishments, data to identify problem areas and trends, a "real world" application of communication skills for students, and an assessment of student work.

**Description:** The MOUSE Squad at Union Middle School is run as an after-school program offered to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The program advisor is the school Librarian, Janette Adams, who works closely with a faculty team to make the program effective. The team includes a 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Susan Fernandes and a parent volunteer, David Wickemeyer, who make significant contributions to the MOUSE Squad program. The program has been active for three years. The MOUSE Squad has used MyTechDesk to manage student tech support for the past two years. Currently, there are 25 students actively participating in the program. MOUSE Squad meets as a group 1 hour per week after school; however, students spend additional time completing learning certification modules online at home, in order to be eligible to offer technical assistance to teachers. Students respond to work orders as needed. Teachers make requests and students complete a work order ticket, which describes the problem and the resolution. The District IT department accepts and encourages the roll of the students in helping to troubleshoot site problems, provide repeat routine maintenance activities and perform occasional system updates. District IT staff can track student activities through the MyTechDesk work orders.

MyTechDesk, as an integral part of the program, enables problem and trend tracking, and allows the MOUSE Squad students to practice problem solving and determine proactive solutions to trends seen in work orders. As a result of trends identified, students have created training videos and PowerPoint presentations for teachers (e.g., creating web pages), as well as reference books on defragmenting a disk, what to do

when the LCD projector doesn't work, and how to repair permissions. The MyTechDesk ticket management system helps students to meet the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS), learn problem solving and life skills, and work in a cross-curricular manner (integrating written and oral language, and research skills). The advisor also reviews the MyTechDesk logs to determine how effective students have been, in order to make recommendations to the high school student technology program.

**Resources/services needed to implement:** MyTechDesk account and student intern program.

**Known impact on teaching, learning, instructional management and delivery of support services:**

- ✓ MOUSE Squad, in combination with MyTechDesk, gives students a positive way to organize and use their technology skills, gain confidence and communicate more effectively.
- ✓ MyTechDesk has provided students with a real-world experience in organizing, coordinating and structuring services to meet the organization's technology needs.
- ✓ MyTechDesk has eased the tracking burden for the advisor and provided a tool to monitor student progress.
- ✓ MyTechDESK integrates both written expression and oral language skills in this project-based learning program; students respond to problems identified through a work order, fix the problem, communicate the resolution to the requestor and write a response to explain the resolution. Improvements in language skills have been observed by the advisor.
- ✓ Students have learned presentation skills by presenting their program, including their use of MyTechDesk, to District Office staff and at the statewide California League of Middle Schools (CLMS) Conference.
- ✓ Students have learned social responsibility, corporate accountability, and environmental lessons through the coordination of an e-waste (old computers, printers, etc.) event. The event also earned \$1800 toward a new computer lab.
- ✓ District IT staff have been freed to respond to more serious problems. The cost of the MOUSE Squad curriculum is made up for in student service.
- ✓ A total of 25 students have participated in the Union Middle School MOUSE Squad program in the past year. Of these students, 100% have received one or more certificates in multiple technology skills.
- ✓ MOUSE Squad reduces the cost of technical assistance for the district and the amount of crisis-level tech support necessary by having students troubleshoot, perform preventative maintenance, and monitor routine operations in an organized manner using MyTechDesk.
- ✓ MOUSE Squad has introduced students to career possibilities and provided work experience and an organizational structure for students who plan to pursue a career in the technology field.

**Other Benefits:**

- ✓ MyTechDesk provides a structure through which the technology teacher and students can keep track of projects and work accomplished.
- ✓ The school receives well-organized, on-site support that would otherwise not be available. Problem notification and turn-around time is much faster with MOUSE Squad and MyTechDesk.
- ✓ MOUSE Squad provides encouragement for teacher technophobes, who are more confident attempting technology integration because they have student technical support available in a timely manner.
- ✓ The MOUSE Squad advisor looks at past tickets in order to make referrals to the high school student tech program.
- ✓ Students feel empowered when they are handed a work order. They recognize the level of responsibility with which they have been entrusted and take full ownership of that responsibility.

**Lessons Learned**

- ✓ Building and continually maintaining relationships with the District IT department is important to the program's success. IT can be more supportive when they are kept informed and shown the benefits. MyTechDesk allows the IT department to review all of the tickets generated and solved by students.
- ✓ Proposing a trial or pilot for new projects is a good approach to ease administration and IT department concerns.
- ✓ Thinking outside of the box often helps overcome barriers. A district policy barred student email at school, yet an exception was made for MOUSE Squad students through Gaggles.net, as a result of the students' high level of responsibility and proven track record.

**Is this effective practice recommended for sharing? Yes**