



SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Curriculum and Technology FY24 Budget Details and Recommendations

A report prepared for School Committee by

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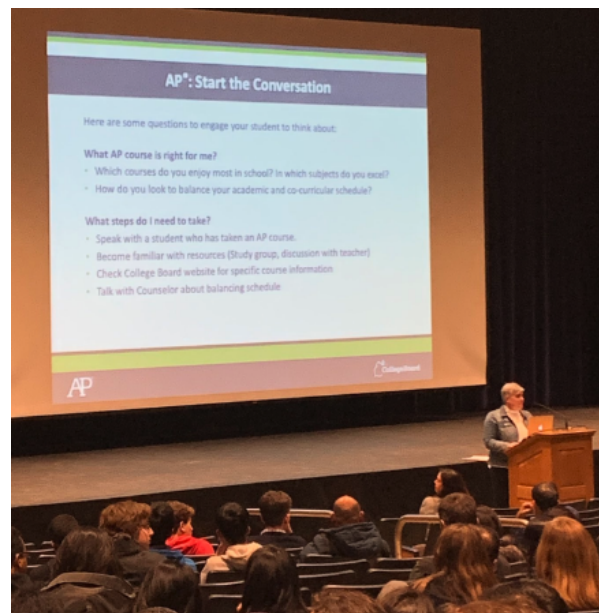
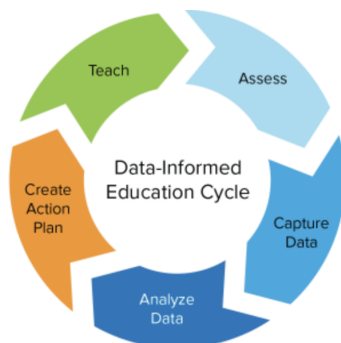
March 1, 2023

Context

Relative normalcy in staffing and more stable schedules has meant that students and staff are experiencing more consistency this year. Educators continue to draw on lessons learned during school closure to foster continuous improvement, and technology plays a key part in that work. This is evident in various ways within the Information Technology and Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment roles. As district leaders, however, we share the common goal of using past experience and new tools to move from a reactive stance to a more positive, proactive approach.

The aim of education is growth: the aim of growth is more growth. (John Dewey)

Shrewsbury Public Schools' motto is "empowering learners" and the budgets for curriculum, instruction and technology are aligned accordingly. Our expenditures are closely tied to district goals and the related resources needed to support both student and staff learning.



Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Budget Overview

The table below depicts well our chief areas of focus from 2022-2023:

<i>Strategic Priority</i>	<i>Implications for Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment</i>	<i>Investments in Professional Development</i>
Space & Resources to Support Effective Learning	Using common adaptive software tools to match student practice to targeted skill	Expanded use of ST Math, adaptive software for students in grades K-4 Empower teacher leaders to support the expanded use of Seesaw, an online learning platform in pre K-Grade 4 classrooms.
Learning Environments Where Everyone's Success Matters	K-6 Focus on aligning literacy practices to research, including high quality curriculum materials for newcomer (Level 1) English learners The addition of a data specialist facilitated the use of common metrics to effectively monitor student progress across grade spans	A Reading Specialist at the middle level will strengthen intervention efforts for students and provide additional staff support. Working with outside consultants to respond to the date, including developing resources for meeting diverse student needs
Enhanced Well-being of All	Together with district leaders, continue to use survey tools (including Panorama) to monitor progress towards district goals	Currently in year 2 of a three year professional development cycle for staff that includes 10 hours of training on:
Connected Learning for a Complex World	Support new courses like <i>Project Lead the Way</i> and Heritage language courses and related opportunities (the Seal of Biliteracy at SHS)	* Universal Design for Learning (UDL) * Components of effective co-teaching for leaders and co-teaching teams * <i>Equitable Educator</i> course for SPS staff

As you know, the pandemic shifted our priorities and presented new challenges. Responding to emerging needs presented new opportunities (like the expanded use of iPads) and fueled the increased consistent use of common software tools. As a result, the district was able to provide students and families equitable access to resources. At the same time, moving forward with the investments we made during the pandemic will incur additional costs when grant funds are no longer available. This is why, for example, we built the cost of a universal screening tool into the budget. In addition, whenever possible we continue to seek support and/or grant opportunities from other organizations.

Currently the cost of ST Math for students at Beal and Floral are covered by a grant from the One8 Foundation. Similarly, our acceptance into the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Mass Tiered Literacy cohort this year has resulted in savings. Educators and district leaders on the Literacy Council have benefitted from 60 hours of professional coaching at no cost this year alone. Other professional learning groups are furthering our efforts to close achievement opportunity gaps in the areas of Math, Behavioral Health and Family Engagement.

As we work to achieve district goals we must respond to state directives as well. New guidelines on supporting English learners has resulted in increased focus on curriculum materials for newcomers and their families and students whose learning has been disrupted.

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Budget Comparison

Account	FY2023 Actual Budget	FY2024 Proposed Budget	Difference FY23 Actual / FY24 Proposed
Mentoring Stipends	\$35,000	\$36,488	\$1,488
Professional Development Stipends	\$12,000	\$12,510	\$510
Curriculum Development Stipends	\$37,000	\$38,573	\$1,573
Professional Development Contractual Services	\$35,000	\$36,488	\$1,488
Texts/Instructional Equipment	\$227,096	\$236,748	\$9,652
Educational Supplies	\$152,457	\$158,936	\$6,479
Dues and Memberships	\$5,000	\$5,213	\$213
Travel Professional Development	\$3,000	\$3,000	-
Conference Professional Development	\$15,000	\$15,638	\$638
TOTAL*	\$521,553	\$543,592	\$22,039

**Please Note: Totals for each column may differ due to rounding.*

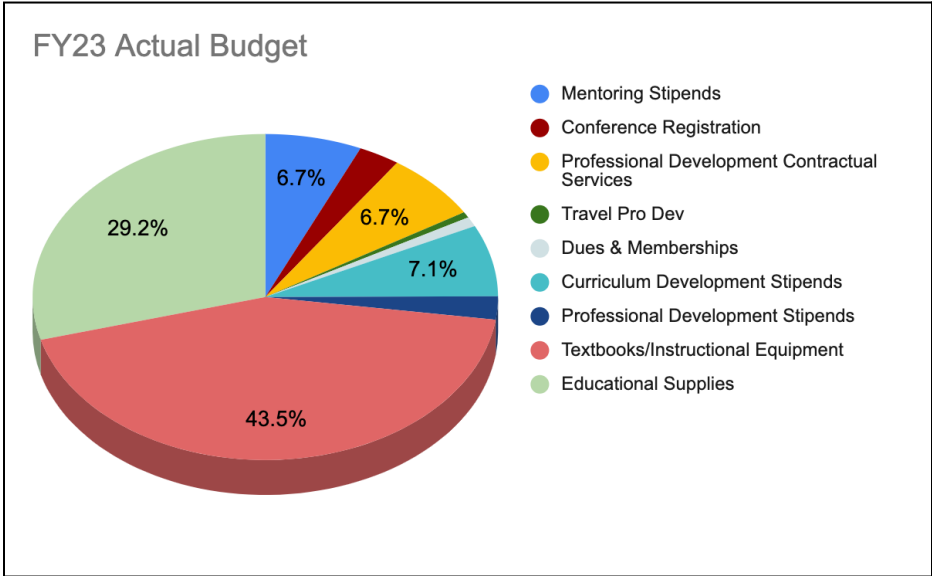
The successful passage of the May 2021 override made it possible last year to restore the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment budget. As shown in the table above, the budget recommendation for fiscal year 2024 includes modest increases in allocations across the board. Overall the story is one of maintaining the Curriculum and Instruction budget with the goal of continuing to support the new practices we've put into place. It's important to keep in mind, however, that even with these increases, we will likely need to make thoughtful choices when responding to emerging needs.

As we work to support equity and systemic thinking, costs that may have been covered by building-based funds are now included in the district budget. As costs increase in some areas, this puts pressure on other funding categories. For example, the cost of the district mentoring program continues to exceed the district's Title IIa grant allocation. This same grant typically augments funds allocated within the budget for professional development, which means that for the past few years more of the Curriculum budget was used for this purpose, leaving less for other expenses.

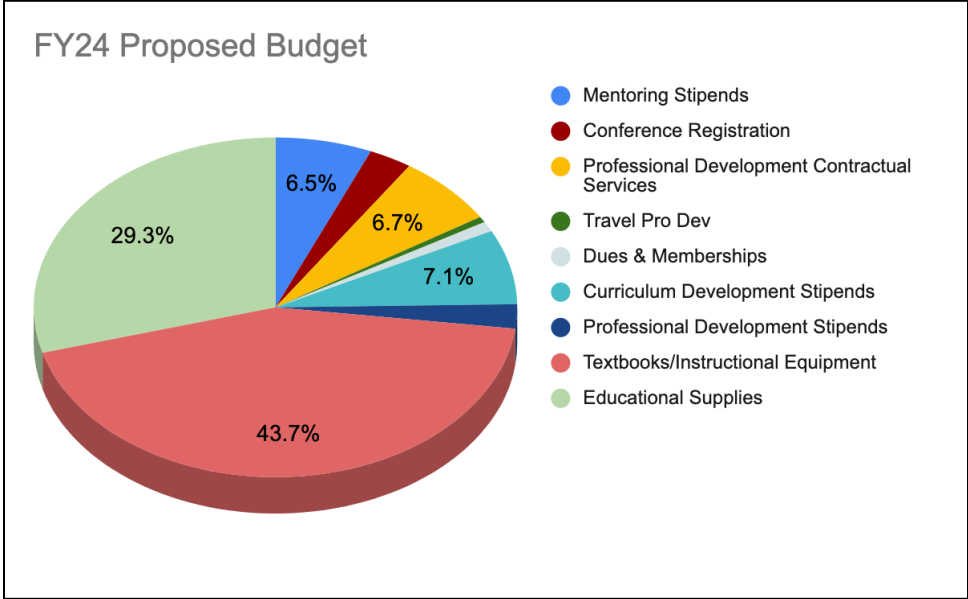
Of all the things that matter for having good schools, nothing is as important as the teacher and what that person knows, believes and can do... (Jon Saphier)

Overall, the budget for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment is made up of nine categories. The charts below depict the allocations proposed for FY24 as compared with the 2023 budget:

FY 2023 Total Budget: \$521,553



FY 2024 Total Budget: \$543,592



As presented on February 15 2023, the Superintendent's Budget recommendation includes funds to support several strategic investments in curriculum, instruction and assessment:

One-Time Expense Funding Plan Proposal

FY24 Departmental Request	DLT Req. for FY24	Recom.	Notes	Funding Source			FY24 Appropriations Budget	Total	Timing
				ESSER-2	ESSER-3	SHS Gift			
K-12 Media	\$6,750	\$4,000	Materials for new Business courses and staff PD		\$4,000			\$4,000	Order this spring
Athletics: SHS & Oak	\$35,000	\$0	Has funding possibilities via Boosters						
K-12 Music/Performing Arts	\$37,451	\$0	Recent fundraising effort injected \$35K+						
ELL	\$14,500	\$7,000	ELL program also gets state grant funding		\$7,000			\$7,000	Order this spring
SHS English	\$4,000	\$4,000	Bookshelves for 10 classroom libraries		\$4,000			\$4,000	Order this spring
High School	\$7,000	\$0	Exterior lighting project--possible Public Bldgs. funding						
SHS Social Studies	\$5,000	\$5,000	Digital DEIB resources and staff PD		\$3,500	\$1,500		\$5,000	Order this spring
SHS Math	\$6,000	\$6,000	Summer curriculum development stipends for 7 staff at 20 hours each.			\$6,000		\$6,000	Order this spring
	\$115,701	\$26,000							
K-6 Literacy Resources	\$600,000	\$266,972			\$84,972		\$182,000	\$266,972	Order after 7/1/23
Renaissance Learning STAR Assessment Software		\$182,000		\$182,000				\$182,000	2-year Renewal on 6/15 for 7/1 start
Equity Audit		\$55,000					\$55,000	\$55,000	
Total Investment		\$529,972		\$182,000	\$103,472	\$7,500	\$237,000	\$529,972	

Most importantly, the additional funds necessary to support K-6 literacy resources will be provided by reclassifying the anticipated expenses for this initiative to use federal grant funds. Specifically, the cost of renewing the Star Assessment Software this coming June will come out of the ESSER-2 grant. This frees \$182,000 that would otherwise have been taken from the appropriated Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment budget for literacy materials. Taken together with an additional \$84,972 allocated for literacy in the ESSER-3 grant, a total of \$266,972 will be available to support this important undertaking. It's important to note that these funds will supplement the existing appropriations for texts, instructional equipment and educational supplies as shown in the highlighted items in the FY24 Budget Details table that follows.



Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment FY24 Budget Details

Item	FY 24 Cost
Texts/Instructional Equipment	
Most of the instructional materials being purchased are now digital: ST Math, Desmos, ALEKs, accounting software, Noodle Tools, STEMscopes, and various apps. The consumable math resources for K-5 are also included in this line item.	\$236,748
Educational Supplies	
We continue to use some traditional instructional materials by design, and this category includes replacement of worn and/or outdated materials. At Shrewsbury High School, shifting enrollment in Advanced Placement (AP) classes results in ongoing costs for new textbooks.	\$158,936
Curriculum Development	
This line item provides funds for various summer and school year curriculum projects. The district is currently engaged in curriculum work related to language learning and literacy. This line item also funds the development and organization of digital resources. This work reduces the district's need for textbook replacement.	\$38,573
Mentoring Stipends	
This cost provides mentors for new professional staff hired in Shrewsbury. In FY17 we shifted a portion of this cost to the Title IIA grant. In recent years the entire grant has been needed to cover these costs, making the total cost of the mentoring program approximately \$103,000.	\$36,488
Professional Development Contractual Services	
This line item will support the Strategies for Effective Teaching (SET) course for new teachers, the Primary Source Partnership, Early Release and Professional Day training, and consultants for district equity initiatives.	\$36,488
Conference Professional Development	
This line item supports our teachers in attaining the necessary qualifications to teach AP courses, and funds to provide teacher leaders the opportunity to attend conferences that align with the district's strategic priorities.	\$15,638
Professional Development Stipends	
These stipends support teacher leaders and job-embedded professional development.	\$12,510
Dues & Memberships	
This line item covers the cost of membership in professional organizations like the Massachusetts School Library Association and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development as well as periodicals like the Marshall Memo for district leaders.	\$5,213
Travel Professional Development	
This category funds educator attendance at conferences and curriculum leadership meetings, typically within New England.	\$3,000

As depicted in the Strategic Priority table, the results our students achieve are tied to the investments we've made in developing strong instructional practices, securing powerful tools and maintaining effective systems of support for students and families. The sections below describe these investments in greater detail.

New: Reading Specialist for Early Middle School Grades

Given the rapid pace of change present in education, it should be no surprise that periodic investment in upgraded curriculum materials is needed. Much of the improvements that result in better learning experiences for students start with increasing staff capacity as well.

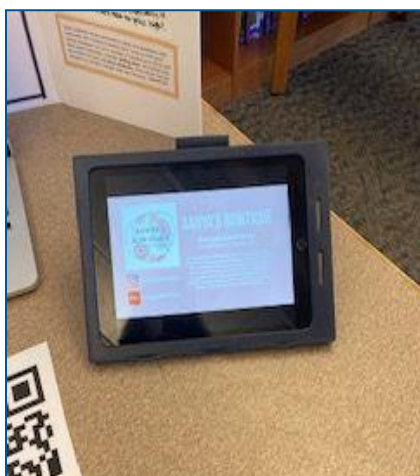
As noted previously, this coming year the district will begin adopting a new literacy program for Grades K-6. Materials to support students with diverse learning needs, especially in reading, have become increasingly important at all levels. As students transition from learning to read to reading to learn, access to high quality materials that align with the latest research about the component of strong instruction is essential. Second only to the use of grant funds to purchase new curriculum materials for literacy, the most exciting addition to the proposed budget has to do with personnel resources to provide support for reading.

The addition of a Reading Specialist for Grades 5 and 6 to the Curriculum team will help train educators to use new materials, support educators at Sherwood Middle School as they shift practice, add to the capacity at all levels to systematize instructional support for students in need of reading support, and provide direct instructional intervention to students who require reading support at the middle level. In the same way that our Title I Reading Director and Instructional Coaches/Curriculum Coordinators provide these kind of supports at the K-4 level, this will be a leadership role that is not supervisory but that will be key for ensuring that our 5th and 6th grade students continue the development of their reading skills in order to ensure the strongest possible foundation for future success in the upper middle and high school grades.

Instructional Technology

Elementary 1:1 Program

Our current program enables teachers to plan lessons, units, and projects that integrate technology in meaningful and consistent ways. It also provides teachers with opportunities to take advantage of teachable moments that are enhanced through technology. Teachers utilize iPads to enhance teaching and learning across the subject areas.



The 1:1 model also enables teachers to provide their students with easy access to special events and activities. Students across the district participate in the Hour of Code to celebrate Computer Science Education Week. Increasingly, students and staff alike are seeing digital learning less like an event and more like an everyday

experience. In the classroom and in our media centers, students engage with block coding activities that introduce them to computational thinking concepts.

Many instructional tools available for use with iPads are available at no cost, including:

- QR codes
- Padlet
- Google Drive/Docs
- Nearpod
- Pages
- Numbers
- Keynote
- iMovie

There has been a shift in the role of our technology departments - in the past, we have focused on fostering the use of technology. Now, staff members are much more inclined to use technology, and have been in need of additional technical support to maintain that usage. For this reason, as we anticipate next year's budget we must also consider the cost of supporting software tools. The district has increased the use of digital subscriptions to supplement instruction in the content areas. For example, *Character Strong* now provides teachers an easy to use Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum. Other tools allow teachers to personalize learning. ST Math, Desmos and ALEKS are good examples of Math tools that help target practice to individual needs. Although effective, educational software is also expensive. Going forward, it will be important to continue to consider which tools are the best match for teaching and learning at every level, as some of the tools most often used, like Book Creator and Notability, are fee-based.



Technology Fosters Connections

Educators at all levels are now able to integrate use of the iPad in daily instruction. Importantly, educators also use technology tools to connect home and school. Our investment in Schoology across the district has long facilitated communication between teachers, students and parents in Grades 5-12. At the Elementary level, educators have begun using Seesaw to feature student work, foster belonging and to facilitate connection. The link between home and school that is afforded by the universal availability of this tool simplifies two-way communication. We've also added new tools like Talking Points, an application that allows educators to effectively translate school communications for families.

Digital Learning

Students continue to access digital instructional tools that serve to positively redefine learning experiences. These tools better prepare them for the learning and working environments they will encounter in their future. Previous presentations have demonstrated the use of digital resources that enhance Science instruction, including STEMscopes at the middle level and Mystery Science, a program accessed by students in the younger grades. Educators rely on similar tools to supplement instruction in Social Studies and English

Language Arts. Here are two examples of specific digital resources we wish to continue utilizing:

Discovery Education

Providing educators access to standards-based digital curriculum, this tool is used by Social Science teachers in Grades 5 and 6 to engage students in interactive content.

Sora

Sora is an app and a website that provides students with access to eBooks and audiobooks. Students can borrow up to 3 books at a time. Students have the option to add a public library card to their account to increase the number of books they can access.

Information Technology Budget Overview

The Information Technology department is responsible for the purchasing, implementation, maintenance, and support of technology within the district. As the use of technology by teachers and students has increased, the reliability of technology in the district has become increasingly important. In addition to ensuring the reliability of existing services, devices that were formerly not IT-based are becoming increasingly dependent upon IT services (e.g., security cameras, electronic door locks, copiers, clocks, cafeteria point-of-sale systems, etc.). The proposed IT budget supports these functions.

Account	FY2023 Actual Budget	FY2024 Proposed Budget	Difference
PD: Dues & Memberships	\$500	\$500	\$0
PD: Conferences	\$4,100	\$4,100	\$0
Inst. Tech: Supplies	\$20,155	\$21,000	\$845
Inst. Tech: Networking	\$149,760	\$168,400	\$18,640
Inst. Tech: Hardware	\$684,000	\$692,000	\$8,000
Inst. Tech: Software	\$166,000	\$186,000	\$20,000
Networking Infrastructure	\$56,000	\$30,000	-\$26,000
Data Processing	\$190,000	\$235,500	\$45,500
AV Supplies	\$7,384	\$7,500	\$116
AV Equipment	\$36,390	\$37,900	\$1,510
Repair and Maintenance: Equip	\$63,981	\$75,520	\$11,539
TOTAL	\$1,378,270	\$1,458,420	\$80,150

* Please note that this budget detail does not include salaries and wages or line items for Media Services, both of which are included in the ITAMS total in the budget book.

Recent Information Technology Investments

A number of IT initiatives were completed over the course of the past year:

- **Short-throw projectors at OMS & SHS**
Until this year, all classrooms at Oak Middle School and the majority of classrooms at Shrewsbury High School have relied on the use of projectors on carts. Although supply chain constraints delayed implementation of portions of this project, all OMS and SHS classrooms have been upgraded to “short-throw” wall-mounted projectors and sound systems, similar to what is in place in all PK-6 classrooms (with the exception of the interactive features used at the lower grades). These wall-mounted projectors eliminate the need for projector carts, which take valuable classroom space and decrease the flexibility with which teachers can arrange their classrooms. In addition, these wall-mounted projector setups allow for more standardized configurations that facilitate the movement of teachers between shared classrooms, particularly at SHS due to space limitations.
- **One Card Badges & “Follow Me” Printing**
In collaboration with the Business Office, the IT Department has rolled a new standardized identification badge for all staff called the “One Card.” In addition to serving as identification badges, One Cards also serve as building key access cards.

Over the past few weeks, we have also rolled out a system called “follow me” printing that allows staff members to print their copy jobs at any copier simply by swiping their One Card at the copier. This system has a number of benefits:

- Increased confidentiality for printed documents - documents are only printed in the presence of the person who submitted the job
- Increased ease-of-use for scanning - staff members no longer have to enter a username and password when scanning to email
- Convenience for staff - if a copier is found to be out of order after the job has been sent, staff members can just swipe in at a different copier and the job will print at that copier instead.
- Cost savings & environmental benefits - print jobs are not physically printed until the sender swipes in at the copier to “release” them. If print jobs are not released within a certain time frame, the job is canceled. This eliminates jobs being printed and not picked up, resulting in cost savings and reduced environmental waste. In just the few weeks since this has been rolled out, more than one tree, over \$135 in costs, and 265 pounds of CO₂ have been saved.

- **Additional Video Surveillance Cameras**
In collaboration with the Business Office and school leaders, an additional 69 video surveillance cameras have been installed district-wide to enhance safety and security.
- **New Ticketing System**
The IT Department has implemented a new ticketing system called Freshservice, which will allow us to keep better track of ticket resolution timelines to ensure that staff members are not waiting excessively long for assistance. This system is also allowing us to build a knowledge base for staff, students, and IT staff members to use for resolving issues.

Information Technology Budget Details FY 2024

Most of the increases in budget lines in the proposed FY 2024 IT budget reflect increased costs across a number of services and renewals.

One cost that is a larger individual increase is the cost to renew the district’s Zoom subscription to continue to allow staff members to run remote meetings as necessary. In past years, this cost was borne by federal pandemic-related funding sources.

Item	FY24 Cost
Data Processing	
Zoom renewal for staff members	\$32,025

Curriculum & Technology: Fueling Innovation Together

Instructional resources are increasingly digitized, and so the curriculum and technology budgets are increasingly interconnected and interdependent. This report seeks to separate out and summarize proposed expenditures for both the curriculum/instruction and technology departments, but it’s important to note that our departments actually work in tandem. Although investments may shift over time, our shared goal is to deliver a high quality instructional experience to Shrewsbury’s students.

Appendix

Please click these links for more information on digital tools:

Apple Classroom

http://images.apple.com/media/us/education/2016/1e867897_5de3_45db_ac71_d635d1ccb5a5/inspiration/classroom-app/education-classroom-app-cc-us-20160427_r848-9dwc.mov

Discovery Education: <https://www.discoveryeducationglobal.com>

STEMScopes: <http://stemscopes.com/home.php>

Listenwise: <https://listenwise.com>

Mystery Science: <https://mysteryscience.com>

Nearpod: <https://nearpod.com/>

QR Codes: <https://www.whatihavelearnedteaching.com/using-qr-codes-in-the-classroom/>

Padlet: <https://padlet.com/features>

I Movie: <https://www.apple.com/imovie/>

SeeSaw: <https://web.seesaw.me>

Sora: <https://soraapp.com/library/masslibma>

Sphero (robots): <https://www.sphero.com/>