Jefferson Country School System-Jcss Essay, Research Paper

Q1. Evaluate the process that JCSS used to select its vendors and software.

A computer selection committee (most of the major users of the system such as assistant principals, deans, counselors, teachers, the personal director and the chief accountant) was appointed to evaluate available systems and recommend a vendor to the JCSS School Board. It also included representatives of the different levels of schools in the system. The committee prepared a request for proposal (RFP) that was send to possible vendors which stated that the proposals will be evaluated on functional requirements, support service, and a five year life cycle cost. Also the vendors would accept responsibility for all the hardware, software, and support and training services required to install and maintain the new system, which is for the benefits of the JCSS, because the vendor will have the responsibility for all the operations, services and the problems that may occur during the implementation of the new system. The RPF specified: the number and location of the terminals and printers that were to be connected to the system; the desired requirements for the applications software, the applications specifications for the attendance accounting and student scheduling systems. JCSS described what kind and size of system they want, also the requirements needed in the system. The three finalists vendors was invited, and the vendors were not told in detail what to show, but they were asked to demonstrate the operation of several of the major systems. Instead of testing the vendor?s demonstrations on the JCSS? computers (the original computers that will be used in the new system), the demonstrations were done on the vendor?s own small computer. The committee intended to visit a school each vendor?s system and spend one day at each of the just two locations. They observed their systems in action and talked with users. In addition, members of the committee made telephone calls to their counterparts at other schools that used each vendor?s system without unearthing any major problems or concerns. Here the committee members do not observe exactly the other school systems that if they were fitting to the system that JCSS wanted. Each vendor proposed software packages in all the areas that JCSS had asked for, but none of the systems did exactly what they wanted in exactly the way the current systems did things that might cause problems in the future because of the lacks and uncertainties in the new system which will be replaced with the existing one. The committee made an evaluation table and selected the vendor, which has the highest rating. This table rated seven factors (vendor profile; vendor service; hardware; application software; 5 year cost of ownership which includes: purchase of the hardware and software, installation, training, maintenance and support; software support, and bid exceptions which determines the how well the proposed software fits the JCSS specifications) on a scale. As a result JCSS school board awarded the contract to DSI (Data Systems Inc.). In my opinion JCSS did not find new exact system packages that meets the specifications to perform the same operations exists in the old system while in the evaluation process of its vendors and software.

Q2. Evaluate the implementation of the student management system at JCSS.

They have had major problems in installing and using the student management systems. They planned to follow the cycle of the academic year when implementing the student system. Instead of testing the system and observing the necessary problems, they directly transferred the old system to the new one. First they would transfer all the student demographic information, then complete the student? fall class schedules, and then grade reporting and student transcript information. When they started to work on student scheduling, things did not go well. The training provided by DSI for the scheduling officers was not good because the officers did not understand how the system work, and the DSI experts did not described well about the schedule that JCSS wanted. DSI claims that it was caused by how the scheduling officer set up the scheduling system. Because of indefinite reasons of the problem, JCSS were unable to get the schedules done at the planned time which caused several problems because they were just able to get all the schedules done two weeks before school started. Preparation for the fall was hindered because who had to work on the new system (secretaries and counselors) was on the payroll during the summer. All training was delayed until the week before school started, when everyone reported back to the work. The training was rushed, and DSI did a poor job. This would cause problems because the time was less (one week). When the school started, the people who were working in the system did not understand it or know what they were doing with it. The scheduling of the students was taking too much time, and the attendance officers could not work the system for the first few weeks. After some well-executed training, the teachers successfully entered their grades at the end of the semester. Here the new system was better and much effective then the old system. The problem is the academic staff did not trained well; they try to learn the new system in a short of time (one week), which made them to dismiss some details. They did not understand the new system in an efficient and effective way. As I see all the works are connected to each other from the scheduling of the students to the transcripts. The problems start to occur at the beginning, so they did not do other works such as attendance, grading, etc. In my opinion JCSS must first implement a prototype (example) system to observe the effects of the new system on the JCSS program, and analyze the problems, then create alternative solutions to the problems. It is important to experiment the new system before implementing in whole organization. As a result JCSS start to use the new system but not in the planned horizon time.

Q3. Critique the performance of JCSS management in the purchase of this system

Some of the management staffs were satisfied with new system and some of them were not. There are some problems exist at the beginning of the implementation of the new system. After some time the departments learned the use and benefits of the new system. The new system was fast, efficient and effective. They do the things in short time. They had the problem while training, because the time was short and the trainers did not know much about what JCSS wanted. Also there were too many restrictions on the schedule because the new system did not have the capacity to perform it. But they believe the new system will have capability to improve on their old system. Dr. Faris (responsible for class scheduling) said that counselors had many problems at the beginning but they got along fine with schedule changes, and they complete the new schedules faster than they had with the old system. They believe that the new system is a substantial improvement over the old one. They get the information (attendance, grades, past history, transcripts) in two or three minutes. They can produce their own special reports without getting a programmer involved. Dr. Gosser said that they did not spend time on technical details while evaluating the propose systems and they did not put in effort to get down to the details of exactly what they needed. And they said that they had only few days of useless training on the system before they start of school. They did not learn how to use the system. But after some time they recognize that they have go the new system, and they were going to have it for a long time. Dr. Davis said that they did not have the opportunity to discuss any of the systems that were looking at and whether those systems would help them or satisfy their needs, and she told the system is compatible and suitable with their needs. Catherine Smith said that it was difficult until they understood the system, and when they get the control they started to gain the benefits of the new system. Murphey Ford said that the new system did not worked as the old one. Carol Andrews told that they should have paid attention to training.

As a result in my opinion JCSS must analyze and determine what was needed exactly in the new system and pay attention to the detail. They should piloted to the new system as an example to see the effects before installing it system wide. The training period should be longer and the academic staff must try to understand and learn each detail in the new system to get the best performance. The management started to realize that the performance of the new system is better than the old one.