

**Job Analysis of Instructional Technology Aide Position**

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### **Abstract**

While examining various job position listings, I found several that were intriguing for the sake of analysis. My goal was to find a position I would legitimately consider, and I adequately met the desired skills and requirements as detailed by the employer. With my major being in cybersecurity, it can be difficult to immediately enter that field, without previous more generalized information technology work experience to serve as a foundation, so this was also considered throughout my search. Most employers searching to fill what they consider entry-level positions seek those with multiple years of experience in addition to educational metrics. Ultimately, I chose a deeper analysis and reflection on the Instructional Technology Aide position being advertised on indeed.com by the Spotsylvania County School District, as I felt it matched well with my current skillset and past experiences and could provide industry-relevant experience for pivoting towards an entry-level cybersecurity career in the future.

## **Job Analysis of Instructional Technology Aide Position**

### **The Position, Employer, and Industry**

The position is listed as an instructional technology aide for the 2025-2026 school year which is contracted out for ten months, after which the contract is “evaluated annually” for renewal for the following school year (Spotsylvania County School District, n.d.). The position is described as “the first responder to end users’ [teachers, students, staff, and families] concerns and troubleshoots hardware, software, applications, and infrastructure” (Spotsylvania County School District, n.d.). My initial reaction was that this would be a job revolving around maintaining, updating, repairing, and troubleshooting the various devices found in an educational environment. Also, the use of the term “aide” implied that the employers were looking for a more junior position that would involve working closely with someone with more experience (Spotsylvania County School District, n.d.). Reading further into the job descriptions and job functions reinforced my initial thoughts as it discusses collaborating with other members of the instructional technology department. Since I approached this exercise with the mindset of finding a job offer that I felt that I could currently apply for and reasonably felt I could be hired for, this entry-level friendly phrasing is what caught my eye. I could picture working through a contract period or two and getting daily firsthand experience with all the technical issues that can arise within a school system, and then leveraging this experience for a move to a more advanced position in the technical industry.

The Spotsylvania County Public Schools system is one of the largest in the state of Virginia serving the city of Fredericksburg nestled in the Piedmont region of Northern Virginia. The school system caters to over twenty-four thousand students across thirty-one schools. They

describe their own workplace culture as being a supportive and “highly collaborative team,” where “you become part of something much bigger” about the ability to impact the education of the next generation of children (Spotsylvania County School District, n.d.). The Smith article from the module touches on how those who contribute “to future generations” typically have a more positive self-narrative, so there is some anecdotal support for this notion of gaining deeper fulfillment from working in support of children (Smith, 2017). Currently, I work as an assistant teacher in a private early childhood education program and the unofficial IT department as needed. With my experience working in childcare, I feel that these are pretty standard phrases and framing of any position related to working with children. It feels pretty common for the employer to instill the idea of a job with a greater purpose than just a way to make ends meet financially.

Though I work in private childcare, my organization does have a working relationship with my local public school systems through summer camp and after-school programs, as well as having several families where a parent is a public school teacher so I do have some knowledge of the challenges that can arise with working for an educational employer. There can be a lot of issues with funding, struggles to fill positions, and lackluster pay. While I do not have experience with this specific school system the indeed.com site does offer a feature that allows previous and current employees to leave reviews. One review did indeed mention “limited pay” and staffing issues, and that the student population suffers from issues such as “poverty, drugs, etc.” (Anonymous Employee, n.d.). Keeping the position of instructional technology aide in mind I feel these issues could lead to challenges with vandalism, destruction, or theft of school technology.

Despite these challenges, I do feel encouraged by the wording of the advertisement overall. Even the review that mentioned the challenges, was mostly positive citing friendly coworkers and “would recommend this as a workplace” (Anonymous Employee, n.d.). It seems like a position where there will be support from other members of the instructional technology team, there is a familiarity with dealing with technology in a childcare setting, and the fulfillment of serving children is something that I have experienced and that does appeal to me.

Speaking of the prospect of a technical support position in education going forward, I feel that the position will always be necessary, but the importance could change going forward. During the pandemic, the education sector was plunged into a massive experiment with using technology to facilitate learning from home out of necessity. Now that we are past that point, I feel technology could be embraced in the classroom even more going forward, meaning the position of an instructional technology professional could become more relevant and see an increase in role and responsibilities. On the other hand, school systems could reflect upon the pandemic and the following months and conclude that technology was a distraction and served little to no improvement of educational quality and course correction away from its usage, which would negatively affect such a job position.

### **Skills Analysis**

The most important skills necessary for this position would be the technical skills to work on and troubleshoot the various devices found in a school system. The job function section of the indeed.com listing specifically mentions working with “computer workstations, laptops, Chromebooks, and tablets, as well as other technology equipment such as projectors, smartboards, and printers” (Spotsylvania County School District, n.d.). Some other technical

skill-reliant tasks include installing, configuring, and maintaining “approved applications and re-images workstations” (Spotsylvania County School District, n.d.). Working with and troubleshooting these devices is something that I have experienced in my personal life and at my current job. My college course has also given me a deeper understanding of working with a shell environment and using command line prompts which can be useful in troubleshooting as well.

Some of the other expected tasks for the position are providing support for students and staff members as well as training users on technology usage and “best practices” (Spotsylvania County School District, n.d.). This would again require technical skills but also imply having effective communication skills as I would need to be able to explain complex subjects in an easily digestible form to coworkers who might not be as tech-savvy or to children who need simpler terms to understand. Courses such as public speaking and giving presentations in other courses have helped to develop these skills. For example, as a final for a History course, I had to prepare a presentation on a pre-WWII topic. I chose to research and present on the history of moonshining and prohibition, so while I had spent weeks researching the topic not everyone was familiar with the subject deeply, so I had to present it in a way for those of various knowledge levels to understand. Then my previous work experience in childcare would prepare me for this task if I had to explain using the technology to any students.

Another listed task helps reinforce my feeling that this would be a fitting position for someone just looking to enter the industry professionally because it mentions knowing when something is beyond my understanding and filing a work ticket to a more senior member of the instructional technology team. This would mean I would have to be able to self-assess my skill level accurately and honestly and then communicate the issue in a written form.

There are some tasks specifically that indicate to me that this position could provide invaluable work experience that could be transferred to a cybersecurity role in the future. This task is overseeing “network administration and security” which involves user access management, malware detection, and file management (Spotsylvania County School District, n.d.). In addition, there is mention of performing basic networking troubleshooting. My coursework in cybersecurity has provided me with some exposure to these topics and allowed me to complete these tasks in a lab environment. Having network administration experience is one of the most listed qualifications for entry-level cybersecurity roles, so the instructional technology aide position could be a stepping-stone for my longer-term career goals.

Given the layout of the skills list, I would say general technological knowledge would be the most important skill for this position since the part on “technical maintenance” is the first listed item (Spotsylvania County School District, n.d.). Second I would list communication as the second most important skill because providing technical support for others is second on the essential job function list. Other useful skills would include documentation, knowledge of networking and cybersecurity practices, and the ability to work in a team environment. As a whole technical skills will be very much required but as noted in the Harris Clayton Editorial, “some studies have found that these skills [generic soft skills] are more sought after in new entrants than technical skills” (Harris & Clayton, 2018).

### **Education and Experience Requirements**

The advertisement has only a few qualifications listed under this section. The highest level of education that they request is only a high school diploma. In terms of work experience they ask for “one year of experience providing IT support to an office or organization, ideally

within the Education industry” (Spotsylvania County School District, n.d.). The only other requirement is a valid driver’s license, implying the position may travel throughout the various schools in the Spotsylvania County School District as needed, and the ability to pass a background check. So, in terms of education, I am overqualified and do have professional experience in providing IT support to a childcare provider. I feel that this position would be a good opportunity to flush out my work experience with IT, network administration, and basic cybersecurity principles, combined with my collegiate education to seek a cybersecurity position later on.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, the instructional technology aide position being advertised by the Spotsylvania County Public School systems offers the chance to gain experience in the technology industry. The position would offer the ability to troubleshoot common workplace devices and refine basic cybersecurity and networking principles while working in a supportive team environment. While working as a member of a school’s technology staff can present unique challenges, it can also offer fulfillment other positions might not. The tasks associated with the position explicitly and implicitly call for an array of technical and soft skills to be successful. The position aligns with my work and college experience and could be a key step toward reaching my longer-term professional goals of working in a cybersecurity-focused role. It would be a position that would facilitate the development of my skill set while offering the chance to make an impact in the education of the next generation of children.



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