

Current Condition Synthesis Report

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I was given the opportunity to do a standards-based investigation of instructional technologies and their potential to improve teaching practice, professional productivity, and student performance. The standards that were utilized were the five standards from ISTE NETS-A for Administrators. These standards are put into place to guided educational leaders in improving teaching practices, professional productivity, and student performance at their school. Leadership and Vision, Digital Age Learning Culture, Excellence in Professional Practice, Systemic Improvement, and Digital Citizenship make up the researched standards. Each standard has a set of indicators that acts as checklist item for educational leaders. For each standard I did an investigation to see how the indicators are being applied in my base school. This investigation was done through personal interviews (two instructional coaches and assistant principal), readings from E. Zimmerman, C. Zook, Principal Connections, and a website titled International Society for Technology in Education. ISTE NETS-A gives us a quick synopsis of each standard. Leadership and Vision is characterized as educational leaders inspiring and leading development and implementation of a shared vision for comprehensive integration. A Digital Age Learning Culture is described as having educational administrator creating, promoting, and sustaining a dynamic, digital age learning culture that provides a rigorous, relevant and engaging education for all students. Excellence in Professional Practice describes promoting an environment of professional learning and innovation. System Improvement calls for education administrators providing digital age leadership and management to continuously improve the organization through the effective use of information and technology resource. The last standard, Digital Citizenship is regarded as modeling and facilitating understanding of social, ethical and legal issue and responsibilities related to an evolving digital culture. The

investigation of all five standards has yielded a lot of data and a lot of issues have risen as a result. The top four overarching issues:

- Ensuring grade levels are varying their integration strategies so that students receive different (not redundant) experiences with technology
- Using feedback from teachers, students, and parents
- Using technology to reach a global service
- Soliciting input on equity issues from external groups

Ensuring grade levels are varying their integration strategies so that students receive different (not redundant) experiences with technology is vital. When students are exposed to the same technology they become burnt out or even bored. Junkins (2019) states this has been something we have seen firsthand...our students have been having access to many of the same programs from grades 3-12. He continues “we” as a school do not have the ability (permission) to purchase programs or resources on our own. These are district made decisions. The goal is to have students engaged and wanting to learn more. Redundancy leads to classroom behavior issues and a sense of lack of importance in the student’s minds. There must a be a devised plan to curb this issue.

The next overarching issue is using feedback from students, parents, and community members. Along with parents, students, teachers, and staff, members of the community are part of the “stakeholders”. Stakeholders is anyone who is devoted to the success of a school and its students. The saying is “it takes a village to raise a child”. Everyone needs to be involved and kept in the loop about issues or changes that are happening in the school. Educational leaders have a duty to make sure they are communicating effectively with all stakeholders. In terms of

including students and parents when soliciting feedback, Howard (2019) explains we host regular student led conferences with students that include data conferences, goal setting, and students' feedback. Students do give feedback, but we lack feedback or a process for feedback from parents and other stakeholders. Feedback is crucial. Even though parents and community members are not inside the schoolhouse daily they still provide crucial input that help educational leaders make instructional decisions to better serve the students.

In terms of using technology to reach a global service, educational leaders must support and encourage the use of technology to authentically learn about the learns/scholars in other cultures. Students are not allowed to use any form of web camera applications that allow them to communicate with others. This is a district policy and is safeguarded through restricted wireless internet software. Telecommunication applications that specialize in video chat and voice calls like Skype, Oovoo, and Whats App are blocked. Students need to be aware of the world around them. We are doing students a disservice if we keep them close minded and not expose them to other cultures and global issues. If changes are not made, we will essentially be hindering our students and they will not match up with other students just like them in other countries.

The last overarching issue that we will address is soliciting input in equity issues from external groups. The word equity is used meaning leveling the playing field for all students. Junkins (2019) exclaims equity, not be confused with equality, doesn't mean that education is a one size fits all process where each student receives the same opportunities, services, but it's more about providing the right (and necessary) solutions to best meet each students unique needs as students and learners. Educational administrators must find a way so that each child has an opportunity and tools to grasp the concepts being taught. Outside resources, such as keynote speakers, out of state poverty or equity conferences, etc are needed to help manage and

somewhat close the gap with equity. Equity is an issue that has long lasting effects. Issues with classroom equity have left some students unable to perform, not because they are having trouble grasping the material, but because of issues related to geography, race, gender, ethnic, language, and economics according to Zook (2017).

I have identified and clarified the four overarching issues for Whittemore Park Middle School in reference to the five standards from ISTE NETS-A. Ensuring grade levels are varying their integration strategies so that students receive different (not redundant) experiences with technology, using feedback from teachers, students, and parents, using technology to reach a global service, and soliciting input on equity issues from external groups are the main issues that were seen from my research. Each issue can bring about long-term repercussions that could be damaging to student success. A plan must be devised with possible solutions to these issues.

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