

ISTE NETS-A Standard 3 Investigation: Excellence in Professional Practice

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EDIT 760, D-1

June 26, 2019

Promoting an environment of professional learning and innovation is the makeup of the third standard from ISTE NETS-A for administrators. Excellence in Professional Practice is the name of the standard. Zook (2017) states “excellence is defined by the amount of time, resources, and access that administrators dedicate to their own growth in tech literacy”. Administrators are the top of the chain in a schoolhouse. All stakeholders look to the administrative team for guidance and support when using technology innovations. These administrators must constantly reflect and grow in this area. One can experience excellence in professional practice (standard 3) by following the four indicators listed with the standard. I am researching to see how well my current administrative staff at my base school is complying with standard 3 from ISTE NETS-A. My findings are based on an interview from the instructional coach at Whittemore and a reading from C. Zook.

According to ISTE NETS-A the first indicator of standard 3 maintains the educational administrators will allocate time, resources, and access to ensure ongoing professional growth in technology fluency and integration. It does not matter what profession you are in; one must always find a way to grow and grow the whole team. Technology is ubiquitous, and it is forever evolving into new levels. It would make perfect sense to self-assess your technology skills to determine their effectiveness. Howard (2019) states, “she does not formally assess her technology skills, but instead she makes sure to attend all trainings on technologies being used in our school and make sure she is able to navigate all these technologies”. At least being up to date on the technologies being used in your school is a start. I think you must constantly reflect on the new technological innovations because they are rapidly evolving. No one want to be complacent with the current tools they are using because they will soon be bypassed by the new ideas. Along with reflections, administrators should model technology. If teachers are

encouraged by administrators who demonstrate technology use, they (the teachers) will encourage the students. In a sense it is a trickle-down effect. At Whittemore, Howard (2019) models technology use through, “digital staff meetings, during weekly emails, and use of the school’s media outlets”. This falls in line with the famous saying “practice what you preach”. At my school, administrators and teachers heavily use google drive to collaborate/communicate. Collaborating with fellow employees and those who share similar interest helps to improve skills. Horry County School District has moved immensely into the cooperative and collaborative learning model. At Whittemore, collaboration is the most important resource we have. We have teachers/administrators who are constantly working together to improve technology skills. We do this both formally and informally at our school through professional development. Zook (2017) expresses administrators must initiate and participate in communities that let them refine their professional edge. This allows them to bring modern ideas to their schools to teach more effectively. Along with self-assessing and collaboration, an educational leader needs to self-evaluate their programs to determine whether new skills are benefiting them in their work. New skills and new technology innovations are fantastic, but you must see if you are benefiting from it. We work with our digital integration specialist to plan technologies goals for the school, we evaluate this work mid-year to adjust our professional development, and we reflect after each school year to determine if we met our goal exclaimed Howard (2019). It’s clear that the educational leaders at Whittemore allocate time, resources, and access to ensure ongoing professional growth in technology fluency and integration.

The condition of indicator two states educational leaders facilitate and participate in learning communities that stimulate, nurture and support administrators, faculty, and staff in

study and use of technology. It is crucial to examine current expectations set for faculty and their technology use. Technology is a powerful tool and you want to it be utilized correctly so that it benefits everyone. There are current expectations for faculty/staff at Whittemore for technology use and it is examined by the administration team. The administration team works hard to equip all teachers with the skills they need to put instruction at the forefront of their daily work. They make sure teachers are efficient with Power Teacher, gradebook email, substitute system, digital content providers, and online lesson planning. It is vital that teachers feel confident in these areas. As I said earlier educational leaders must “practice what they preach”. The educational leaders at Whittemore models their appropriate use of technology through communicating effectively through emails, sharing documents, a providing feedback on lesson plans and classroom observations electronically. They work diligently on focusing PD (professional development) on technologies that will enhance instruction. There are extensive professional development technology opportunities offered at the district and school level. These sessions are often based on the content of the course. It is important that the technology supports instruction and is not just a replacement tool. According to Howard (2019) the expectations for PD are based on the needs of students and teachers. The purpose is to serve the student and the teacher. Horry County school district is working towards a more personalized PD path as it relates to technology because teachers have different skills and needs in these areas. In terms of promoting and modeling effective communication and collaboration among stakeholders I believe Whittemore is where it needs to be.

Diving into indicator three as it states educational leaders promote and model effective communication and collaboration among stakeholders using digital age tools. There is ample amount of ways to communicate digitally to all stakeholders. Every school is different in their

approach. I asked my instructional coach, J. Howard, about the different communication systems we utilize, and she indicated that all school events are communicated through a google calendar and a weekly “In the Park” email. Also, she stated our school has an active Facebook page, we send out automated calls to all parents notify of school events, and we regularly use email to share and collaborate on google docs to communicate with staff. The word stakeholder in education refers to anyone vested in the education of students. Stakeholders come from all walks of life and different demographics. One would think there must be some plan to make sure all communication is easily accessible by each demographic. Howard (2019) expressed that we work hard to communicate using all outlets and we have an open-door policy and invite parents to come to school at any time. With the many different forms of communications, it is key to get feedback. Whittemore Park is working hard to gain feedback about stakeholders preferred technology-based communications. My school regularly ask parents/guardians their preferred method of communication and do our best to meet those needs. With the many forms of communication, the administration team answers all emails and phone calls from parents/community members in 24 hours. It is imperative that lines of communication are open and quick. All stakeholders must be informed and kept abreast of what is happening at the schoolhouse. Howard (2019) says our educational leaders are active participants in the community. Whittemore often host technology nights for parents/community members to learn the district technologies. This allows for a better connection between the school and the community. The school is giving back. If an issue was to arise dealing with technology or communication, my school develops a collaborative solution to troubleshoot any issues. Any decisions affecting the school, district, or community is dealt with using a shared decision-making model. This shared decision-making model consist of regularly meeting with the

Principal Cabinet, leadership team, grade level teams, and departmental teams' states Howard (2019). The administration team attends monthly meetings at the district level to participate in the shared decision-making process. This indicator brings no concerns.

The last indicator of standard three from ISTE NETS-A state's educational leaders must stay abreast of educational research and emerging trends regarding effective use of technology and encourage evaluation of new technologies for their potential to improve student learning. The best administrators stay up to date on emerging trends in technology and education exclaims Zook (2017). You must stay relevant and be onboard of any new trends. The administrators lead the school and if they stay abreast of the new emerging trends then they can share and collaborate with their staff who in return will have more resources to educate students. The educational leaders at my school regularly review feedback about staff development, positive comments, and concerns. They send out surveys to teachers and hold polls on certain issues. Staff can even talk one on one to administrations for feedback. All staff development must directly address instructional needs. Technology and instructional PD needs to be connected. At Whittemore, educational leaders do determine whether technology is currently in use on site or with the district for sustain, job related professional development. Technology delivery methods are always main topics at staff development sessions that I have been apart of. The administration team at my school do research alternative delivery methods for staff development. Howard (2019) expressed that we offer a variety of methods for PD at our schools, we are working on more creative solution for PD that are even more personalized. The educational leaders have a great relationship with our service providers. There are no concerns with indicator four of standard 3.

My research consisted of an interview with one of the instructional coaches at Whittemore Park Middle and the reading from C. Zook called “What are ISTE Standards”? Through my findings I would say I do not have any concerns about the excellence in professional practice at Whittemore. The administrators here are collaborating with other learning communities, allocate time and effort, bring new ideas back to their base school, model strong communication and collaboration, promoting growth, and staying abreast of new technologies that come about. Through my investigation I can say that my school adheres closely to standard 3 from ISTE NETS-A.

Reference

Howard, J. (2019, June 25). Personal Interview

Zook, C. (2017, September 28). What Are ISTE Standards? (And Why Do They Matter?).

Retrieved June 26, 2019, from <https://www.aeseducation.com/blog/what-are-iste-standards>