

ISTE NETS-A Standard 5 Investigation: Digital Citizenship

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Digital citizenship is helping students to learn, communicate, and collaborate safely and responsibly in the digital community. The fifth standard for ISTE NETS-A is titled “Digital Citizenship”. This standard states educational administrators’ model and facilitate understanding of social, ethical and legal issues and responsibilities related to an evolving digital culture. The world we live in is digital. Since we are building a digital age learning culture students, teachers, and staff need to learn their responsibilities and roles they play with technology. Standard five incorporates four indicators that can be used as conditions to follow for an administrator to uphold digital citizenship. This research is brought about to see how well my base school, Whittemore Park, is complying with standard five from ISTE NETS-A. I gathered my evidence through an interview with one of my schools’ instructional coaches and the website called “Technology Is Key for Boosting Classroom Equity”.

Corresponding to ISTE NETS-A, the first indicator of standard five maintains educational leaders must ensure equitable access to appropriate digital tools and resources to meet the needs of all learners. 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. As an administrator, teachers, parents, etc must find a way so that each child has an opportunity and tools to grasp the concepts being taught. 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, ethnicity, language, and economics according to Zook (2017). The biggest way my current school ensures equity is by providing each student with a Dell Chromebook and specific

accommodations for students with unique needs. All students are connected to the schools' wireless during school hours, all computers are docked in homeroom at the end of the day, and any digital assignments cannot be assigned for homework. All digital assignments are done in class while the student has their device. In terms of accommodations usually this is done specifically as part of the IEP (individualized educational plan) process in Special Education where we provide accommodations on an individual basis. There are also accommodations for students through the 504 process for students with unique needs that do not involve a form of learning or academic deficit. Junkins (2019) stated in the last few years, we have seen a rise in accountability for equity in servicing our English Language Learners (ELL) as well. It is imperative for educational leaders to acknowledge any equity issues that that is happening at their school. Advice on how to deal with/handle equity issues should be a collaborative effort. Even outside groups could come in and give advice/support. In terms of actions and initiatives Junkins (2019) specified he believes most efforts/attempts at initiatives that seek to provide equity are merely actions taken in order to remain compliant with state and federal regulations or mandates. This should not be. There should be a genuine fight with external groups trying to understand and eliminate an equity issue. At Whittemore, the educational leaders show importance of equity by making teachers show evidence in their lesson plans of how they are providing accommodations for their ELL students or students with accommodations. There is also professional development trainings (mandated) to inform them of the importance of meeting the needs of this group of students. Junkins expressed his concern of how much effort really goes into fighting equity issues. He believes initiatives are put in place just to get by. This is concerning coming from an educational leader at the school. I would say that my concern level is increasing for Digital Citizenship at Whittemore.

The second indicator of standard five states educational leaders promote, model and establish policies for safe, legal, and ethical use of digital information and technology. Establishing policies and procedures for safe and equitable technology use should be formed by a group of stakeholders. In the Horry county school district these policies are set forth by the school district. They establish the committee and create the policies/procedures and then they inform all schools of the new policies. We are 1:1 with technology in our school and across the district, so it is hard to really see equity in access to technology as an issue. However, as it relates to EL students, many of the digital programs we use do have the ability to translate content into other languages, particularly Spanish. I am not sure if the ability of these programs to translate across multiple languages is a deciding factor when purchasing programs for our schools to use. All schools must follow district guidelines and district mandated procedures for use. Junkins (2019) does state that sometimes the district does ask for feedback from school personnel about technology procedures and policies. I believe the conditions of indicator two are somewhat met. I believe there needs to be more collaboration (including teachers, parents, and all stakeholders) when establishing policies.

Diving into indicator three as it reads educational leaders promote and model responsible social interactions related to the use of technology. Electronic communication is nothing new to students. Students connect with each other primarily through social media sites, but some email each other. Each student has a school Gmail account that is active the whole year. Whittimore Park has a school Facebook page that post events, pictures of students during field trips, activities, competitions, etc. Students can see, like, comment, and even share post from the school page. The school district has a YouTube page and a twitter account that post similar items. Students too can comment, repost, like, etc. This social media interaction makes it easy

for administration to understand the level of use of electronic communications. Teachers can communicate with students through email and Remind 101 (educational texting app). Also, teachers can communicate with other teachers through email, social media, text messages, etc. There is constant communication between students, teachers, and parents. There should be discussions about use of electronic communication within a school setting. At my school, Junkins (2019) states we rarely have discussions about appropriate use. Usually these conversations only arise after a specific incident has occurred and we want to ensure something similar does not occur again. When technology is issued to students and staff, all are required to sign documents and acceptable use policies and thus agree to use the technology as intended. From my research I believe Whittemore I believe Whittemore should have more discussions with their students about appropriate use. This brings me concern.

The last indicator of standard five from ISTE NETS-A state's educational leaders' model and facilitate the development of a shared cultural understanding and involvement in global issues through the use of contemporary communication and collaboration tools. Understanding how technology is used around the world as a learning tool may help us understand how to better utilize a tool. We have technology specialist come into our school on a regular basis. They often share new ideas and trends with technology happening beyond our school walls. Some teachers are active on various social media (Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, etc.) and try out new ideas, strategies, etc and share with their colleagues. In terms of using technology to authentically learn about and communicate with learners and scholars in other cultures, Whittemore drops the ball. When asked about this Junkins (2019) exclaimed if learners and scholars in other cultures are not specifically mentioned in our academic standards, then we probably aren't supporting and encourage the use of technology to authentically learn about them. He also stated we rarely, if at

all, communicate with learners and scholars in other cultures. I have a high level of concern with the conditions of indicator four not being met at my school.

My research consisted of an interview with one of my instructional coaches at Whittemore and a reading from E. Zimmerman called “Technology Is Key for Boosting Classroom Equity”. Through my findings I would say I do have some concerns. I believe Whittemore needs more meaningful solutions/input on the topic of equity issues, more collaboration when creating policies, more discussion about appropriate technology use, more knowledge of involvement in global issues. The educational leaders at my school are not meeting all the conditions of standard five of the ISTE NETS-A.

References

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Zimmerman, E. (2016, April 3). Technology Is Key for Boosting Classroom Equity. Retrieved July 2, 2019, from <https://edtechmagazine.com/k12/article/2018/06/technology-key-boosting-classroom-equity>