ISTE NETS-A Standards Paper #2

Standard #2: Digital Age Learning Culture

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The ISTE NETS-A Standard 2 revolves around Digital Age Learning Culture. This standard primarily deals with the responsibility of educational leaders to create and maintain an appropriate technology culture. While the culture may begin at the district level, it is the responsibility of the school’s leadership to ensure that it continues to grow and flourish at the school level. This culture needs to be vibrant and rich with various types of technology. Leaders, staff, and students need to be familiar with many different types of technology rather than only one platform/device. It is the responsibility of the administrators and the teachers to model and promote daily, effective use of technology. Administrators at the school level and teachers at the classroom level should ensure that learner-centered environments are provided and that effective practices are being utilized across the curriculum.

Alexe Miles and I conducted surveys using SurveyMonkey.com in order to determine the knowledge of the teachers and administrators regarding the digital age learning culture at Andrews Elementary School. Andrews Elementary School is a large, rural Title I elementary school in Georgetown County. Many of the students that attend this school do not have consistent access to technology outside of the school setting. The limited access that they do have is not regularly used for educational purposes but for entertainment only. Due to this research being conducted during the summer break, only a small portion of the teachers/administrators responded. For this particular survey 25 out of 50 people responded.

The focus of our survey was on the administrators’ and teachers’ ability to create and promote an appropriate digital culture. Our first question again addressed the ability to identify any existing documents that describe the vision and plan for the technology use in our classrooms. For this question, only three of the respondents indicated that they were able to identify documents describing our vision plan. This is of high concern to us and will be a part of our technology improvement plan.

We next asked if they were able to identify procedures for selecting, using, and evaluating various instructional technologies. Nine of the respondents indicated that they were confident in their ability to select, use, and evaluate instructional technologies. The majority of the other respondents were confident in their ability to use given instructional technologies but not in selecting and evaluating. This is of medium concern to us as most of the teachers are using district provided instructional technologies due to the potential cost involved in purchasing their own. Teachers should be able to evaluate the effectiveness so that their input can be given on the effectiveness of district provided technologies.

When surveyed on whether they actively gather information to determine whether the current learning environment supports collaboration, innovation, and technology use, fourteen of the respondents indicated that they regularly gather this information. Administrators actively monitor the learning environments provided by the teacher and teachers actively monitor the classroom to ensure that collaboration and effective technology use is in place.

When asked if they model the importance of supporting collaboration and innovation in their own behaviors, including personal technology use, planning, and staff development sessions, 14 of the respondents indicated that they do. Although few indicated that they had modeled in a formal staff development session, they have modeled and collaborated in grade level sessions. Those with limited personal technology use were also the ones with low classroom use.

Our next questions asked if they assess the level and type of student centered learning and individualized learning currently taking place and identify student groups that currently may not be having individual learning needs met. Twenty of the respondents indicated that they do so on a regular basis. This is of low concern for us as the vast majority are assessing the learning taking place in their classrooms on a daily basis.

When surveyed on whether they feel that all staff are provided equal access to professional development support in technology in terms of time and funding, the results were a bit surprising. Twelve of the respondents indicated that they do not feel that all staff are provided equal access. This surprised us due to the availability of our media specialist in working with individual teachers/classes and with the monthly visits from our district’s technology coach. The technology coach shares various strategies as well as sets up times to work directly with interested teachers and their classes. This is of medium concern to us and further investigation is needed to determine why these respondents feel that they are not being equally supported.

When asked if they feel that our school encourages the use of various instructional technologies in classrooms which promote interaction with teachers, students, educational leaders and/or business leaders on locations outside the school, fifteen respondents indicated yes to all areas. Areas that the teachers feel we do not promote interaction is with educational leaders outside of our school and business leaders. At this time, this is of low concern to us since the majority of teachers believe that the interactions with teachers, students, and local educational leaders is encouraged.

Our final question asked our administrators and teacher to rate their personal proficiency and confidence in technology use. We broke the use down into three categories, proficiency in basic technology use, confidence in using technology for personal use, confidence in use technology for instructional use. The rankings were between 1 – 5 with l being low and 5 being high. The results are shown below.



The confidence level in using technology for instructional use was lower than expected and is of high concern for us.

 As we looked more closely at Andrews Elementary School’s digital age learning culture, it is apparent that while there are strong areas, we also have some weaknesses. The knowledge of our staff in where to locate digital vision plans is one area of weakness. Another is the ability of school and classroom leaders in selecting and evaluating instructional technologies. The perceived inequality in staff being provided professional development in technology use is of high concern. Additional information as to why they feel there is inequality would need to be gathered in order to address this. Our other area of concern is the number of teachers that are in the medium to low confidence level in using technology for instructional use. With the amount of staff development that has been offered, we were surprised with these higher numbers.

 As we move to 1:1 use of Chromebooks, it will be beneficial for our staff to view videos such as “How Google Saved a School” in order to help more of the staff members see the benefits of digital classrooms and how they can be used for more than just websites for practice and reteaching. In order to help address the low confidence in selecting and evaluating instructional technologies, teachers can utilize rubrics like those found on the website Learning in Hand. Other resources can be shared as part of the technology improvement plan.

References

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