Hastings-on-Hudson UFSD Instructional Technology Vision

Over the past decade, the presence and use of technology in classrooms has increased, reflecting its growing presence in society generally. Of course, there are mixed opinions on the value and consequences of using technology, and the district's approach fits somewhere in the middle. Specifically, we do not view technology as a goal in and of itself. Rather, when we look at curriculum, if technology can be used to support or improve our students' access to, or management of, content, we think it should be considered as a potential tool. As the most effective teaching uses a variety of tools, we expect that technology will be used as needed rather than continually. Usage will vary across different grade levels, but in general it means that the technology use should either enrich instruction or support communication. Individual teachers are free to incorporate technology in their lesson plans and they are the best source of information on how it is used in a particular classroom.

Screens and devices are ubiquitous in our lives, and they are not inherently better or worse than other educational tools. Though, as with any tool, its effectiveness relies on the hands that use it. And we see as much variation in effective use of technology as we do in teaching generally. So, technology skills have been incorporated into regular staff development and this will continue as we want to make sure that our investment in the hardware and software produces good outcomes for our students. To keep the district moving forward, the Superintendent meets several times a year with a group of administrators and board members to discuss initiatives, progress, and challenges. The district has policies in place for acceptable use by staff and students as well as plans for multi-year technology expenditures and K-12 curriculum goals detailing the skills that should be developed as students progress through the grade levels.

So what are some ways that a student will use technology in our schools: a smart board in an elementary class can engage students in a discussion through its interactive capacity. First-graders might create movie presentations illustrating their research on world markets. In middle school, students learn to use and evaluate on-line information sources as they do study ancient civilizations. In a language arts class, electronic documents can easily be shared and worked on collaboratively with other students or the teacher. Adaptive tests, which respond to the answers an individual student provides, give very real-time, individualized assessments of comprehension and allow teachers to tailor instruction.

Teachers and administrators are also mindful of the skills our students will need following graduation. For example, most universities use some form of electronic board system for tracking assignments, progress, and communication between students and faculty. Over the past few years, the district has implemented comparable school-wide systems, including student and parent portals and the use of School Wires and Google Classroom. Students may currently use their own devices with these interfaces, and in the coming school year the district intends to make netbooks available to all high school students. None of this is mandatory, but if it improves the experience for the student, helping them stay on top of work, or get help from a teacher, then the technology is a useful tool.

Overall then, the district tries to take a reasoned approach to the use of technology in our classrooms, making sure that it is serving rather than driving us. The focus remains on developing the whole child, with all the interpersonal and educational skills that our children will need as they move on in life.

To see our 2018-2021 Instructional Technology Plan, please click **here.**