

Kenneth Freeman
Boise State University
EdTech 501
School Evaluation Summary

School Evaluation Summary: Tech4Success High School

School Demographics

Tech4Success (Tech) High School is a diverse high school located near a military base in a suburban setting. Click [here](#) for complete school demographics. Tech lies within a district containing seven other high schools which serves a population of 147,000. Tech is a Title I school and over a third of its students are considered economically disadvantaged.

Administrative

Policy: Intelligent

While Tech does not have a technology plan of its own, the school adheres to the district's acceptable use policy. The policy covers all aspects of technology usage within the school system. The policy has been approved and is supported by district officials and could easily be adapted into a school-level policy.

Planning: Emergent

Tech does not have a school-level technology plan. All technology acquisition is done at the district level. The school has some policies dealing with technology such as updating PowerTeacher and the school homework Wiki page; but any major school policies dealing with technology would be difficult as the school simply does not have many resources.

Budget: Islands

There is a technology budget at the district level. Schools are not given a technology budget as all acquisitions are made by the district's technology department. The technology department's budget was recently cut by one-third due to budget constraints. The replacement cycle for equipment is budget-driven. Currently the goal is for a 5-year replacement cycle however has translated in reality to a 9-year replacement cycle. With budget constraints being what they are, a 1:1 ratio of computers to students at Tech will likely not be possible in the near future without outside assistance.

Administrative Information: Intelligent

All schools within the district use PowerSchool, an online program which handles most everyday data within the schools regarding attendance, bulletins, grading and other basic school information. While Powerschool enables paperless recordkeeping, the school still requires

teachers to print out items such as quarterly progress reports and report cards. Disciplinary paperwork is still done on paper as well. The school would benefit from developing a way for parents to approve/deny paper reports as parents and students have 24/7 access to their grades through Powerschool. Parents without internet access could request paper copies of reports to be mailed instead. Having an automated system for disciplinary paperwork would be beneficial as well.

Curricular

Electronic Information: Islands

Teachers depend upon electronic information quite regularly for lesson planning. Some teachers even create websites for their classes so students have access to information regularly. Electronic information resources are available through the internet and online resources for student research are provided by the library but use is very sporadic due to the lack of dedicated technology at the school.

Assessment: Integrated

All schools utilize a district-generated program for assessments. This program is correlated to state standards and provides numerous reports for expedient processing and feedback to teachers and students, providing for saved time to reteach standards not met. However, some teachers do not utilize the program to its full effectiveness.

Curricular Integration:

Tech resources are available on a limited basis for most curricular areas. Few classrooms have 1:1 ratio for students so tech resources that are available are not exploited as often by classrooms with no computers. Mobile labs can be checked out within departments but issues arise with accountability, time, and inoperable systems.

Teacher Use: Integrated

Every teacher in the school is given a laptop computer and a model classroom fitted with a overhead projector, dvd player, and audio system with portable microphones. Most teachers utilize the aspects of the model classroom for lessons via PowerPoint and other media. However, there are still some teachers who have not incorporated the use of media and technology to its potential.

Student Use: Emerging

Students rarely have access to computers for classroom activities. Exposure is usually limited to stints at the library, or classes that specifically deal with technology. Few students have consistent and regular access to appropriate technologies. Cellphones are not permitted to be used in the classroom. Computers are not present in most classrooms in the school. Student use of technology is suffering due to lack of resources and outdated policies.

Support

Stakeholder Involvement: Emerging

There is little stakeholder involvement beyond the district level in technology planning and implementation. There is no school-level committee for technology planning.

Administrative Support: Emerging/Integrated

Technology support is handed down from the district level only. Any tech assistance must be applied for through a work order. Significant formal administration, time and support allocated to planning and implementation, but only at the district level.

Training: Islands

Training is offered through inservices but many teachers do not attend due to other inservices for emerging strategies related to Common Core and new PARCC testing. There are also older teachers who do not seek to improve tech skills. Many teachers are digitally literate but are not familiar with technology lesson planning. Technology lessons are not stressed due to lack of technology resources within the school.

Technical/Infrastructure Support: Integrated

Staff is aware of how to request support from the district technology staff (work order). Formal technical assistance provided by district technology representatives.

Connectivity

Local Area Networking (LAN): Integrated

LAN is established and is mainly used for data and sharing.

Wide Area Networking (WAN): Integrated

Is established and used by all employees in the district for communication and sharing.

Internet Access: Integrated

Wireless Internet Access at all district locations. School employees use the internet for tasks and teaching everyday. Student use of the internet is limited due to lack of computer systems in the school. There are plans to incorporate more bandwidth to accommodate systems for online standardized testing to take place next year.

Communication Systems: Intelligent

All district employees and students are given an email account. Teachers and students have also been given accounts to set up for Microsoft Office 365 which should improve communication between stakeholders to an even higher level.

Innovation

New Technologies: Islands

Most staff members are accepting of new tech, but should to be exposed to numerous training sessions in order to fully exploit the new technology. When new tech is presented, there may be a short presentation by the tech dept. to show what the tech is about, but intensive training is done through inservices which may not be attended by all staff.

Comprehensive Technologies: Islands

Teachers utilize available technology in the form of laptops, overhead projectors, audio/video systems, copier/scanners. Video/Voice conferencing rarely, if ever used. Students rarely use technology due to lack of resources and access. With more resources in the classroom, teachers could use these resources to their full potential.

Conclusion

I would grade Tech4Success High School at Emerging/Integrated. Thought has been given to the incorporation of technology in the school district. However, due to lack of access to technology resources at the school level, the implementation of technology lessons and student use of technology has become nonexistent to stagnant. Teachers are fairly well-equipped to teach with technology, but if students have no access to computers, the task is impossible. While the district is in charge of technology acquisition, schools should be given the freedom to seek out technological resources wherever possible to give students the opportunity to engage in learning with technology. Recommendations for Tech4Success follow.

Recommendations:

School Technology Team

The formation of a school technology team would ensure that the school makes informed decisions regarding technology use and implementation. Members could receive formal training from the district technology department to help with frequent but minor problems with tech in the building. This would eliminate some of the time and frequency of work orders. This team could also seek out funding through businesses/technology grants. When a 1:1 ratio of computers to students is achieved, the technology team can form a technology plan at the school level.

Peer Training

Some teachers are more educated in technology than others. Identify teachers who are using technology in their classrooms and have them teach other teachers how to use technology in the classroom. For example, a teacher who has created and is using their own website can show a fellow teacher how to do the same.

Class Websites

Teachers can create websites for each of their classes. These websites can be used to post up assignments, track topics covered through the year, and give students links/media to enhance their learning. Students and parents could keep track of homework and assignments easily and teachers would never have to worry about students asking for makeup work anymore. Students just click on the calendar link and find out what was done that day. Websites are a great way for teachers to engage students, as long as students have the technology resources to access them.