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Avon Grove Intermediate School Technology Plan

GRIT 687: Technology and the Administrator

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This proposal will outline a productive professional development plan that will enable district staff members to positively and effectively integrate technology into their every day lives and lessons.

There are currently over one hundred teachers at Avon Grove Intermediate School. Some of the teachers are using technology in their teaching; however, there are also many who have not yet embraced the technology age. At this time, the teachers have access to a multitude of different technologies that could help to enhance lessons and heighten student attention. It is important for all the teachers and administrators to understand how to effectively utilize technology within their lessons since it is what our students will be using in their everyday lives both in and out of the school environment. Picciano talks of the administrators' participation, which sets the tone and example for the staff that this professional development is an important task (2006 p. 242). Teachers who take advantage of the resources will guide the students to become more self directed in their learning, placing less emphasis on direct instruction.

Over the past years, many instances of professional development have been offered, however the outcome has not shown continued use by the teachers. There are very limited follow-up workshops or extensions for use inside the classroom. There have been small pushes towards increasing the use, but there is currently no monitoring process or accountability for teachers. It has been shown that when a teacher is comfortable with a resource and he/she can confidently use it, the teacher is more likely to do so appropriately, innovatively, and effectively. Picciano talks of how regardless the situation, when someone does not understand or accept a situation, it will not be successful. The information needs to be presented in a proper manner where emphasis is

placed on what is expected. This does not give the individual the choice of implementing or not implementing, but rather informs them of the need to conform to what is expected (2006, p. 239). Just giving small glances at many technologies does not allow teachers to master any one and therefore they are not able to pass the knowledge and the resource on to their students.

In response to the teachers who are not currently working towards incorporating technology into their classrooms, there is a need for a consistent, monitored professional development plan. The goal of the program would be to increase the use of technology in every classroom. It would be important to get those teachers who currently do use technology on board in helping to guide other teachers. At the beginning of every school year, there should be a planned time when teachers both new and old are able to fully learn about and use a piece of technology.

A full day of working with the teachers that is split up into 4 sessions would be necessary. At this time, each of the instructional technology lead teachers (ITLTs) would pair up and present a different technology to a group of teachers. Since there are four ITLTs, the district would offer professional development in podcasting and blogging. During the first professional development block, the third and fourth grade teachers would be able to sign up for one of the two technologies. During the second block, the fifth and sixth grade teachers would also get to choose. In setting the day up this way, each group is able to collaborate with other teachers who teach the same topics and grade levels.

In the session, the teachers would first be introduced to the technology and they would be shown how other teachers of their grade levels have used it in the past. It is very important for the teachers to setup their own accounts and explore some of the software available to them. After the exploration period, the teachers would be expected to choose some specific lessons that they already teach where the technology would be beneficial as a replacement. This hands-on time will help to show the teachers that they do in fact learn by doing just as the students do (Picciano, p. 245). By actually creating and experimenting with the tools, they will understand more than just being told what to do. The technology should not be looked at as an added burden, but rather as an easier way and more meaningful way for students to learn. At the end of the session, the teachers will be expected to take the information and knowledge that they have accumulated and apply it in the classroom.

The next session will be a working session for the teachers to evaluate what they have done in the classroom and share their thoughts. Since it would not be possible to meet every week or even every other week, a blog or wiki will be put into place where the teachers will be expected to use their skills to interact outside of meetings. This is an inexpensive yet effective way to continue the staff development after the initial meeting (Picciano, p. 249). Here they can ask questions, express concerns, and even advertise the successes that have taken place in the classroom. Administrators will be looking for proof of use and success as they observe and in the presentation of student work.

After the initial meeting before the school year started, the ITLTs will hold a monthly meeting with the groups in order to monitor success and give the teachers time to create new lessons with the technology. Once a teacher has shown a mastering of the

technology and has passed this knowledge onto the students it would be pertinent to continue to introduce new technological concepts at meetings. The goal would be for both teachers and students to confidently use the technology in practical situations.

The plan for technology sparks interest in students. In this day and age, it is what they know and what they retain. Skill and drills are things of the past while hands on technology interfacing is the future. Success of the plan will be shown when teachers have been observed having the students produce quality products that show a higher level of thinking in the students. This information will then be displayed with the blog or the podcast. Since all of this is available online, administrators can access and see success at any time without even stepping foot in the classroom.

The ITLTs along with the technology specialist for the building will be a constant aide for the other teachers in their endeavors to embrace technology. The teacher blog or wiki will enable constant communication to solve and express concerns. The plan requires every employee to work towards their own goal for technology along with working together for ideas. As part of the evaluation, if teachers choose to not use the technology it will be evident in their evaluations and observations. The use of technology will be added to the checklist for administrators when they are observing teachers.

The community support within the district is very high although, we do not have any specific community partnerships for technology at this time. The parents that are actively involved are extremely supportive of using the technology in the classroom. At the annual technology fair, the overwhelming response from parents was extremely

positive. Teachers who were presenting were asked if they could be observed using the technology in the classroom. Knowing this support, it may not be hard to gain community partnerships to gain more advanced and even better technology. The PTA already gives \$250.00 per schoolhouse and \$50.00 per teacher, if we can create more partnerships, we can gain more access and make our school even more advanced.

In the long term, it will be important for the teachers to continue to sustain the professional development plan. Since each year there are always new teachers coming in, one of their induction days would be spent on the technology that is already in place at the school. As needed, new technology will be introduced in the break out sessions and with each new introduction, the teachers will become responsible for incorporating it in the classroom. Eventually, it will be important to look at hardware for each student or enough hardware for each classroom to have a full class set. This will pave the way for a “no paper” environment of learning.

Since the new technologies that will be introduced are currently being offered at no extra cost, this plan will not cost the district. Over time, it will be important to keep the technology up to date and the purchase of new software and hardware will be necessary. The teachers will be trained on in-service days and curriculum marketplace days, which are part of their contractual obligations. As of right now, each teacher should have the resources available to him or her in order to carry out the plan. However, as Picciano states, teachers need equipment too (2006, p. 246). Avon Grove currently supplies each teacher with one computer in the classroom, access to a Centrum with approximately 12 desktops for students, and the ability to sign out a laptop cart with fifteen computers. The district would need to invest in microphones for the computers

in order to record and they should investigate the need for more permanent computers inside each computer for blogging.

This professional development technology plan will be implemented starting the next school year and will continue until it is no longer needed. The district should start hiring new teachers who are capable of implementing the technology that is already in use. More and more colleges and universities are requiring their students to take the computer classes that will enable teachers to come to the profession with the knowledge that will be needed to use current technology in and out of the classroom.

Resources:

Picciano, A. (2006). *Educational Leadership and Planning for Technology*.

Columbus, OH: Pearson Education Inc.

