School Technology Evaluation
Gaston School District
Chrissy Jarvis

Demographics

Gaston School District is a rural farming community school located in the coastal hills of Oregon. The population within city limits is 650; including residents outside city limits possibly reaches 1200. The total number of students K-12 grades is 490. Each school is distributed almost half, with 234 students 7-12 grades, and 256 students K-6 grades. 54.4% of the students received federally funded free or reduced lunch (poverty level). The ethnicity of the district is 85% white, 9% Hispanic, and 2% black, and 4% other (Native American, Pacific Islander, etc.)

ADMINISTRATIVE

Policy (Behavioral: Intelligent, Resource/Infrastructure: Integrated)

The TUP policy for Gaston School District is very inclusive for its size, however it is outdated. The last plan dates to 2006. It also lacks some information regarding stakeholder and connectivity information. The policy is formalized, has a governing body, and has been approved. It is also formalized for all entities of the district.

Planning (Behavioral: Intelligent, Resource/Infrastructure: Intelligent)

The committee meets monthly during the school year and is comprised of parents, teachers, community members, administrative staff, school board, and a student. They develop and update plans as needed regarding the technology plans. They feel technology is ever changing and must do the best job possible to plan for the future. They monitor and evaluate ongoing goals as to the priority needs of the district.

Budget (Behavioral: Islands, Resource/Infrastructure: Intelligent)

The technology plan clearly states the operating expenses and investment plan from 2006-2009. It is detailed and inclusive, offering flexibility based on changing needs and desires to meet the districts needs. However, in actuality budgets the last year have been cut due to the economy and this does not appear to be accounted for. The budget and incoming grant money has not been consistent also due to the economy.

Administrative Information (Behavioral: Integrated, Resource/Infrastructure: Intelligent)

Administrative systems are available to all staff members and help is always accessible. We are a small district, so this information is concise and forthcoming. However, some staff members do not like to utilize technology as readily as a paper system. Some technology challenged staff feel paper is a better back up system so they do not utilize this information to its fullest extent.

CURRICULAR

Electronic Information (Behavioral: Integrated, Resources/Infrastructure: Intelligent)

Every computer in the district has access to the intranet. Therefore, every student and staff member can exchange electronic information. The district has a server with many different entities that save electronic information and a place where all staff members can save information. Each member has a private area and there a public sharing folders where staff members can collaborate and share electronic information. In addition, the district has a secure email system that all staff members have access to.

Assessment (Behavioral: Integrated, Resources/Infrastructure: Integrated)

Curriculum at Gaston School District is very dependent on technology. Many classrooms use technology for visual aids in teaching. One of the main goals have been to increase the use of technology in traditionally non technical classrooms to improve our technology curriculum that aligns with the state technology curriculum guidelines. Many software programs - CCC, Renaissance Reading, Mastery in Motion, SpedEZ, and other programs offer many assessment resources for teachers to use for student improvement. Many staff use these assessment tools, however, there a some who choose not to schedule time for the computer lab or to use in class computers, so the assessment resources are not all inclusive.

Curricular Integration (Behavioral: Islands, Resources/Infrastructure: Integrated)

There are many software and hardware programs installed on computers to facilitate learning and teaching. The cafeteria uses an electronic serving program for meals, special education uses a specialized software program for IEP's. The district uses an online information system for student records that is secure, named eSIS. In addition, teachers have many software programs at their disposal, already installed for easy access for students to use such as Renaissance Star Reading, Mastery in Motion, and CCC.

Teacher Use (Behavioral: Integrated, Resources/Infrastructure: Intelligent)

The technology department and administration have made it a priority that all teachers have access to technology in their work area. All rooms are equipped with document cameras and online access. This way teachers can use their technology equipment to access sites necessary for curriculum such as Discovery, news sites, History channel, and United streaming. Most teachers use information resources, however not all are heavily dependent nor use them daily either due to lack of computers within the classroom, or technology comfort level.

Student Use (Behavioral: Integrated, Resources/Infrastructure: Integrated)

Most students have access to computers and technology. This is more apparent at the Junior and Senior High school level, rather than Elementary. Much of student use is based on teacher use. If the teacher instructs using technology and allows for computer lab times, then students have access to technology. At the upper level students have the option to work with video, cameras, and editing equipment that allows them to update the school website. Since Gaston School District resides in a small rural town these students also update the local city, fire, police, and community web pages. The district and students benefit greatly from the efforts and energy of work with computer programming and technology.

SUPPORT

Stakeholder Involvement (Behavioral: Integrated, Resources/Infrastructure: Integrated)

Being such a small town, the stakeholders are therefore smaller. However, those entities and groups involved have a direct impact and are actively engaged in this process. The TUP plan does not explicitly define the stakeholder information, thus the lower rating.

Administrative Support (Behavioral: Intelligent, Resources/Infrastructure: Intelligent)

In our small school district, frequent communication between the technology coordinator, the building principals, the superintendent, and other key members allow the plan to be evaluated and modified as needed. Administration currently believes strongly in technology and what it offers students so the support is continuous and positive.

Training (Behavioral: Integrated, Resources/Infrastructure: Integrated)

Some formal training opportunities are not a realistic or financial possibility for Gaston School District. Being that this district is small, it is not possible for an expert to reside in each building. However, the district takes advantage of all opportunities possible. The local Education Service District (ESD) that services this district offers many of the opportunities. They recently gave a series for teachers to create Moodle pages. The technology coordinator

also offers classes once a week to help teachers better utilize many programs and technology. All staff have the opportunity to take part in these trainings, but not all staff put what they have learned into motion.

Technical/Infrastructure Support (Behavioral: Integrated, Resources/Infrastructure: Intelligent)

Gaston School District employs one technology coordinator full-time. There are also trained team members in each building to offer support for other staff members. Being small this district uses the team approach for helping solve many technical issues. Most staff utilized formal and informal support. There are a few staff members who are reluctant or afraid to seek such support for various reasons and therefore more frequently have problems.

CONNECTIVITY

Local Area Networking (LAN) (Behavioral: Integrated, Resources/Infrastructure: Integrated)

The district has high-speed networking to all areas, however being so rural some technological advances are impossible currently. Each building is approximately 50 to 70 years old. The phones are CAT 3 and analog. Staff use the WAN but voice options are limited as are some sophisticated data needs.

District Area Networking (WAN) (Behavioral: Integrated, Resources/Infrastructure: Integrated)

The district area network includes a T9 line to our ESD that services our network. The district also has new state-of-the-art servers for better file storage and security. Again there are voice issues due to outdated phone lines, but video and data are not affected.

Internet Access (Behavioral: Integrated, Resources/Infrastructure: Integrated)

Every computer in the district has direct LAN Internet access and staff must use the Internet daily in their teaching and other activities. The districts special education program, the discipline reporting system, and the student record system which includes attendance, are all Internet based applications. Many teachers also create classroom web pages using Moodle that is also Internet based. Again, voice and some sophisticated data needs are not met, therefore only integrated not intelligent.

Communication Systems (Behavioral: Integrated, Resources/Infrastructure: Integrated)

Just this year the district has implemented a student email system for all students 5-12 grade. All staff have direct email access for communication with each other and is an integral part of communication. However, being small many staff members still send hard copies or communicate in person because of ease. This does create problems sometimes when a paper trail is needed or editing of paper copies would be easier done if it was provided electronically.

INNOVATION

New Technologies (Behavioral: Island, Resources/Infrastructure: Integrated)

Most technology upgrades are accepted by staff as long as they meet certain criteria. Older staff or those who do not feel proficient in technology as not as accepting. Also, if it is disruptive or time consuming then staff members are more reluctant. Staff members also do not like to use technologies without extensive training or support. For those who do not learn technology fast or feel at ease with using it feel frustrated with implementing new innovations.

Comprehensive Technologies (Behavioral: Island, Resources/Infrastructure: Integrated)

Many technologies are implemented but some are not used to the fullest. Recently the state invested in software from a communication company, a company that would lessen commuting but increase meeting potential. It went out of business soon after implementing. The district invested in a video conferencing unit but the ability to coordinate with other schools or entities has not allowed this system to be used as it was planned. In spite of this, most technologies are becoming more comprehensive and teachers are using them more readily in the classrooms. Travel carts, document cameras, digitizing, and other items are used, maybe just not to their fullest capabilities.

Conclusion

Gaston School District placed at the integrated level. It may be small in numbers but it continually tries to compete with larger entities in technology advances for education. Being small and quaint offers this district extensive communication collaboration. Although some staff members are not open to technology or its potential many use it extensively and benefit greatly from it. There is a fine line between support and resistance in finding new innovative technologies to implement. Having a supportive and involved administration to employing a qualified technology coordinator full-time that actively seeks all avenues for funding, support, and growth ensures this district continues to advance for staff and students.

Maturity Benchmarks Survey Sheet

Chrissy Jarvis / Gaston School District			Emergent	Islands	Integrated	Intelligent
Clearly mark the box that best represents the level of maturity achieved at your school site. Please refer to the attached Model Benchmark Rubric for detailed descriptions of the categories.						
ADMINISTRATIVE	Policy	behavioral				X
		resource/infrastructure			X	
	Planning	behavioral				X
		resource/infrastructure				X
	Budget	behavioral		X		
		resource/infrastructure				X
	Administrative Information	behavioral			X	
		resource/infrastructure				X
CURRICULAR	Electronic Information	behavioral			X	
		resource/infrastructure				X
	Assessment	behavioral			X	
		resource/infrastructure			X	
	Curricular Integration	behavioral		X		
		resource/infrastructure			X	
	Teacher Use	behavioral			X	
		resource/infrastructure				X
	Student Use	behavioral			X	
		resource/infrastructure			X	
SUPPORT	Stakeholder Involvemnt	behavioral			X	
		resource/infrastructure			X	
	Administrative Support	behavioral				X
		resource/infrastructure				X
	Training	behavioral			X	
		resource/infrastructure			X	
	Technical/Infrastructure Support	behavioral			X	
		resource/infrastructure				X
CONNECTIVITY	Local Area Networking (LAN)	behavioral			X	
		resource/infrastructure			X	
	District Area Networking (WAN)	behavioral			X	
		resource/infrastructure			X	
	Internet Access	behavioral			X	
		resource/infrastructure			X	
	Communication Systems	behavioral			X	

		resource/infrastructure			X	
INNOVATION	New Technologies	behavioral		X		
		resource/infrastructure			X	
	Comprehensive Technologies	behavioral		X		
		resource/infrastructure			X	