

Findings

The following items were identified in evaluating how technology is utilized in school:

1. A majority of the staff is very receptive to learning how technology and Apps can be used to enhance teaching and learning.
2. The technology equipment (iPads and Computer lab) being utilized for instructional purposes is not ideally aligned with the appropriate use and required access of the students using the tools. (i.e. The primary grades use the computer lab which creates logistical challenges in disrupting the rhythm of the classroom and the elementary grades (3-5) struggle with using iPads to save and share work efficiently. iPads are not located near K-1 classes.
3. Teachers need professional development on choosing Apps for the iPad that can be used to achieve student learning goals. All teachers need strategies and coaching on how to utilize iPads for instructional purposes. Teachers could benefit from seeing how technology tools can be aligned to the curriculum.
4. Explicit and consistent instruction is needed to teach keyboarding in grades 3-5.
5. The computer lab space has a significant amount of abandoned equipment which has impacted the efficient use of the lab. The primary impediment are non-functioning headphones, broken headphone jacks on the computers, and non-functioning machines. Excessive numbers of non-working headphones present confusion on working vs. non-working headphones. There is no single person responsible for the room.
6. Standardized testing significantly compromises the ability to use technology on a consistent basis for instructional purposes.
7. Students have limited opportunities to use technology to research, create, communicate, or share digital information. They also need opportunities to learn basic productivity tools.
8. General Education students need more opportunities to use technology in school since they generally have more limited opportunities at home.

Recommendations

1. Teacher Professional Development

Provide teachers with opportunities to explore and evaluate iPad Apps that can support classroom learning objectives. This can be in the form of PLCs or a separate PD workshop. (The School District likely has resources that can be accessed to facilitate this work.)

2. K-1 Classroom Blended Learning Math Model

Consider implementing a "Blended Learning" instructional model using iPads with Primary grades (K/1) to support an individualized math program in the classroom. (As an alternative to computer lab time). Blended learning is a formal education program in which a student learns, at least, in part through delivery of content and instruction via digital and online media with some element of student control over time, place, path, or pace.

3. Ensure Keyboarding Skills Grades 3-5

Develop a systematic, measurable plan to ensure basic keyboarding skills for grades 3-5 both in school and at home. This will be critical for performance on the Common Core tests.

4. Infuse Appropriate Technology into Existing Projects

Explore ways to enable students to use digital tools for research, collaboration, creativity, expression and problem-solving aligned with learning standards. In a workshop model, collaborate in grade-level or subject-level groups to integrate appropriate technologies to create or enhance classroom projects. Examples might include: Students design websites as a means to enhance and share a research report, students create multimedia content to communicate information and ideas that effect change, students use programming tools to develop innovative and creative solutions for authentic purposes.

5. Laptop Purchase

Consider purchasing (PTA) Laptop Computers (30+Cart) to Support Integration of Technology in the Upper Grades. This will also alleviate constraints during testing periods.

6. Refresh the Computer Lab

Surplus the abandoned equipment, remove all non-working headphones, check all headphone jacks on computers. Purchase working headphones as necessary. This can be done with a parent "work party" to make the process fun and uplifting! Assign someone on the staff to be in charge of the lab. (Stipend?) Meet personally with each after school program that uses the computer lab and go over expectations.

7. Establish a Tech Committee for next year.

This will help create momentum and move the school forward with technology initiatives.