Leadership Vision and E-learning Plan

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**Introduction**

Schools throughout the United States are promoting active learning through a shift in how teachers deliver their instruction and how students learn. The shift is caused by the implementation of disruptive innovations in education. According to Horn & Staker (2015), the competition of disruptive innovations is due to the quality when compared to the way systems usually conduct their business. Quality is based on the benefits of being affordable, convenient, accessible, and its simplicity. The disruptive innovation of the various models of blended learning are used to combine to combine on-line delivery of specific content with teaching best practices that include classroom interaction and live instruction to personalize learning. Blended learning allows for reflection and differentiation of instruction from student to student across a diverse group of learners.

Although districts are promoting this initiative, many school districts still lack technology and the use of it throughout daily lessons both in/out of the classroom. This results in teaching and learning being conducted in the traditional brick and mortar format. A key distinction lies among minorities and students from low-income households in public schools in regards to the lack of technology and the use of it. Studies have shown that when compared, minority students owned fewer computers than those that come from households of the majority (Chisolm, 2001).

The disparity in regards to access to technology amongst schools and students within a school is referred to as “digital divide”. The term “digital-use divide” has developed from the original term to describe classrooms throughout a school or whole schools who do not use technology throughout their lessons or the district curriculum does not integrate technology even though they have the technological devices.

As society consistently continues to evolve, technology and the use of it also continues to plays a vital role in our daily lives. Sadly, minorities and families from low-income households are the key members in our society who face the biggest impact of the digital divide (Chisholm & Carey, 2002; First & Hart, 2002).

In 2014, a report titled Using Technology to Support At-Risk Students’ Learning was released which identified three components to determine the effective use of technology with students in urban schools:

• Interactive lessons and activities designed for learning

• Exploration and creativity using technology

• Integrating technology and teachers effectively

The e-learning plan presented in this project is intended to be used at the ZZZ elementary school, which is an urban elementary school with grades K-8. The ZZZ elementary school currently has approximately 1400 students enrolled, which is comprised of a 98% Hispanic population, 50% of the students are English Language Learners (ELL), and 100% of the students receive free breakfast and lunch. With the rapid pace of advances in technology and the various challenges that the school faces, the ZZZ School will identify and explore various ways to integrate technology to enhance the teaching and learning process and increase test scores. Technology has revamped the teaching and learning process and has provided the ability for teachers to collaborate with their students, which results in positive learning experiences and opportunities (Ramey, 2013).

Technology integration in the learning process removes educational barriers and increases positive motivation towards learning and student engagement. When students at this school view the use of technology, they see it as a way to communicate through social media using apps like Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, and WhatsApp. The use of technology in education is also viewed at its most basic level of the SAMR model, “substitution”. Students believe that using a Chromebook is using technology to enhance the learning process. An effective teaching and learning process with the integration of technology requires teachers to have the technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge/skills to effectively deliver the instruction. As teachers become more confident in their content knowledge and delivery, students will also become more authentically engaged in the lessons.

Students at the ZZZ elementary school, take the PARCC assessment (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The PARCC assessment uses a technological platform to assess students on whether or not they met/exceed the expectations of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. In many cases, students may have mastered the specific content standards, but lack the technological skills necessary to respond using the various technological tools. As students become more confident with the integration/use of technology in their daily lessons, they will build on their skills which results in an increase in student achievement.

**Vision**

As an educational technology leader; I strive to be a visionary for the ZZZ elementary school by inspiring and leading in developing, implementing, and integrating the latest technology to provide the students with an excellent education and transforming the school towards a clear vision of academic success.

My philosophy of educational technology respects the diversity of all learners and provides customized learning opportunities. Educational technology will be used to enhance the overall learning experience throughout the district to promote active learning environments where students are more engaged with the course content that is being presented to them. It will also ensure that students are prepared for their future in the workforce. Educational technology allows students to extend their learning beyond the classroom by becoming engaged with their communities, other institutions, and people from around the world.

My vision for the ZZZ elementary school is to create an e-learning afterschool program for students are not meeting the expectations on the PARCC Assessment using a blended learning model to increase scores and narrow the student achievement gap. Blended learning is a model in which students learn through a portion of the content being delivered online while in a classroom with traditional instruction (Horn & Staker, 2015).

Blended learning is currently seen in middle and high schools educational settings due to its success in supporting students to reach academic achievement on the PARCC assessment. Incorporating the blended learning model in the classroom gives the opportunity for educators and students to explore and take advantage of new digital technologies, as it is the 21-century leading edge transformation (Guggisberg, 2015).

The e-learning afterschool program that I plan to establish will be using the rotational model of blended learning. The rotational model allows students to rotate between different stations on a fixed-schedule by either working online or working face to face with the teacher. This method helps teachers to create small groups that establish more of a focus on a specific skill/standard; places focus on project based learning, and provides the opportunities for detailed differentiation of instruction.

Table 1 below will shows the current PARCC scores for grades three to six and identifies the percentage of students who meet or exceed the expectation in ELA and Math:

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| Table 1 |  |  |
| *2017-2018 PARCC Assessment Scores* |  |  |
| **Grade Assessed** | **ELA** | **Math** |
| Three | 26% | 26% |
| Four | 27% | 24% |
| Five | 29% | 17% |
| Six | 15% | 11% |

Note: Table represents the percentage of students meeting/exceeding the expectation in ELA & Math

Lodi schools has recently been praised by the state of New Jersey as being a role model for schools after significant PARCC scores increase. In 2015 they were considered a low performing district with just six percent of students meeting the expectation in Math. As of 2017, Lodi has an approximate average of 65% of students meeting the expectations in ELA and Math. School officials attribute their success to incorporating new technology, adapting their curriculum to be more college and career-based and increasing the time in math classes from 40 to 80 minutes. Lodi High School Principal Frank D'Amico states, “Technology is now embedded in every part of the classroom, there are no more trips to the computer labs once a week”.

As Lodi, schools showed a significant increase in their PARCC scores through the integration of technology in every part of their classroom. The purpose of my e-learning after school program is to target the bottom 20% of students (25-student max per class) in each PARCC testing grade (grades 3-8) that did not meet/exceed the expectation or fall into the “approaching” category. Incorporating the rotational model of blended learning will provide students with the opportunity to use and be exposed to educational technology to enhance the overall learning experience in ELA and Math. This goal of this approach is to create authentic student engagement and motivation through a combination of teaching best practices with a technological twist to the delivery of instruction in order to increase PARCC scores.

**E-learning Plan**

After receiving my 2017-2018 PARCC scores, I have identified a major concern with our ELA and Math scores. Table 1 above displays the current scores, which shows the average being 25% of students in each grade meeting or exceeding the expectation with the exception of sixth grade who scored extremely low. I will use the ADDIE instructional design model to help plan and create an effective instructional program incorporating Math Exemplars K-12 to help students gain the academic knowledge and skills to meet/exceed the expectation on the Math PARCC assessment along with Socratic seminar for students to develop their reading, writing, and thinking skills in ELA. ADDIE is comprised of five phases; analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. The first component of the analysis phase has four sub phases that are as follows:

* Instructional goal - The Math Exemplars program will to provide educators with online resources and a collection of planning, instruction, and assessment tools that help students learn to think critically, solve problems creatively, communicate, collaborate, and succeed academically. The Socratic seminar model will include formal discussions based on a text, which the leader to asks open-ended questions. Within the context of the discussion, students listen closely to the comments of others, thinking critically for themselves, and articulating their own thoughts and their responses to the thoughts of others.
* Instructional Analysis – The analysis will be very detailed and outline the specific ELA and Math standards that the students will be assessed on. Prerequisites needed in order to learn specific standards and skills will be looked to assure that students have mastered the proper prerequisites needed in order to learn new concepts. A focus will also be placed on assuring that teachers understand and effectively implement the 8 mathematical practices throughout their instruction and any language arts skills that should have scaffolded to have current standards mastery.
* Learner analysis – The PARCC Individual Student Reports (ISR) and the PARCC Evidence Statement Analysis Reports will be used to identify the individual student’s specific area of strengths and areas in need of growth according to each specific standard assessed in both content areas.
* Learning Objective – By the end of the Math Exemplars/Socratic seminar program, students will be able to solve grade-level problems in mathematics as set forth in the Standards for Mathematical Content with connections to the Standards for Mathematical Practice. In ELA, students will be expected to produce responses that demonstrate the skills and content based on the level of text complexity and range of accuracy as per the NJ PARCC Scoring Rubrics.

In order to develop an effective learning objective, both the instructional and learner analysis are taken into consideration. The following five W’s are to be asked:

* Who is requesting the development of the course?
* What will be the goal of the course?
* Why is the development of the course needed?
* Where will the course be implemented? (grade level/course level)
* When in the curriculum will students take the course?

Once these questions and considerations have taken place and answered, the designer can take a systems approach in developing an effective and efficient instructional course.

**Funding Proposal**

One of the many challenges in education especially when starting a new initiative or implementing a new program is funding. The question always rises as to who is paying for this or where is the money coming from. My vision to implement my e-learning plan of a blended learning model afterschool program to raise PARCC scores is cost effective from an economic standpoint. Since the majority of the resources of are already available at the school, the funding needed would be to pay the teachers’ hourly rate for one-hour afterschool five days a week.

The ZZZ elementary school currently has 15 Chromebook carts that hold 32 chrome books, which are shared amongst grade levels during the day on a rotational schedule. The afterschool program will be targeting the bottom 20% of students (25-student max per class) in each PARCC testing grade (grades 3-8) that did not meet/exceed the expectation or fall into the approaching category. From a logistical standpoint in terms of resources, we have sufficient chrome books for students to have a one to one approach will in the program. Table 2 below breaks down the teacher stipend to implement the program in the 2018-2019 school year.

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| Table 2 |  |  |
| *2018-2019 PARCC Blended Learning Program Salary* |  |  |
| **Position** | **Rate** | **Total** |
| Teacher A | $44.56 | $6995.92 |
| Teacher B | $44.56 | $6995.92 |
| Teacher C | $44.56 | $6995.92 |
| Teacher D | $44.56 | $6995.92 |
| Teacher E | $44.56 | $6995.92 |
| Teacher F | $44.56 | $6995.92 |

Note: Table represents the cost of stipend per teacher for 2018-2019 not to exceed $41,975.52

ZZZ Elementary School is a Title I school and any additional funding needed will be allocated from Title I grants. One hundred percent of the students who attend this school come from low-income families and receive free breakfast and lunch, which makes the school eligible to receive additional funding. Title I grants are intended to ensure that the most socioeconomically disadvantaged children have a fair, equal,, and significant opportunity to obtain a high quality education and reach proficiency on challenging state academic standards and assessments. When the school district receives the Title I grant, the funding must be allocated to the schools with the largest population of children in poverty (Title I, NJ Dept. of Education). Besides, having a 100% of the students enrolled at ZZZ Elementary coming from low-income homes, the school also has the overall largest enrollment in the district, which clearly makes it eligible to receive the additional funding

Once the funding is established and the program is approved by the local board of education, it will be promoted through clear communication by the school administrative team along with the parent liaison to encourage the parents of the targeted student population to enroll their children in the PARCC blended learning program. Meetings and presentations will be held in the mornings and the evenings in both Spanish and English to assure that we get the support of all of the parents. The goal is to inform the parents of the new additional opportunity that is available for their children that did not exist before. This program will reinforce the skills needed to be successful on the PARCC assessment through a technological approach. The goal of the program is to have all students show an increase in their ELA and Math scores by a minimum of 15%.

**Conclusion**

Assessments allow the teacher and student to monitor progress towards achieving learning objectives. In order to assess and measure the success of an academic program, teachers and instructional leaders must create various approaches to assess if the instructional goal and learning objective have been met. Formative and summative assessment are two methods to assess a program.

Formative assessments are a combination of formal and informal assessment procedures conducted by teachers during instruction. An assessment is only formative if it used to modify the teaching and learning process to improve student achievement. Effective formal assessments include descriptive feedback to the student that allows them to improve the quality of their work. Good descriptive feedback focuses on the goal/intent of the lesson, the students’ relation to the goal/intent, and what actions are needed to close the gap between the two.

Summative assessments evaluate student learning, knowledge, proficiency, or success at the end of a course, unit, marking period, semester, etc. This is considered to be post learning and is not an accurate reflection is the student as learned the content given. Summative assessments are formally graded and often heavily weighted. When the focus is on summative assessments, students do not learn. The best way for students to learn is through formative assessments that include checks for understanding/checkpoints along the learning process.

Assessments must be measureable in order to determine if the student has learned what we want them to learn or met the expectation. Effective instructional delivery will ensure that students learn the content. They inform instructional designers and teachers if the students met the objective and if changes need to be made to the instructional design in order to have true alignment between the course objective, instructional strategies, and assessments (Brown & Green, 2016, p. 159).

To gain an accurate scope of the success of my program, the targeted student population will take a formative assessment designed by the teachers using PARCC samples at the beginning of the program. Throughout the year, teachers will provide students with descriptive feedback through formative assessments such as surveys, blogs, chats, boards, short quizzes, exit slips, simulations, games, virtual lab, daily journals, Kahoot, polls,etc. The feedback given to students is to allow them the opportunity to improve the quality of their work. Throughout the program all assessments will be aligned and/or scored using the NJ PARCC Scoring rubrics. At the beginning of the spring prior to students taking the actual PARCC assessment, teachers will administer a teacher created summative assessment using PARCC samples based on Individual Student Reports (ISR) and the PARCC Evidence Statement Analysis Reports which identified the individual student’s specific areas in need of growth according to each specific standard assessed in both content areas.

Overall, the expectation is to show significant growth when comparing the pre/posttest at the beginning and end of the program, but a true symbol of success is to see the significant increase in the PARCC scores.

Horn & Staker (2015) state that disruptive models of learning will replace the classrooms in middle and high schools, but not in elementary schools over the long term. As more school districts move to a K-8 model, I believe that the discipline of systems thinking will replace traditional classrooms depending on the overall mission and vision of the school. Blended learning models assist in facilitating the diversity of student learning.

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