Technology Empowerment

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**Vision Statement**

Our vision is to provide students with a 21st Century learning community in which students become life-long learners, prepared college, career, and life after graduation. We will provide a student-centered, teacher-facilitated learning environment with project-based and blended learning. We will empower teachers, students, and parents with innovative technology.

**Rationale**

I was unable to get any data from my survey questions. This is my observation of the current technology we have to support this vision. Coffee County Charter Schools has implemented the Google for Education Application. Teachers and students have Google accounts, enabling an open line of communication and collaboration with stakeholders. Google Classroom is a great source for the implementation of a blended learning environment. Data collected from a previous technology needs survey suggested administrators desired an increased number of teachers become familiar with Google Applications. Currently, the Career Academy is the only school in the county that fully implements online learning, providing a glimpse into blended learning. It is the vision to have all the schools reflect a student-centered learning environment.

The level of engagement increases when students are motivated to learn. Williamson (2013) included student-directed learning tasks as an indicator of instruction for engagement, empowerment, and deep understanding, retention, and transfer of knowledge. Students are able to hone their organizational and research skills, develop better communication skill, and learn to work well with others. Project-based learning prepares students for college, career, and life. Professional development is needed to ensure this vision is meet. Teachers need to know how project-based and blended learning looks. After completing professional development, teachers will have some knowledge to provide an online learning platform and project-based learning activities to all students. Ongoing support will be provided until teachers are well skilled. Increasing the level of engagement will increase student achievement, thus also increasing the students’ motivation to learn.

**Diversity Considerations**

Internet access outside of school can be a problem for some students in a blended learning environment. This issue can be addressed by providing an opportunity for students to use the Internet before, during and after school instruction. Wi-Fi connectivity has been established at all the facilities in the school district. This will address the needs of students with a low social economic status having access to the Internet and the needed devices to access any web-based resources. Project-based learning and blended learning allows diverse learners to work at his or her own pace, providing differentiated learning and increasing student engagement.

Considerations for diverse learners with disabilities will also be meet with the use of project-based and blended learning. Students with disabilities will have the same expectations of learning, but they will have assistive technologies to help achieve the vision of all students being able to use an online learning platform and complete project-based learning activities. This type of learning environment offers more hands-on approaches to learning which promotes a variety of learning styles. All students can learn, they just learn different ways and at different levels.

**Stakeholder Roles**

Students are engaged in a challenging learning environment that is focused on project-based, hands-on learning. Taking on the roles of an explorer, teacher, and producer students become involved during the learning process. They are comfortable using technology to receive some classroom instruction and assume responsibility for their own educational success.

Teachers use technology to support all learning across the curriculum. They function as facilitators, guides, and co-learner/co-investigators. Through on-going professional development and training, all teachers acquire the knowledge and skills to integrate technology in a blended learning environment.

Administrative functions are to clearly communicate expectations for the instructional use of technology. Schools provide a learning environment where all students and staff have ready access to a full range of current technology, software tools, and applications. All schools have knowledgeable staff and external resources (parents, community members, businesses, and network resources) to further the curriculum goals.

Parents will use appropriate resources for supporting student learning at home through the use of online learning platforms. They will use technology to communicate with teachers and access student progress status.

**Goals**

Evaluate and realign existing curricula to ensure that the utilization of technology is appropriately implemented in accordance with the Georgia Performance Standards of Excellence and the National Standard of Technology (NET-S).

Students will be able to use online resources to participate in collaborative project-based activities for the purpose of developing solutions or products for a global audience. Students will be able to select appropriate tools and technology resources to address a variety of tasks and problems.

Teachers will receive professional development and training on implementing a blended learning environment. Teachers will learn how to create screencast and podcast for online classroom instruction. Teachers will be trained to effectively set up and use Google Classroom to promote a blending learning environment.

Parents will receive training on how to use available technology (parent portal) to access students’ grades and assessment scores. Parents will have the ability to join the Google Classroom learning environment to view screencast and podcast.

**References**

Williamson J. (2013).  *Indicators of Instruction for Engagement, Empowerment, and Deep Understanding, Retention, and Transfer of Knowledge*. Adapted from: Jones, B. Valdez, G., Nowakowski, J Rasmussen, C. (1995). Plugging In. Oakbrook, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, p. 9. Kennesaw State University, 2007-2013

**Appendix (Survey/Interview Questions)**

1. How does the current shared vision support the implementation of technology?
2. How do you utilize the accessibility of current technologies in your school?
3. Can you identify the educators that are technologically skilled in your school? If so, how are your assessing their technology skills?
4. What appropriate professional development are you providing your educators to support technology use in teaching and learning?
5. How does student-centered teaching look at your school?
6. How do you plan to implement Illuminate as part of the assessment component of the teacher evaluation system?
7. What are some ways you could provide technical assistance on your campus?
8. Are the current school policies in place to support technology in teaching and learning?
9. What are some ways technology is used to support diverse learners?
10. What are your plans for including parents and students in the implementation of Illuminate?