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Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes

November 2, 2017

Attendees: Deirdre d'Albertis, Jaclyn Savolainen, Laura Schulkind, Joe Phelan, Marvin Kreps, Stephen Jensen

RCSD Technology Integration

Steve Jensen updated the committee on the progress of tech integration across the District (see Power Point Presentation).

The CELT (Center for Educational Leadership and Technology) Audit was completed in January 2013. Their findings outlined 6 key areas for developing a 21st Century Learning environment in Rhinebeck:

- Development of Mission, Vision, Guiding Principles for Technology Use
- Development of an articulated and aligned instructional technology curriculum (Board approved the Grade 6-8 Computer Science curriculum only, in Summer 2017)
- Development of IT Infrastructure and Organization
- Use of Administrative, Productivity and Accountability Systems
- Development of Communications and Network Infrastructure
- Budget

Embedded in these key areas were 68 recommendations, one of which was the hiring of a Director of Technology to ensure cohesion in implementation. Since Steve was hired, he has been working to address these recommendations within the District's budgetary constraints.

Progress:

At CLS, the old computer lab was originally closed down to employ the cart model of push-ins to classrooms. Since then, the K-2 teachers have requested that the lab space be used for laptop use MAPs testing was also run out of this space in the Fall. In the early stages of our Technology Plan implementation, it was determined that iPads would be used K-2 and laptop carts for 3-5 students.

At the secondary level, Canvas was voted by the BMS faculty to be the learning management system (LMS) of choice. Currently, between 60-70% of BMS faculty is using Canvas. Steve anticipates that, by the end of the 2018-19 school year, additional teachers, though not all teachers, will adopt Canvas.

Flipped classroom instructional strategies are beginning to be used more frequently, especially in the RHS Math Department, with the set-up of a studio for recording lessons within the BMS/RHS AV Room.

Student email accounts (grades 6-12) went live a couple of years ago. There are discussions about allowing 5th graders access to their email account in a closed, in-school setting.

The Libraries (Media Centers) in both buildings have been enhanced. We have District-wide Wi-Fi and as well as the technological capacity to conduct Assessments online.

With the increased use of Google Apps for Educations (GAFE) and Canvas, there seems to be less need for teacher webpages. Some BMS teachers are using their pages to launch to their students' Canvas sites. Parents can also go to the BMS section of the website and reach the login from the "In Our School" tab.

Ongoing:

Previously, we had 3 Acceptable Use Policies (AUP) for technology for each building. Now, there is one policy which has been vetted by our legal counsel and is awaiting action from the Policy Committee. In the development of the AUP, the District chose not to follow the CELT recommendation of allowing teachers to adjust the internet filter. Filtering is still adjusted by administration.

The Board-approved mentoring plan outlines the ways in which mentor teachers are to teach new hires how to use District software and systems, but Steve is finding that even teachers who no longer have mentors find situations that require more PD. These situations will need to be addressed on-going.

Consistency of technology use in the classroom remains an issue at CLS. This year, 4 of 6 grade levels worked closely with Alison Vaccarino over the summer to incorporate usage in their curricula. A push-in model is being employed currently to try closing the gaps for kids.

As we still are awaiting approval and funding of our Smart Bond allocation, some general fund monies have been spent for back-end infrastructure work (server replacements, etc.). Those dollars cannot be recouped when we get our Smart Bond money, but these items will no longer be included in our spending plan which will leave additional money for students' technology needs.

Not Done:

District-wide wireless network - this recommendation was to provide wireless service to every taxpayer of the RCSD community. Though this measure would develop a community learning network, it is financially and technically impossible for our schools to provide wireless access to every household in the district.

Still to Do:

CELT recommends that our Librarians become Media Integration Specialists to align use of technology. All faculty are expected to teach tech skills.

Technical competency requirements need to be included as part of our job descriptions and postings.

We continue to need to assess teachers' professional development needs. Where are the strengths and weakness and how can we harness the strengths to promote further integration with those who need greater support?

The Guidance Dept. is reviewing the feasibility of employing Naviance, an online tool for post-secondary planning. This carries an annual subscription.

Steve is conducting research re: online learning and how/if such a learning structure could be beneficial in Rhinebeck.

RHS has decided that they would like to employ additional laptop carts and have requested Mac carts in favor of carts with PC machines, after a faculty review of Mac and PC options. With the advent of the online cart reservations system, it has become much more convenient for teachers to plan their use of "portable" technology in their classrooms.

Presentation hardware is another question that will affect every grade level. The Smart Board technology currently in use has fallen out of favor with schools due to its proprietary software and annual subscription requirement. It remains to be determined whether we will need interactive screens (@ \$4,000/screen) which are useful at the elementary level or large monitors (@ \$1,000/monitor) which are useful for secondary presentations moving forward.

The Microsoft Academy, which Steve and Marvin presented a number of years ago, has not been acted on or is being discussed currently because there is no course to accommodate it and online learning is still a contractual issue. It remains to be determined how class credit and certifications as “master” MS users would benefit student transcripts.

Steve shared that he and Marvin are developing a grant proposal to create a “Rhinebeck Academy” for professional development. This would act as a school within a school for teachers helping teachers with new technologies. There is still much to determine in terms of compensation and credits.

In lieu of Vertical Teams, ETACs (Educational Technology Advisory Committees) are being developed for all 3 buildings. These committees would include not only teachers and administrators but also a community member at each building to support continued integration.

Steve would like to see the revival of the development of a GenYes Club. There is a set curriculum for this program which develops students’ capacity to become “help desk” members of the school community.

Finally, more work needs to be done on development of School/Business partnerships.

Requests:

The committee asked Steve to provide an inventory of hardware in each school building along with a replacement plan for these machines. Steve explained that he is currently working on a 5 year replacement cycle for student machines (front-end) and somewhat longer replacement cycle on back-end equipment. Estimated replacement timing and leasing costs will be important information for the Board in determining budgetary needs into the future.

It would be helpful to know the intended uses and the reasons for the high school staff’s preference for the Mac platform over the PC platform. Steve will put together a cost-benefit analysis to be shared with the members of the Curriculum Committee in short order, so as not to delay the purchase of technology for the high school.

Next meeting: Monday, December 4, 2017

December Agenda: Review of Next Gen State Learning Standards (Marvin)

Respectfully submitted by Laura Schulkind