**Technology Plan Analysis**

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**School Improvement Plan Analysis:**

1. What is your school’s Vision/Mission?

The **Vision** for Griffin Middle School is as follows:

“Griffin Middle School is a diverse community committed to academic excellence, the development of character, positive social skills and responsibility. To achieve this vision we will:

* Use all resources to bridge the gap between school and our stakeholders and open our doors to parents, business partners, and the community.
* Commit to improving communication between all levels.
* Provide opportunities for students to make appropriate choices, which guide them to future successes.

The **Mission** for Griffin Middle School is as follows:

We, the faculty and staff of GRIFFIN MIDDLE SCHOOL, are committed to providing students with a safe environment that enables them to learn the skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing world. Our mission is to educate students to become responsible, productive citizens in our culturally diverse society.

1. What are the targeted areas for improvement and the specific goals related to this improvement area that are set forth in the SIP?

Our targeted areas for improvement at our school lie within the broader goal that “Students will demonstrate continuous improvement on state indicators and performance assessments.” Of course we want to actualize this improvement goal in all content areas, but we are most focused on that which the state of Georgia emphasizes: Math and English/Language Arts. The details are interesting. At our school, we have a large population of Students with Disabilities and ELL students. These are our targeted students, because these subgroups determine whether our school makes AYP or not. Our finalized actuals for 2010-11 have not yet been confirmed, however our **targets** from 2010-11 to 2011-12 are as follows:

**Math:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Targeted Group** | **2010-11** | **2011-12** | **% Change** |
| Students with Disabilities | 54% | 59% | +5% |
| ELL Students  | 64% | 67% | +3% |

**ELA:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Targeted Group** | **2010-11** | **2011-12** | **% Change** |
| Students with Disabilities | 63% | 67% | +4% |
| ELL Students  | 81% | 83% | +2% |

Our goals for our intentions to accomplish these targets are as follows:

1. Improve the implementation of the use of research-based strategies (differentiated instruction, specialized instruction, co-teaching, thinking maps, and **instructional technology**) to meet the needs of each student; giving special attention to SWD, ELL, and bubble students.
2. Refine and improve the implementation of Safety Nets (Saturday school, extended learning, tutoring, and 8th grade remediation) to increase student achievement.
3. Refine the implementation of an effective instructional framework (workshop model: opening, work session, and closing).
4. How is technology included in the SIP? Is student technology literacy included as a goal in your SIP?

The only place that **technology** is mentioned in our entire SIP, is in the improvement goal listed in #1 above, “improve the implementation of…instructional technology…to meet the needs of each student…”

1. Why is technology addressed (or not addressed) as it is? I believe that technology is addressed specifically because Cobb County just paid a large sum of money purchasing i-Respond units and the RM Class Pads for each class room. Since this purchase must be justified somehow, all schools more than likely will have reflect the use of technology in their SIP. (I’m not sure if it’s mandated through the district to include this, but if I were a betting woman…)
2. Are you pleased with the current treatment of technology-related issues in the SIP? Why or why not? Before taking this Masters coursework in Instructional Technology, to be honest, I probably would not have noticed the presence (or lack thereof) of any technology focus. However, learning more about technology as I have, I would say that I am somewhat disappointed that we are not focused on integrating technology in our everyday classroom activities. Why? Technology is the wave of the future. Kids love it. Computers, MP3 players, smartphones and the like, are not viewed by younger generations as luxuries. They have become necessities…like an additional appendage to their physical bodies. For us as educators to not fully capitalize on this attraction to technology is a grave error in judgment—one that will impact learning negatively for years to come.
3. Would you like to see technology issues represented differently in future SIPs? If so, why? Yes, I would definitely like to see technology issues addressed more broadly in our SIP—by perhaps even adding a separate category to the SIP entitled “technological innovations” or some such notion. By doing so, we are building awareness and developing a school culture in which technology becomes increasingly more important and more of an expectation instead of a novelty. If we are going to remain globally competitive as a nation, we must dispense with our old ideas of textbooks and paper trails, in favor of new and innovative designs…those ideas which currently reside “in the cloud.”
4. What are your first thoughts about how technology could contribute toward achieving the mission/vision/goals set forth in your school improvement plan?

The Vision Statement for Griffin Middle School provides ample opportunity for technological contribution in two of the three areas mentioned: 1) bridging the gap between school and stakeholders by opening our doors to parents, business partners, and community at large, and 2) improving communication at all levels. I envision creating layers of technology to address bridging the gap. For starters, how about creating a computer lab for parental access during the day and evening hours? For that matter, how about building a “computer kiosk” outside of the main building which would allow students and parents alike to come and utilize technology when needed? This would not only bridge the communication gap and contribute positively to the local community, it would also address the issues of equitable access for all. I also see utilizing tools such as blackboard at various levels. We could communicate more readily teacher to teacher, teacher to student, parent to teacher, administrator to teacher, etc., and share our ideas. By working collaboratively with all stakeholders, we all become vested in increasing student achievement in new and innovative ways. I also see using internal webpages (not sure quite how this would work) in which grade level data teams could communicate to the rest of the staff about what they are doing and how they are planning together. We could provide training videos for professional development for teachers, videotaped lessons for students to access on our blogs, narrated PowerPoints that students could download on their i-Pods, etc.

In our Faculty Handbook, our corporate beliefs are also listed. Within these beliefs, we have stated that “Because of the vast difference in the abilities, needs, and interests of our students, we believe that individualized attention and a strong instructional program promote academic excellence and facilitate personal growth.” Where better to place a program of technology integration? With the plethora of web-based instructional technology currently on the internet, and the abundance of software which currently exists on our computers at school, it’s an easy jump from current practices to new and innovative ones.

1. How might technology be integrated more effectively into your SIP in the future?

Please refer to #6 and #7 above.

**School Technology Plan Analysis:**

1. Is there a technology plan that is separate from the SIP at your school? Why is there no plan, and has there ever been a history of tech planning at your school?

No, we do not have a tech plan that is separate from our SIP, and there has been no history of a tech plan in the past. Prior to 2008-2009 school year, Griffin Middle School had been unsuccessful in making AYP for 5 or 6 years in a row. As a result, the Georgia Department of Education became involved and began to institute stringent regulations about how the school was to be run. The focus has always been solely on making AYP, not increasing students’ critical thinking skills by encouraging the use of technology. We did have a year or two with a technology specialist, but she was fairly ineffective, inactive in the building, and non-descript. Due to budget constraints, her position was eliminated. We are in dire need of tech expertise, and I am looking forward to being able to help other teachers learn what I am learning now.

**District Technology Plan Analysis:**

1. What are some major action points/goals outlined in your district tech plan?

The action points, or goals, for our district tech plan are outlined below:

* Increase student engagement through higher order thinking experiences using digital tools and resources in exploring real world issues and solving authentic problems.
* Increase student engagement through learning experiences using digital tools and resources to achieve content standards, explore real world issues, and solve authentic problems.
* Increase teachers’ use of technology to promote collaboration, to support and clarify conceptual understanding, to provide multiple and varied formative and summative assessments, and to differentiate the teaching and learning process.
* Increase e-learning (virtual learning) opportunities and access for students at all levels to high quality supplemental or full courses of instruction personalized to student needs.
* Re: Internet Safety: Students and staff will safely and ethically use the internet to access educationally appropriate materials and engage in internet enabled learning activities.
* Re: Parent and Community Uses: Improve meaningful, multidirectional communication between school, home, and community that consistently supports student learning.
* Re: System Readiness (Staff Competencies/Attitudes): Increase staff competency to implement a variety of online instructional strategies.
* Re: Student Tech Literacy: Reduce the information and technology literacy gap between schools and improve student performance on the technology literacy assessment.
1. How was your district technology plan formed?

First, a vision and mission had to be developed, with the “buy-in” of all shareholders. Then it was important to investigate the “current reality” of what is being seen and done in our schools within the district. This “current reality” was supported by data collection from several sources:

* Levels of Technology (LoTi) and Details Questionnaire
* GAPSS teacher survey questions
* GAPSS Observation items
* Classroom observations
* Parent, staff, student SIP surveys
* 8th grade Technology Literacy Assessment scores
* Usage data with: Skills Tutor, netTrekker, CVL resources, Blackboard, Atomic Learning, Achievement Series software.
* Assistant Principal Perceived Needs Survey
* Essential Conditions Survey

Then a Gap Analysis is completed. Here, collected data is analyzed to determine the gap between what levels of technology access is needed to achieve the vision, and what is currently available. Analysis includes trends across sub groups in the school system. From this information, goals, benchmarks, and strategies can be developed, knowing where we are and where we want to go.

1. What do you think of your district plan?

I think the district plan is thorough and realistic. I like the process which was followed to arrive at a plan. It was very methodical and research-based. By looking at the District Plan and seeing the manifestation of that plan in the schools, I can see why a technology coach in each school would be useful, if not essential. I also find it curious why the district would go to the trouble to have such an extensive tech plan, and there not be much of anything at the school level. You would think that school plans would reflect the larger district plan, but it doesn’t at all. This has been extremely helpful to me in understanding what needs to be done at the school level to better mirror the district plan.

1. How might I become involved in the district level technology planning/implementation?

I feel the best way for me to become involved in district level tech planning is to ensure that the vision at the district level is being communicated down to the school level. By helping to bridge those gaps between the technology wizards and the paper dinosaurs, I can best support the district’s overall technology goals. On a more practical level, I can also become a representative of my school at District wide technology events, meetings, etc. This would ensure a healthy dialogue between the two entities.

**National Technology Plan:**

1. What are some major action points/goals outlined in your national tech plan?

The major action points/goals of the NETP are based on five essential areas: Learning, Assessment, Teaching, Infrastructure, and Productivity. Listed below are the goals and action points for each:

**Learning: Engage and Empower** *All learners will have engaging and empowering learning experiences both in and out of school that prepare them to be active, creative, knowledgeable, and ethical participants in our globally networked society.*

* States should continue to revise, created, and implement standards and learning objectives using technology for all content areas that reflect 21st century expertise and the power of technology to improve learning.
* States, districts, and others should develop and implement learning resources that use technology to embody design principles from the learning sciences.
* States, districts, and others should develop and implement learning resources that exploit the flexibility and power of technology to reach all learners anytime and anywhere.
* Use advances in learning sciences and technology to enhance STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) learning and develop, adopt, and evaluate new methodologies with the potential to inspire and enable all learners to excel in STEM.

**Assessment: Measure what Matters** *Our education system at all levels will leverage the power of technology to measure what matters and use assessment data for continuous improvement.*

* States, districts, and others should design, develop, and implement assessments that give students, educators, and other stakeholders timely and actionable feedback about student learning to improve achievement and instructional practices.
* Build the capacity of educators, education institutions, and developers to use technology to improve assessment materials and processes for both formative and summative uses.
* Conduct research and development that explores how embedded assessment technologies, such as simulations, collaboration environments, virtual worlds, games, and cognitive tutors, can be used to engage and motivate learners while assessing complex skills.
* Conduct research and development that explores how Universal Design for Learning can enable the best accommodations for all students to ensure we are assessing what we intend to measure rather than extraneous abilities a student needs to respond to the assessment task.
* Revise practices, policies, and regulations to ensure privacy and information protection while enabling a model of assessment that includes ongoing gathering and sharing of data on student learning for continuous improvement.

**Teaching: Prepare and Connect** *Professional educators will be supported individually and in teams by technology that connects them to data, content, resources, expertise, and learning experiences that enable and inspire more effective teaching for all learners.*

* Expand opportunities for educators to have access to technology-based content, resources, and tools where and when they need them.
* Leverage social networking technologies and platforms to create communities of practice that provide career-long personal learning opportunities for educators within and across schools, pre-service preparation and in-service education institutions, and professional organizations.
* Use technology to provide all learners with online access to effective teaching and better learning opportunities and options especially in places where they are not otherwise available.
* Provide pre-service and in-service educators with professional learning experiences powered by technology to increase their digital literacy and enable them to create compelling assignments for students that improve learning, assessment, and instructional practices.
* Develop a teaching force skilled in online instruction.

**Infrastructure: Access and Enable** *All students and educators will have access to a comprehensive infrastructure for learning when and where they need it.*

* Ensure students and educators have broadband access to the internet and adequate wireless connectivity both in and out of school.
* Ensure that every student and educator has at least one internet access device and appropriate software and resources for research, communication, multimedia content creation, and collaboration for use in and out of school.
* Support the development and use of open educational resources to promote innovative and creative opportunities for all learners and accelerate the development and adoption of new open technology-based learning tools and courses.
* Build state and local education agency capacity for evolving an infrastructure for learning.
* Develop and use interoperability standards for content and student-learning data to enable collecting and sharing resources and collecting, sharing, and analyzing data to improve decision making at all levels of our education system.
* Develop and use interoperability standards for financial data to enable data-driven decision making, productivity advances, and continuous improvement at all levels of our education system.

**Productivity: Redesign and Transform** *Our education system at all levels will redesign processes and structures to take advantage of the power of technology to improve learning outcomes while making more efficient use of time, money, and staff.*

* Develop and adopt a common definition of productivity in education and more relevant and meaningful measures of outcomes, along with improved policies and technologies for managing costs, including those for procurement.
* Rethink basic assumptions in our education system that inhibit leveraging technology to improve learning, starting with our current practice of organizing student and educator learning around seat time instead of the demonstration of competencies.
* Develop useful metrics for the educational use of technology in states and districts.
* Design, implement, and evaluate technology-powered programs and interventions to ensure that students progress seamlessly through our P-16 education system and emerge prepared for college and careers.
1. How was the National Technology Plan formed?

The U.S. Department of Education initiated the development of *Transforming American Education (TAE)*  in the spring of 2009 in an effort to update the last technology plan written in 2004. Public participation, transparency, and collaboration were key considerations in the development of TAE. Web 2.0 technology greatly accelerated the creation of this plan, as it enabled thousands of people to participate in its development every step of the way. Plan development began with interviews with a dozen leaders across the Department of Education and at the White House Office of Science & Technology Policy to build a deep understanding of policymakers’ priorities, goals, and insights into how to make the next national education technology plan most effective. Focus groups were formed with teachers, school administrators, and members of the Consortium on School Networking (CoSN) and the Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA). In addition, more than 300 leading educators and educational technology experts participated in the ISTE Leadership Symposium. Leadership Symposium participants drafted vision statements and action steps to contribute expertise to the development effort. The input gathered was presented to a technical working group of educators, researchers, and state and local policymakers who contributed an extraordinary range of expertise to the vision, research, and writing of *Transforming American Education.* A second version of the National Education Technology Plan website was launched on Aug. 29, 2009, to give the public a sense of the themes being considered by the technical working group and to allow a wide range of stakeholders to contribute their own resources for consideration. During the three-month input period, 22,876 individuals visited the site and contributed 572 reports, technology tool examples, case studies, and personal or group statements on the plan. Hundreds of other stakeholders provided valuable input to the national education technology plan team throughout the summer and fall of 2009. The plan development team held webinar discussions with the members of educational technology organizations SETDA, CoSN, and NCTET, as well as with education philanthropy leaders. A draft plan was released on March 5, 2010, and posted for online feedback on http://www.ed.gov/technology. After two months of public comment, all input was reviewed by the plan development team and used to inform the final revision of *Transforming American Education.*

1. What do you think of your national plan?

First, I feel that there are many, many people who were involved in developing this plan who are FAR more knowledgeable in technology advancements in education than I am, so I think I am very grateful that there are people out there making a plan for technology to be used as an integral part of transforming American Education as a whole. That being said, I like the way the plan is organized into the five categories. It seems well structured, thorough, and easy to understand. I feel the section on infrastructure is especially interesting regarding access. The plan discusses what needs to be done to enhance equitable access in terms of infrastructure and provides examples of how this is being piloted in various schools and districts throughout the United States. I enjoyed reading about the “Phone Fridays” from Newport News, VA, where a Math teacher put the onus on students to come up with innovative ways to use their phones in their Math classes. Who better to ask for creative technology solutions than the kids who use them?! I thought the reading of these plans was going to be dry and boring, but I have found both the district plan and the national plan to be very interesting.

1. How does this plan differ from local and district plans?

The national plan seems more thorough and global in its perspective. The national plan also has side-bar examples of what their “vision” looks like in the classroom, using teacher-innovators as models for testing out new ideas. The district plan went into much greater depth about the research that was used in developing their goals and action points, while the national plan focused more on the plan itself. The district plan is much more student-centered while the national plan addresses specifics about equitable access/infrastructure and productivity from administrative and instructional perspectives. The district plan is a smaller reflection of the larger, more comprehensive national plan.