ASP Project Proposal

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

ACSI/MSA

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, Head of School

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX anticipates the granting of reaccreditation through the completion of conversion to an Accreditation by School Project model in 2016. As a continuance of that model, XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX is pursuing reaccreditation in year 2023 through the completion of another Accreditation by School Project.

The Accreditation by School Project begins with an evaluation of stakeholder concerns. This analysis leads to the development of a project. Time spent on this process directly relates to daily classroom practice. Every component of the process has a correlation to student learning. Time is spent addressing academic concerns, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of our educational program. Faculty response to and involvement in this process will enhance their involvement and ownership in the project while further developing teacher pedagogy and ultimately enhancing student outcomes. within the accreditation process and the resulting product. The benefit to stakeholders, including students and parents, is an enhanced educational program.

Needs Assessment

Our preliminary research, including informal interviews with and unsolicited comments from stakeholders clearly indicate the need for a lesson delivery method that will address the varied needs in our classrooms.

From the beginning it was clear that our methodology would require a new approach toward traditional school practices. Our school benefits from a staff that is stable, possessing years of experience and history serving XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX . While this is a tremendous blessing and serves us well, it also poses some real challenges for change. For example, one of the traditional methods of instruction that many of our teachers utilize involves whole group instruction. At the elementary level, teachers are instructing basic skill development objectives in a whole group approach that does not easily allow for the development of extended skills or the remediation of missing skills. At the middle school level, whole group instruction is a primary delivery method of instructional objectives, and while the outcome concerns are similar to the elementary concerns, there is the added issue of misbehavior and classroom management that can occur when students disengage. Additionally, learning gaps increase as students progress in age and these gaps are not easily addressed in the current methodology being utilized.

Faculty surveys indicate that areas of concern in the teachers' classrooms are: addressing individual needs, addressing students with documented learning differences, alternative forms of assessment, as well as student engagement/discipline.

The partnership with our parents is foundational to the success of our educational program. An open-door approach with faculty/administration/staff and our parents allows us the valuable opportunity to work alongside our parents in the education of their child. There are times when parents have shared a consistent concern regarding which "level" their child will be placed in in reading and math. Additionally, one of our ASP team members, XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, is a parent and a board member and has indicated concern for her own child's as well as others who may have learning differences separate of the general student population. While we are able to group according to ability in some areas, the size of our school and our staffing requires multiple levels of ability to be in one classroom. Appropriately addressing student outcomes will require an approach that is manageable, consistent yet flexible,as well as data driven,

In an effort to further define the project, teachers, as primary stakeholders, were able to determine best practices in addressing their classroom concerns regarding meeting the needs of a vast population of students. During August 2016 inservice, teachers were presented with a hybrid approach to their own professional development. They were presented with direct instruction, collaborative opportunities, as well as independent research on their computers. Following the inservice, teachers commented that it was engaging, and that they remembered what they learned. Additionally, after polling the teachers, most indicated that the collaboration was the most engaging portion of their learning. This proved to be a clear indicator that the teachers were not only experiencing the hybrid model first hand, but were receptive and willing to implement this approach in their classroom.

Dr. Kevin Washburn, a leader in brain-based learning, emphasizes the importance of "casting a wide net" when designing instruction for students. By designing instruction that allows students to not only answer questions, but design further questions, while utilizing different sources, students' brains are able to work in both active and receptive states. (Washburn, 2012) Generally speaking, the current instructional design model at XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX does not maximize the potential for brain based learning. Restructuring the lesson model to include a hybrid learning model, will allow teachers to teach to both the active and receptive states of brain function.

Additionally, research in the area of improving student learning, indicates that there are numerous principles to brain-based learning. Caine and Caine (1991) ascertain that there are twelve principles, of which three relate well specifically to a hybrid approach to lesson design: (1) people understand and remember best when facts and skills are embedded in natural, spatial memory; (2) learning is enhanced by challenge and inhibited by threat; and (3) each brain is unique. By understanding the implication of these principles, teachers can best meet the needs of their students by implementing a hybrid approach to lesson design.

One of the best professional development opportunities is to observe and dialogue with colleagues. While serving on an accreditation team with a colleague, XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, of XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, he spoke of similar concerns at his school and how they addressed those concerns and student outcomes. August 2016 provided me an opportunity to visit XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX exemplary school and spend some time talking with his team of educational leaders at XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. His approach to addressing the needs identified by his

school, which are similar to the needs identified by XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, was to take a hybrid approach to learning.

Additionally, while conversing with XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, recipient of the National Science Teachers Association Sylvia Shugrue Award for Elementary School Teachers, as well as 2016 NJ state finalist for president's award for excellence in math and science teaching, I became intrigued by her methodologies in her classroom. As a public school teacher of 26 students, several of whom have IEPs, as well as ESL students, she is challenged to design lessons in such a way that her students will succeed and have their unique needs met. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX utilizes a workshop approach in her classroom, utilizing small group instruction along with collaboration. She reports that her students are engaged, encouraged, and excited about learning. She has discussed with me the option to observe her class this fall.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In the pursuit of attaining the above goals, XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX will be addressing the methodologies used in classroom instruction, grades K - 8. By pursuing a hybrid approach to instruction, teachers will be developing lessons that provide for independent work, collaboration, integration of technology, as well as direct instruction. Students will be actively engaged in their learning, will receive immediate assessment of learning, and will realize increased achievement scores. The project will begin with implementing a hybrid approach in math and reading classes, then applying the approach to content areas.

Project Rationale

The mission of XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX states, "We are a non-denominational, Bible believing Christian school. This school exists to assist parents in their responsibility of training their children by providing a complete educational program that is biblically sound, Christ-centered and of excellent standards. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX is committed to equip students for Christian living by instilling biblical principles of self-discipline, individual responsibility, personal integrity and good citizenship."

As a complete educational program, XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX will be able to provide students with an array of learning opportunities that will develop not only their independent learning abilities, but will allow for a more personalized approach to learning. As students are able to achieve certain benchmarks in their learning, they will be able to progress according to their ability. As a complete program, utilizing a hybrid approach, students will further develop their technological skills as 21-Century learners and be able to apply their acquired skills in meaningful ways.

Additionally, through collaboration, students will further hone their citizenship skills as they work with their peers to not only become effective communicators (one of our ESLR's) but also to become problem solvers, resolve conflict, and to recognize personal responsibility as part of a collaborative group.

Project goals include the following:

- Provide increased active student participation

- Provide variation of teaching methodologies

- Provide increased achievement scores

- Provide immediate assessment of learning

- Utilization of data to drive instruction

In addressing the needs of the students and striving towards the goals of the hybrid learning project, it is expected that the varied methods in the classroom will not only meet the above goals, but will provide further opportunity for growth not only for students, but for teachers. It is anticipated that teachers will not only require, but will request to observe other teachers who are implementing this process and will become excited about professional development which will address their classroom needs in very relevant ways. As teachers implement a hybrid approach, and students are actively engaged in learning, parents will also witness growth in their children and it is anticipated that as students are engaged in meaningful activities, that the incidents of distracting behaviors will decrease in the classroom.

Institutional Support

In order to implement the project successfully, a team of stakeholders has been assembled and include the following:

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, Head of School

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, Assistant Principal,

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, Curriculum Coordinator

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, Curriculum Specialist, Teacher,

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, Parent, Teacher

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, Board Member,

The XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX Board of Trustees is in complete support of pursuing re-accreditation through ASP. During the August Board meeting, the board expressed full support for pursuing our next project. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, part of the education committee, has agreed to serve on the ASP team and will offer not only insights, but act as a great liaison in garnering further board support as the project continues.

As the project is further developed and implemented, teacher inservice will be provided. The school calendar provides for 4 days per year of teacher inservice, which can be utilized for staff development. Additionally, Colonial Intermediate Unit XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX provides training as well as hardware for classroom utilization in regards to inclusion of technology in the classroom. Additionally, XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX realizes a technology budget of roughly twenty thousand dollars a year which will be used to further enhance our existing technology infrastructure which includes building-wide wifi, smart boards in each classroom, Apple computers for teaches and student in-class use, as well as mobile iPad labs.

Research Design

While this first year of the ASP accreditation cycle will involve more in-depth planning, preliminary description of the project's research design is critical to receiving guiding feedback. As XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX begins the process, the guiding research

questions are ones that relate to how students are engaged in the classroom: how often are they passively engaged, actively engaged, on task, off-task, and how much of the time is teacher directed/focused. Additionally,the examination of achievement scores is anticipated to show an increase over time as related to specific areas, such as math and reading skills. At the inception of the project, teachers will be surveyed to indicate how often they are utilizing technology in their classrooms, how often students are utilizing technology, how often they utilize collaborative learning, and how often they have to redirect the attention of students or address discipline issues related to off task behaviors. Additionally, baseline data will be gathered through observation by the school psychologist who will observe and record student behaviors as they relate to teacher behaviors of active and passive engagement. Teachers will receive professional development in the areas of hybrid learning design, lesson implementation, evaluation and assessment, as well as particular technological instruction as appropriate to their needs. Included in this development will be the opportunity to observe and participate in other classrooms utilizing a hybrid method, either within XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, or through visiting other schools and classrooms. Additional resources can be utilized through the Colonial Intermediate Unit XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX as well as online learning resources.

Throughout the project, through the conclusion, teachers will be surveyed according to the baseline survey. Indicators of results that will be accepted as evidence that the project's goals have been accomplished include an increase in frequency of utilization of technology, collaboration, and student active engagement. It is anticipated that an increase in achievement scores on the Terra Nova will also indicate accomplishment of goals. Additionally, in-class measurements will be utilized, such as comparing grades and

performance on specific projects. For example, the change in grades for a specific mid-term assessment or project will be utilized and accepted as proximal measures of classroom learning. Lastly, through recording of observations indicating an increase of student active engagement during class time, as observed by the school psychologist, project goal accomplishment will be indicated.

The First Year

Documentation of baseline data, including teacher surveys, observation data, baseline Terra Nova scores in math and reading will be established. Teachers will receive preliminary introduction and training to hybrid learning through observation, professional development, teacher-inservicing, and journals.

The Second Year

Teachers will implement a hybrid learning approach in their reading and math classes. Teachers will be paired with another teacher to collaborate on their lesson planning. Continuation of documentation of data including teacher surveys, observation data, Terra Nov scores.

Year Three through Five

Teachers will implement a hybrid learning approach throughout other areas of the curriculum, identifying and adding at least one other content area per year. Continuation of documentation of data including teacher surveys, observation data, Terra Nova scores.

Year Six

Continuation of hybrid learning approach. Continuation of documentation of data including teacher surveys, observation data, Terra Nova scores. Comparison of data with baseline data to indicate achievement of goals.

As with any research design there are expected challenges. Perhaps the largest challenge is to keep our technology up to date. As our smart boards and personal computers age out, it will be important to keep the rotation of new devices. Addtionally, as new devices are implemented, they may not work well with our older devices or operating systems.
Yet another challenge will be in stretching our teaching outside of their comfort zone. It will be critical to have our teachers experience success early on in designing and implementing their lessons.

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