

Shared Vision & Rationale

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Vision Statement

Educational technology will be viewed by stakeholders at Alcova Elementary School through the lens of the ISTE (International Society for Technology Integration) standards for students. Stakeholders will work collaboratively to create an environment in which students are well prepared to handle the real world. Through initiatives immersed in technology, such as Project Based Learning and STEM, students will engage in authentic learning experiences that will build their collaboration and critical thinking skills. In addition, students' perspectives will reach beyond the classroom as they collaborate with experts and professionals both locally and globally. Upon leaving Alcova Elementary School, students will be empowered learners with the ability to use a wide variety of technology tools to meet their instructional and personal needs (ISTE, 2016). In order to support this vision, teachers will consistently receive support and training to assist them in leading their students to success in the 21st century.

Rationale

Currently, the vision for the school as a whole states that "Alcova Elementary School will work together as a community to challenge students to do the best they can and support students by giving them the tools and strategies they need to achieve academic success and be independently successful in the future." This vision of the school goes hand in hand with the shared vision for technology integration since both stress the importance of providing students with what they need in order to succeed in the future.

According to the International Society for Technology Integration (ISTE), there are fourteen elements that are crucial in order to successfully utilize technology in an educational setting, and having a shared vision is the first one on the list. ISTE's belief is that "Proactive

leadership develops a shared vision for educational technology among all education stakeholders, including teachers and support staff, school and district administrators, teacher educators, students, parents and the community” (“Essential Conditions,” 2016). The key to a shared vision is that it must be shared – it cannot be something that is developed by administration and then expected to be carried out. A shared vision creates a shared sense of ownership and therefore a greater incentive to see it lived out.

According to the Enhancing Education Through Technology Act of 2001, technology should be implemented into the classroom in order to increase student academic achievement. One of the major purposes of this act was to support initiatives that are introduced to integrate technology with academic standards (“Part D,” 2004). STEM and Project Based Learning (PBL) are two huge initiatives that have just recently become very popular because of how successful they have turned out to be with students.

PBL encompasses STEM and these two initiatives will be a great way for the shared vision for technology integration to become reality. The purpose of PBL is for students to work together in groups to explore and/or solve real-world problems that correspond to their curriculum. Chances are, these PBL projects cover more than one standard, which allows teachers to incorporate a wide variety of math, literacy, and/or science standards into their projects. PBL projects are focused on discovery learning and research rather than students simply reading from a textbook or copying notes off the board. When students learn by doing, they are more likely to retain the information they have discovered. Another huge thing about PBL is it helps students develop real-world skills such as critical thinking, research, collaboration and even interaction with the community outside of school. Finally, PBL is a great way to integrate technology into the classroom. PBL thrives on student choice - students may choose to present

their final products in a variety of ways – presentations, movies, etc. In addition, students use technology to conduct their research. As a result, technology encompasses the entire project – it is not just used for the final product (Edutopia, 2008). In addition, Alcova’s school improvement goals cover literacy and numeracy achievement. This shared technology vision encompasses these goals as well since students would be doing PBL and STEM activities that cover both literacy and math content areas.

Members of the Alcova technology team were given a survey about technology at Alcova. This survey was created and administered by the LSTC (Local School Technology Coordinator) via a Google Form, and she kept track of their answers on a Google Sheet (see Appendix). Seven teachers completed this survey – five classroom teachers and two support staff members. The purpose of this survey was to begin determining some first steps for classroom teachers to take as everyone works together to make this vision a reality. The majority of teachers indicated that currently, technology has been used in a variety of ways on their grade levels. Teachers use it to teach mini-lessons, post content on their eCLASS pages, and communicate with parents; and students use it to design products for the purpose of showing their learning. These teachers interviewed believe that a classroom that effectively integrates technology is one that uses it in a variety of ways – research, discovery learning, creating products, and so on. As a result, this shared vision is already in the process of becoming a reality in many teachers’ classrooms since many students appear to already be demonstrating several ISTE standards - Knowledge Constructor and Innovative Designer (ISTE, 2016).

Teachers also indicated specific technology tools and skills that students on their grade level should develop before the end of the year. Members of the technology team will use the data from the survey to create a vertical technology plan for each grade level to follow during the

school year. In addition, this survey also asked for suggestions on how to make professional learning more beneficial for teachers and how to get more teachers on board with using technology in their classrooms. The technology team will take a look at these survey responses as they work on developing a plan to make this shared vision happen.

Diversity Considerations

Alcova Elementary School is a Title I school, and as a result, over sixty percent of students are in the free and reduced lunch program. This means that the majority of Alcova's population is comprised of students with a low SES. Every teacher at Alcova has had at least a couple students in their class who do not have access to either a device or the internet at home. According to Warschauer, Knobel, and Stone (2004), "many fear that unequal access to new technologies, both at school and at home, will serve to heighten educational and social stratification, thereby creating a new digital divide." Teachers have already seen a digital divide at Alcova begin to form, so things need to happen quickly in order to narrow it.

The survey that the Alcova technology team completed also touched on how Alcova can help promote equitable access for students who do not have devices and/or internet at home. The majority of the technology team members suggested providing time before and after school for students without access to work on homework and/or projects. It would also be a time to really work with these students on how to become excellent digital citizens since they do not really have the opportunity to put that into practice at home. In addition, there are certain internet companies who provide discounted internet and sometimes even a laptop to low SES families. This is something teachers can begin pushing hard this coming school year. Finally, the Consortium for School Networking developed a toolkit that schools can use to begin an equitable access plan for all students. This toolkit includes two surveys – a parent survey and a student

survey – that can be administered at the beginning of the school year so that teachers are able to immediately develop a clear picture of what types of technology each of their students has access to at home (“Digital Equity,” 2016).

Finally, Alcova is going to strive to promote digital equity for girls. One big way that this will be done is through an after school club. Alcova offers a wide variety of after school clubs, and this coming year, they will offer a coding for girls club. It can be very beneficial to girls to “create safe, girl-only spaces for technology programs” (Scott, 2009). This context would have the potential to really get girls excited about technology, especially coding.

Stakeholder Roles

Administrators

The administrative team at Alcova will make sure they are supporting their teachers to the best of their ability as this shared vision is put into action. Administrators will be in close contact with the LSTC and members of the technology team to determine if teachers need additional devices in their classrooms. As needed, the Title I assistant principal will purchase devices with Title I funds.

LSTC

The LSTC will work closely with teachers as they begin implementing technology in their classrooms. She will serve as a technology coach, but she will apply the partnership philosophy discussed by Knight (2007) in his book. This means that she will make sure that the teachers see her as an equal, and not as a boss trying to force them to put the shared vision into practice. The LSTC will create a schedule that will be posted on the school’s eCLASS page, and then teachers will be able to sign up for her to assist them as needed – this could be one-on-one assistance, modeling a lesson with students, co-teaching a technology lesson, or simply being an

extra pair of hands in the room while the teacher tries something new.

Vertical Technology Team

The vertical technology team will work with the LSTC to formulate a vertical technology plan for the entire school. This team is made up of at least one teacher per grade level in addition to several support staff members including special education and ESOL teachers. These teachers will work with their grade levels in implementing various technology tools with students, and the special education and ESOL teachers will be able to offer some great insight into which technology tools would be the most beneficial for some of Alcova's diverse students. The team will also assist their grade level in implementing at least one PBL or STEM-based project each semester.

Teachers

Classroom teachers will be using the vertical plan that the technology team created to guide their technology implementation throughout the year. They will seek help from the LSTC and/or their grade level technology team representative any time they feel stressed or overwhelmed. During grade level planning meetings, teachers will work on integrating technology tools with math and literacy standards for the purpose of increasing student engagement and allowing students to uncover their own learning. Teachers will also work on teaching the concept of digital citizenship to their students (ISTE, 2016).

Parents

If able, parents will partner with teachers in working on technology skills at home. If parents do not have access to the internet at home, there will be several workshops offered at Alcova throughout the year that will give them strategies for how to support their students' learning.

Students

Students will commit to being innovative thinkers throughout the year, and they will always be encouraged to try new things without being afraid of failure. If all of these stakeholders work together, the shared vision at Alcova Elementary School will become a reality.

Appendix

[Survey](#)

[Survey Results](#)

References

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