Understanding Your School’s Technology Culture

I. Technological Capacity and Capabilities

1. What kind of technology is available to you?

6 computer Labs- Two of which are fully integrated digital arts lab with higher-functioning GIS mapping and arts related functions.  There are 4 mac labs and two PC labs. Library has a dell cart available for use in library, as well as 10 research lab computers (iMacs). Social Studies and English departments have Chrome carts with 32 computers (though some of the classes number 36 students). 5 years ago there was 1 to 1 program: all incoming freshmen could have access to a mac laptop, this program has been replaced by chrome carts. There is a google chrome cart and a dell cart on order to be available to the other departments as well as an iPad cart

There are printer/scanner’s available to each of the four wings, as well as library, counseling office and main office, digital arts room & Plato labs&computer labs

There is a handful of digital still and video cameras available through the library, though now over 7 years old. 5 SRL cameras are in Digital Arts and Yearbook

Each classroom has a digital projector,

cannot use them - Apple technical problem, sound system, and CD,DVD option

Each staff member receives a macbook or Dell which is used for all in school/interdistrict communication and reporting

1. What Internet capability is available?

TMHS has a 150mbs login secured wifi access. The labs have direct ethernet connectivity, but they are limited to the 150mbs as well to ensure the bandwidth is not entirely allocated to the labs. Wifi connectivity covers the entire building with both a secured and guest access.

1. How is computer and internet access provided? Dispersed computers? 1 to 1? Labs? Can students use their own equipment?

Access is provided via chrome or dell carts which teachers may sign up for in their rooms, or move the class to a computer lab.  Most students have personal access on phone and devices-and often assigned research time in groups in class to collaborate and research together.

The current ration is 1

1. What kinds of filters are in place, and how do they restrict what you might want to do?

The JSD has firewall in place that is up to the federal code, CIPA-Child internet Protection Act--guidelines

The only site blocked is facebook.and few others (Youtube was locked for long time, now it is not

If any educational site a teacher is trying to use is blocked,

1. If resources like social media are blocked, are there “intranet” options? Are there ways to get special permission to use blocked resources?

There are educational analog sites that are left unblocked for students to use. In place of Facebook students have access to Edmodo. The restrictions are limited however at this school. When YouTube was blocked the students had to use SchoolTube, however YouTube is no longer blocked so the analog site is rarely used.

1. Who has the specialty gear (cameras, scanners, etc.) and can you use most it?

There is a assortment of specialty gear offered at TMHS. There are a few variants in the types of gear available. The library has a few older cameras for students to check out and use on projects. The teachers of the Digital Arts and Yearbook classes have two high resolution top quality cameras on hand for students to use. These ones are strictly protected on most occasions. We have two school GoPro’s these ones are hard to keep track of. They trade hands between the Digital Arts, Yearbook, and science department teachers. There is a drone that can be used by the students. The current person in charge of this technology is Kristen Wells. We also have a 3D printer (Athena) here at TMHS, but I was not able to get a clear answer on who can use it. As for printing a majority of student printing takes place in the library. They have a printer in both the main floor and in the library computer lab. There are also shared computer labs between each wing with computer and printer access. Each wing has its own staff printer, but students are restricted due to confidential IEP documents that can be left unattended. Some student TA’s use them, but it is a hot issue here.

1. What is your best sense of the technology that your students have at home? To what extent can you expect them to have access to technology and internet access outside school to work on school projects?

The last survey that went out asked the students who had access to the internet at home. This included students with smartphones. The survey showed that ~85% of students are able to access the internet at home. From asking students however I found that only ~50-60% of the students have a home computer with internet access and a printer. From this I would conclude that project work at home is still limited.

II. Leadership and Policies

1. Does your school have a mission statement and an educational technology plan? If so, when were they last updated? Attach them or provide a link to them from your blog.

Yes. TMHS Mission: “Through connections, inquiry, and community, students will succeed academically, socially, emotionally and physically.”

TMHS Vision: “TMHS is a welcoming and equitable community where caring and respectful learners work to be successful and contributing citizens.”

TMHS is a part of district technology committee, but does not have its own technology mission statement. The school has two tech champs. Our school follows District’s technology plan. According to this plan computers in our school get updated once a year, every summer.

<http://www.edlinesites.net/pages/Juneau_School_District/Board/Policies_and_Regulations/1000_-_Program/1530_-_Use_of_Electronic_Techn>

1. Are missions and plans used and generally valued at school? Do you use them?

Yes. Copies of the mission and vision are in every classroom.

1. Do the missions and plans address the issues of digital citizenship, or of developing a balanced view of technology adoption?

IST standards are part of the advisory curriculum. Plato blended community.

1. Is technology well-funded at your school? Do you see signs of technology rotation, professional development and on-going maintenance of existing equipment?

Yes. The only thing, which needs to be improved is professional development: not all the teacher are good in technologies.

1. Does your school have Internet use and parent permission policies? When were they last updated? Attach them or provide a link to them from your blog.

Yes. Parents need to sign the permission every year. It is showed in students’ pages in Power school.

1. Has your school adopted or established competencies for students? When were they last updated? Attach them or provide a link to them from your blog.

No. There are currently no established competencies for students in regards to a technology standpoint. There are computer science courses offered, but they are more in regards to program use. During the first few freshman advisory classes the students are introduced to Powerschool but that is about as far as a competency program we have. Parents are also introduced to Powerschool and it seems to be a widely used program, with a lot of students and parents checking it regularly.

1. Who are the ed tech leaders within your school? Does your school have an ed tech committee? Is it active? What are its responsibilities?

Janna Lelchuk and Kristen Wells

1. Who are the student leaders in technology? Are there programs that allow them to use their expertise to help teachers and other students? Are there special programs that allow them to pursue their interests?

Students leaders in technology: Sonny Mauricio, Ian McAndrews

Programs: Adobe Creative Cloud Suite

1. Are community members involved in regards to using technology in your school?

Yes, they reserve and use labs.

1. If something breaks, who fixes it? How do you contact them? Are corrective and on-going maintenance well supported?

IT department from JSD headquarters, and staff TMHS

Reflection

In a few paragraphs, summarize your assessment of your school as a technology culture by addressing the following points:

·      What is the current status of your school as a technology culture?

·      What is the overall attitude about and level of support concerning the use of technology at your school?

·      What areas are doing well?

·      Which need improvement?

·      How can you become involved?

·      If you had a budget and authority, what would you do to improve your school’s technology culture?

I would say we are doing pretty well in TMHS’s development of a technology culture. There are plenty of opportunities for students to use technology during classroom assignments. I know in our class we established a “Tech Use Go” method of letting the students use their own technology in class. When we have this rule in effect students are allowed to pull our phones and iPads to do their research. I have not yet seen a student pull out a personal computer yet. For how big the school is I would say they are doing a good job. I would not expect to see a one student one computer setup that a lot of the rural schools are able to do, but so far I haven’t seen a case where computer access was in short supply.

It’s highly dependent on the teacher how much support the students are given. Some teachers are really ahead of the game. They have been attempting a flipped class where students watch their lectures at home and are helped with their homework in the class. I would really like to see more effort in helping these students better understand the basics of Internet research and other online tools that are available to them. I have seen juniors having difficulty navigating and finding reference materials on simple cites, but I am not sure if that has anything to do with level of support they are getting. It could be they simply have not been assigned research topics that included web based searches. I would like to see mandatory introductory classes on how to use technology offered at the school. A class that ran for a whole year and got students totally prepared to use the Internet as a research tool as well as introducing all the basic programs the students can use.

As for what the school is doing well in the one key aspect that sticks out to me is PowerSchool. I am glad the school has gotten both the students and parents introduced to this program. When I put in a grade for my students I always wonder if they are looking in to what they are getting. That question is always answered when I put in a zero. Just hours after putting in the grade students come in to see about making up the assignment. They read my notes and come prepared to do the activity or an alternative assignment for the missing points. I have also had students come in to make up an assignment because parents are threatening to take their electronics away. From talking to the other MAT students it appears that almost all schools use PowerSchool, but I am not sure they are using it to the extent of TMHS. There are a few ways the school can improve in their tech services though. I have seen students save their documents they had worked for over an hour on just to lose them somewhere in the mass of data. These are students that have at least a year at Thunder Mountain. They either forget how to go about saving their data, or simply never learned. Either more instruction or a more intuitive program is required. All the students who lost their data never turned in the assignment. Just the loss of work caused them to give up. So far that was the largest flaw I noted.

I have been preparing assignments and different strategies that will help my students use technology in the classroom. I had fun with Socrative over the summer MAT program so I have been including that in my lesson plan. Instead of standard test study guides students are encouraged to work together with a fun interactive test. Each correct answer sends their spaceships just a little further across the screen. I have also been trying to help with citing research found from websites and helping students identify reliable websites. Helping them remember what are the traits of a reliable website. Other than that I’m just getting started. I’ll see just how much technology I can include in my class.

If we had the budget I would really like to assign each of the students a computer at TMHS. I don’t feel Internet access at home should simply be reported on what can be looked up on a cell phone. You need a computer for far to many things. Things you simply cannot do on a phone. I know having a computer is not enough, and paying for students Internet would just be a ridiculous request, but it is a good start. There are plenty of hotspots the students can use, and the school remains open well after school ends. That is the main thing I would look into changing to better help the students.