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EDLS 695

Reflective Journal #4

Standard I: Principals Demonstrate Strategic Leadership

Ia: Vision, Mission, and Strategic Goals

Ib: School Improvement Plan

Ic: Leading Change

Id: Distributive Leadership

Standard V: Principals Demonstrate Managerial Leadership

Va: School Resources and Budget

What I Observed:

I recently had the opportunity to serve on the school’s “Tech Vision” committee. I have to admit, “Vision” was not a large part of the discussions. In a time when our small budgets have become increasingly smaller, “vision” has become “survival.” The question we were faced with was, “How do we keep our school’s technology up-to-date with almost no budget?

Currently the district uses a system of RED, YELLOW, and GREEN to identify desktop and laptop computers. GREEN means that it is a fairly new computer with little to no problems; RED means a computer is on its last leg and that if anything more fails it will not be repaired or replaced. Our school identified 37 RED student computers; the district budget will allow us to replace 27 of those, meaning 10 could fail during the next year. Most replacements would occur in the library; the remaining would be distributed among Special Education, Gifted & Talented/Structured Study, and English Language Learners. This is where most student-use of computers occurs. We also determined that there were no student computers with a YELLOW status. However, the computer labs had low RAM; this would need to be increased with building funds. Staff laptops included approx. 10 RED. These would be replaced with a shuffle of YELLOW laptops, GREEN laptops, one desktop replacement, and one that would not be replaced at all. Funds would be provided by PTO.

All printers, copiers, fax machines, scanners, projectors, document cameras, and interactive whiteboards are still on a “To Be Determined” status.

Additionally, building funds would replace laptop batteries, screens, bulbs, lamps, fans. To budget for this we determined 15% of our assets (no RED computers are seen as an asset) would determine our repair budget.

We are watching grant opportunities for possible additional funding.

We are exploring new software to help with SPED, RTI, ELL, and progress monitoring.

What I Learned:

This was incredible insight into the strain schools have in merely maintaining technology. This is increased when we consider keeping on the forefront of technological advances in order to provide students a 21st Century Education. Also, “technology” covers a wide expanse of services and equipment beyond computers.

How Will This Impact My Leadership Practice:

Much thought was given to where the replacements would occur. Students came first and foremost; high-use areas came next. One tool we used was to have a map of the building in front of us so that room numbers and locations were easily identified and everybody was on the same page. Additionally, as we found more replacements, the trend was to put them in SPED; however, it was pointed out that other special populations, such as GT and ELL were also high-use populations and needed some replacements as well. It was better to replace 2 in each area, than to replace all in one and none in another. It was also helpful to have a representative for one of these special populations to advocate and explain why their needs were higher than regular classroom teachers, as well as a technology teacher who understood all the vocabulary! It would have been helpful to also have a representative from the regular teaching staff present.

Additionally, not much has been communicated to staff. While a run-down was given at a SAC meeting, I feel it would be beneficial to relay the information at team meetings as well.

Finally, I would like to have heard the reasoning behind what gives a machine its status color of RED, YELLOW, or GREEN. Especially when considering YELLOW, there seems to be a larger spectrum. Even the district technology personnel who were identifying the computers seemed a bit frustrated with the system. At the very least, I would add a category: GREEN, YELLOW, ORANGE, RED and include with this a rubric of identifiers for each category.

CRITICAL ISSUES:

Finding/budgeting categories (PTO, activities, capital funds, etc.)