

Digital Learning Initiative Committee Meeting Notes: Thursday, April 14, 2016 (3:30-5:30pm)



Welcome / Update

Mary Morgan Ryan explained the change in the DLI timeline from two decision points to one. She said the goal is to leave the April 14 committee meeting with an indication of "shared" or "1:1" per grade level. The group will later discuss learning options based on the District's three existing platforms (MacBook Air, iPad, ChromeBook). The "Current State" presentation will be given at the May 9, 2016 Board meeting. (It was not given April 11, 2016 because of the Board's full agenda.) The "Current State" presentation has been given to PTO Presidents, the Board Learning Committee, and one school PTO per their request. The timeline includes an August presentation to the full Board on options, with action in September. It was noted that Mary and Bridget would ensure the DLI Committee is informed of the result of Board action.

BLT Meetings

Mary described the conversations she had with each of the nine Building Leadership Teams and outlined key findings:

- A shared environment is not best for student instruction.
- Tech integration PD is very important and should be a District priority.
- Teachers need to use technology to help students master learning standards and use curriculum tools / resources of the District.
- BLT discussions were reflective of the DLI belief statements; themes showed we are "on the same page."

Q&A

Per a question, Mary clarified that it is not the District's intent to re-distribute existing devices from one school to another as part of a possible implementation plan, and it was noted that when the same question was asked at a PTO President meeting, they were quick to share concerns with that notion, as well.

If the District determines a shared environment is preferred and a PTO wants to purchase devices to create a higher ratio of shared devices or a 1:1 environment, it was noted that the District might refuse such a gift from the PTO in advance because the purchase would not be aligned to District practices. Dr. White added that it is his intent for the District to be responsible for purchasing devices rather than PTOs, but the ultimate structure for funding may be a partnership with PTOs initially.

Teacher Survey

- Survey launch page included standards and belief statements
- Survey window: March 23 - April 11

- Focus was data by grade level (not school)
- Over 60% of certified staff responded
- Mary explained the different types of teachers who participated
- Most questions (3, 4, 6-12) focused on current state

Mary shared the survey data and welcomed comments and questions as each survey item was reviewed. Committee members remarked on the differences of responses between grade levels, and the responses of teachers who are 1:1 currently vs. those who are in a shared environment currently. It was noted that some teachers have not had the exposure or training to answer questions about the future of what they would like to do with devices. (They don't know what they don't know.)

Individuals worked in groups to review the data by grade level. Their reports were as follows:

- Kindergarten: Majority said they want a shared environment but want the shared devices in the classroom, not accessed via a reservation or check-out system. Recommended device ratio is 1:2 or 3:4. (15% said they want 1:1.) There was discussion that the financing may not exactly be 1:2 because it might technically be a 1:4 due to AM/PM classes.
- 1st Grade: 1:1 was recommended based on the data and the teachers' concerns about limited access. It was agreed that 1:1 in 1st grade would not include students taking the devices home. If they were in a shared environment, teachers agreed it would need to be more balanced (shared in a much lower ratio than current).
- 2nd Grade: 80% of respondents requested 1:1; 67% said they do not recommend students be permitted to take the devices home. They noted dramatic gains in "how you would like to use digital tools to enhance learning" vs. "how you are currently using digital tools to enhance learning." They observed that specials teachers commented that those they teach in a 1:1 environment are able to accomplish more.
- 3rd Grade: 1:1; further exploration is needed to determine whether devices should be left at school or allowed to be taken home. Committee members suggested follow-up discussion with the staff, and noted that a transition period might be appropriate before students would take the devices home.
- 4th Grade: 1:1; allow use at home
- 5th Grade: 1:1; allow use at home. It was noted that taking away the 1:1 environment would be devastating to the teachers.
- 6th Grade: 1:1; allow use at home. There were many comments on the preferred device.
- 7th Grade: 1:1; allow use at home. There were many comments on the preferred device.
- 8th Grade: 1:1; allow use at home. It was noted every subject expected homework to be done on a device every week, some several times a week, and so knowing homework assignments vary by subject night to night, it could be assumed that students are expected to use digital tools to complete homework nearly every day.

The committee discussed the challenge parents have with siblings all needing device access, particularly at the middle school level.

Committee members discussed some surprises with the expressed need for 1:1 at Grade 1 and Grade 2, but the data from teachers was fairly clear.

The committee discussed the 1:1 plan District 86 has adopted, and the current challenge of 5th graders in a 1:1 environment going to a shared environment at the middle school.

Committee members said they read many comments from teachers emphasizing the need for PD and the importance of technology being embedded in the curriculum.

Meeting Adjourned

5:30pm