

Teaching Through Technology

Successful 1:1 initiatives focus on teaching and learning

SESSION *Sustaining a 1:1 Initiative: It's Not About the Stuff*

Presenter Pewaukee: Amy Pugh, chief information and technology officer

Amy Pugh, chief information and technology officer for the Pewaukee School District, said the number one rule in operating a successful 1:1 program is supporting students and teachers.

"It should be about teaching and learning," she said. "You really shouldn't be focusing on the technology itself."

That might be counterintuitive, but Pugh emphasized that if students and staff are not comfortable using the technology, then they're not going to use it.

In the Pewaukee School District, the district's 1:1 initiative came from its strategic planning. Pugh said that technology has long been a focus of the district, but the district has deliberately viewed technology as part of learning and not a stand-alone piece.

The district formed a committee to research a 1:1 initiative when the board of education requested that the district look into it. The committee examined more than 1,000 1:1 programs.

The district decided to invest in a 1:1 program and from the beginning, the focus was on professional development for teachers and administrators.

"Everyone needs to be behind the 'why,'" Pugh said. "It really needs to be about curriculum integration and it needs to be part of a curriculum redesign process."

During the 2008-09 school year, the district tested out its new 1:1 initiative with its eighth-grade students. Each student was assigned a

small laptop, given an orientation, and taught best practices. Halfway through the school year, the district deemed the pilot program successful and looked at expanding it. Each school year, another couple of grade levels were added to the 1:1 program until 2014, when it was implemented in grades 2-12.

Throughout this process, Pugh said professional development has been essential to the program's success. The district has five full professional development days built into the school calendar where teachers can choose what they want to learn. Pugh said those days have been very important because they have been able to offer sessions on technology integration. Additionally, the district has a summer professional development academy that has been another venue to provide further training to teachers.

Looking back on the implementation process, Pugh said the district's information technology (IT) staff was crucial.

"If students and teachers are depending on technology, it's important that it works," she said. "If you don't have adequate IT and support staff and you have a lot of down time, teachers are going to move on to something else."

Looking ahead, Pugh is excited to get students more involved in supporting the district's technology. She is developing a student-run helpdesk. Students will be trained during the



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summer by the district's IT staff to troubleshoot technology issues. When the students aren't working on hardware fixes, they will be working on earning IT certifications.

"That's going to take some stress off our IT staff and also give those students authentic, experiential learning," Pugh said.

At the end of the session, Pugh addressed some practical issues related to 1:1 initiatives. One attendee asked how the district monitors students' internet searches. Pugh said that the district has a secure firewall and the laptops have filtering software so that even if they are used off campus, they can't access suspicious websites. However, Pugh admitted the system wasn't perfect and that training students about best use practices is a priority.

"It's important that we provide authentic opportunities for our students to learn how to be good digital citizens," Pugh said. "Our students learn about issues related to copyrights, passwords, and how to do a good internet search." ■