

Centennial Place Elementary School submits two improvement plans each year, one for *Title I* reporting to the Georgia Department of Education and one for our district's accountability measures. Fortunately both of those describe use of technology, because Centennial Place has not had an updated technology plan since 2008. They include many of the same features, although the Title I Schoolwide Improvement Plan is more detailed. This analysis focuses on the most 2013-14 Title I Schoolwide Improvement Plan. Both of these plans are grounded in the school's vision and mission:

**Vision:**

Centennial Place is a school where all children will be encouraged to develop intellectually, emotionally, and socially while preparing for a global society.

**Mission:**

Centennial Place provides positive learning experiences designed to actively immerse learners in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics while strengthening problem solving, critical thinking, and effective communications skills.

The plan was developed through the work of a data team which includes teachers, parents, school administration, and external advisors from Georgia Tech. The group divides responsibilities for compiling and reviewing data and instructional plans for submission. In developing the plan, the team reviewed 2012 CRCT data for grades 3-5 as well as other screening instruments including STAR Reading, STAR Math, STAR Early Literacy, Woodcock Assessments and Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing, quarterly pre- and post-tests, and Infinite Campus data. STAR assessments are computer adaptive tests that are administered at least three times a year. The data analysis served as a schoolwide needs assessment to develop the action plan. Centennial Place has a significant enrollment of homeless students living in two transitional centers and must factor in their needs for academic support as well as transportation into any academic plans. English language learners are also supported during tutorial and by an itinerant ESOL teacher several times a week.

Data indicate that our students who have been enrolled at Centennial Place since kindergarten and participated in our SMART (Systematic Multisensory Approach to Reading Training) initiative for the most part meet or exceed standards in reading and comprehension in the early years. However, weaknesses were found in mathematical proficiency and in science proficiency in all grades, as only 72% of students met or exceeded math standards and 79% met or exceeded science standards. Strategies to increase performance focus on afterschool tutorial in those subjects with more opportunities for hands-on experimentation and using manipulatives. Technology tools also support students during tutorial, but unfortunately tend to be limited to drill and practice uses.

Strategies for professional development include both job-embedded and off-site training in differentiation, technology, and implementation of the Common Core. Technology training offered to teachers this year included apps and ways to use iPads to strengthen literacy learning. Unfortunately, this was an example of workshops being disconnected from reality for lack of a plan: we don't have any iPads for student use, although most teachers have one. Other technology-related training was available for effective use and integration of technology, particularly for teachers with students who have identified learning difficulties. In addition we have *Tech Tuesday*, when teachers and parents can learn about different technology tools after school. It would appear from the Title I Schoolwide Improvement Plan that few of the conditions essential for effective technology implementation are in place at Centennial Place, however my observations indicate that as a school culture we are very focused on using technology effectively for student learning as well as professional development, in spite of challenges caused by existing APS policy and infrastructure.

The Title I Schoolwide Improvement Plan does describes technology use extensively for parent communications. Centennial Place uses website information, e-mail, robo-calls and social media as well as Remind101 in upper grades.

I think there are several reasons technology is not referred to explicitly throughout our Title I Schoolwide Improvement Plan as a way to support school improvement. The primary reason is ironic: because technology use at Centennial Place is ubiquitous for lessons and communication, there is no attention given to new ways instructional technology could be used to engage students with authentic activities. Second, we have a media technology team which meets quarterly, but this group often discusses technology management issues, including use of the Mac lab and mini lab, or shares information about useful websites. Finally, Centennial Place does not have a living technology plan. If we had an updated plan that described learning goals and objectives and was communicated clearly to teachers, technology use would be more effective. I have come to believe that embedding technology requirements into a school's improvement plan ensures that instructional technology use in schools remains focused on improving student learning.

#### References:

*Centennial Place Elementary School Title I Schoolwide Continuous Improvement Plan 2013-2014*. Revised October 29, 2013. Atlanta, GA: Centennial Place Elementary School.

International Society for Technology in Education (2012). *Essential conditions: necessary conditions to effectively leverage technology for learning*. Retrieved from <http://www.iste.org/docs/pdfs/netsessentialconditions.pdf>

