Vision Paper

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Vision Statement:

Centennial Academy will use the latest technologies to engage and support students as they demonstrate mastery of Georgia Common Core standards of learning. Individual access to Chromebooks will be the primary tool that allows each student to explore content and collaborate with teachers, peers and others outside the school. Access to open content resources will support project-based learning that takes place without limits of time or place. *Promethean* whiteboards and tables in classroom will continue to be a focus. A robust wireless network will serve the individual needs of students and teachers who have diverse strengths, interests, and challenges.

Rationale:

The technology vision for Centennial Academy is grounded in the school's vision and mission:

"Centennial Academy is envisioned as a school where all children will be encouraged to develop intellectually, emotionally, and socially while being prepared for a global society. The mission for the New Schools at Centennial Academy is to create a culture of opportunity where students are developed into creative, critical thinkers through a STEAM-focused (science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics) curriculum" (Centennial Place Elementary School, 2013).

Technology is a critical component of our school's curriculum. Technology represents the medium through which today's students will interact with the world, and supports higher order thinking and student-centered individualized learning. However, it is not sufficient just to provide equipment to students. When implemented appropriately, the integration of technology has strong, positive impact on student learning (ISTE, 2008). Project-based learning also often uses technology as a platform for experimentation and communications, and has been shown to increase student understanding (Edutopia, 2008). Since Centennial Academy's curriculum will incorporate active, project based learning in all grades, it is vital to envision and plan for new technologies.

One of the hallmarks of information in the digital age is immediate access. Currently Centennial Academy has only five desktop computers in each classroom, although the average class contains 22 students. Supporting 1:1 student to computer access means students no longer have to wait to access a research site or participate in an online learning activity. Recent research (Devaney, 2010, cited in Roblyer, 2013) demonstrated the importance of 1:1 computer access to student engagement and learning when that use was supported by formative electronic assessments and frequent teacher collaboration, similar to that envisioned for Centennial Academy. Another facet of immediate access will be provided through open content resources and textbooks. Traditional print textbooks are expensive and are used for several years, even as they become outdated. Lost or damaged books may not be replaced, and students sometimes have to share textbooks. Using standards-based open content sources, including units created by Centennial Academy teachers, means students can access current digital resources wherever they have Internet access (Johnson, et al, 2013).

Community Roles and Participation

All members of the Centennial Academy family will share responsibility for successful implementation of the school's technology vision. Administrators, teachers, instructional and technology coaches and students will work together every day toward shared learning goals. Parents and other community members will support students and the school instructional staff with volunteer time and regular participation in school events.

School administrators will serve as leaders and models of technology implementation. They will establish expectations for appropriate and effective technology use and develop related policies that support all staff. As instructional leaders they will ensure protected time for professional learning and planning, and will model uses of technology in communication and data analysis.

Teachers at all levels will guide students as they work toward individual mastery of common learning standards, using best practices in teaching that are grounded in current research about how children learn best. They will be facilitators, guides, co-learners and co-investigators (Creighton, 2003). Teachers will develop individualized instructional resources and collaborate on projects, as well as participate in frequent job-embedded professional learning opportunities, modeled and supported by the school's on-site Technology Coach. Finally, they will be recognized and rewarded for innovative ways to implement instructional technologies in class.

Students of all ages at Centennial Academy will learn to be good digital citizens. They will use age-appropriate web-based resources including virtual labs and manipulatives to learn science and mathematics skills. They will research issues and write persuasively to help bring about changes they are passionate about, and they will apply reasoning skills to solving unusual problems. They will explore primary source materials such as those available in the Library of Congress' American Memory Project to gain insight into historical events. They will model responsible, compassionate behavior while collaborating with other students around the world through blogs and real-time video hangouts.

It would not be possible to implement technology successfully without the support and participation of parents and community stakeholders. Parents will ensure that students have support and resources they need every day to be successful students. Community members will mentor students and help them envision how they can become successful adults. Parents and guardians provide practical support such as volunteering their time and energy, sharing skills and advocating with the school district and government agencies for policies that guarantee dedicated financial and technical support without unnecessary roadblocks. All stakeholders will be called on to assist with fundraising efforts, lending support to grant writing or contacting district administrators.

Conclusion

All staff members have a shared vision that technology is a tool to get us where we want to go. As a charter school we can chart our own path to success. However, we need to ensure full support and involvement of other stakeholders – parents, partners, and our board of directors – for our model to benefit students. This technology vision synthesizes the view of Centennial

Academy faculty and staff expressed during the planning process for our charter application. Over the next few years, we will leverage our existing technology resources and share planning responsibilities as we work toward our vision, modeling technology as a tool to support educational excellence.

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