

GAPSS Part A Narrative

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Vision

The vision for using technology in the school system is clear. Technology is an essential part of the daily operation. It is part of the teaching and learning process, and it is an integral part of the curriculum. West Fannin Elementary strives to coordinate necessary literacy training using technology from other sources to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement (*Comprehensive title 1*, 2013). In addition, West Fannin offers a variety of trainings to improve children's achievement. Robert Ensley, Principal of West Fannin states, "I would expect a technology coach to work similar to an academic coach with data. The coach would model lessons and train teachers with current and upcoming technology. They would support the technology infrastructure in the building. They would also work with the Technology Director to implement the 3 year Technology plan."

Professional Learning Needs

Professional learning needs are identified based on teacher request and teacher need. Additionally, depending on data from CRCT and other assessments, various training could be implemented. The Comprehensive Title I plan (2013) also identifies surveys which are completed by both teachers and parents to determine what other professional learning could also be helpful in the school environment.

Forms of Professional Learning

In my school, we have many forms of professional learning. The main type of professional learning is workshops. These are often conducted based on the content area which is being taught. I attend many of the workshops with other math teachers.

In addition to workshops, our academic coach also provides many professional learning opportunities for our school.

Current Professional Learning

Within the last year, there have been many opportunities for technology related professional learning. We have an abundance of training on using our Smartboards. We also have professional learning days where we are able to build units and gather resources for particular content standards which we teach. The school also tried something new this year with professional learning. Instead of getting an expert, several teachers including myself presented content which involved using technology in the classroom. Everyone had a schedule and was able to attend a variety of sessions throughout the day.

Generally, if we attend a workshop, there is usually a follow-up session several months after to determine how we have implemented things we have learned. Also, our academic coach observes and discusses new techniques we use that were presented at the time of the workshop. He also models these techniques in order to help the classroom teacher apply them in the appropriate setting.

Over the last few years, there has been an abundance of professional learning both onsite and offsite for faculty and staff at my school. These opportunities include training on Imagine It reading program, many math trainings including Brenda Erwin, collaborative teaching, assistive technology, co-teaching, three technology data days (used for lesson development), and multiple Smartboard Training (*Comprehensive title 1*, 2013).

Alignment

According to West Fannin Elementary School's Comprehensive Title I Plan (2013), professional development is an ongoing occurrence in order to enhance the performance based classroom. The plan also identifies some target professional learning goals which include collaboration, response to intervention, technology, and differentiation.

In order to align these professional learning goals, teachers are provided with data days which allow for enhancement in these areas. West Fannin Elementary School has goals for integrating technology into each classroom. Robert Ensley expressed his goal by saying, "My technology goals would be able to have an iPad/computer for every student in the school. I would also like for a SmartBoard to be in all classrooms including gifted, Art, and Media." Mr. Ensley also stated the importance of utilizing technology on a daily basis to enhance lessons in the classroom. He emphasized how technology lesson would create real world application for students (Ensley, 2014).

Emphasis is also put on professional learning for students with special needs and diverse backgrounds. Since the school is in such a small town, it is important for teachers to ensure all students are getting the best education possible. In order to assist students with disabilities, there are many data days in which classroom teachers' work with special education teachers to enhance classroom lessons and structure time for all students to receive adequate services.

The school also has a significant population of economically disadvantaged students. Therefore, teachers have had immense training on how to provide a fair and suitable education for all students regardless of the status they have.

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The majority of the professional learning budget at my school comes from Title 1 funds. At a school level, the School Improvement Team plays a role in budgeting for professional learning (2013).

Incentives

Generally, the only incentive for attending professional learning is a stipend if it is not scheduled on a regular school day. If it is a regular school day, usually we are not given an option whether to attend or not. Luckily, we have input into what professional learning we want, so the workshops are usually of interest.

Conclusions

West Fannin Elementary has high expectations for teachers and staff. It is important everyone is provided with sufficient professional learning in order to provide quality education to all students.

References

Comprehensive title I school improvement plan. (2013)

Ensley, R. (2014, 02 10). Interview by A. S. Gapss part a.