

NL Review and Recommendations

Essential Areas

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Each essential area is briefly described below. A comprehensive set of guiding questions under each heading will form the basis for overall review.

LEADERSHIP

The first essential area is leadership. The role of a leader is to create a clear vision and marshal resources to support that vision. A clear vision:

- Is owned and understood by all staff
- Endeavors to engage other members of the community such as parents and community groups
- Includes strategies to support and enhance the district/school's aims of learning, teaching, management and administration
- Ensures alignment of technological resources to core curriculum

Leaders also need to be role models for appropriate use of technology. The need to be:

- Astute researchers
- Competent with team building tools, such as RSS and social bookmarking
- Well-versed in web-based communicative technologies, such as blogging, podcasting, etc.
- Knowledgeable about Web ethics and safety

Effective leadership also means the ability to build and foster relationships with members of staff and the community:

- Align staff development with core curriculum goals
- Have a clear set of observations to make when walking through schools
- Maximize teamwork amongst teachers, students and community members
- Communicate effectively with community leaders

CURRICULUM

A review of this area would measure the extent to which there is an emphasis on effective planning and on consistent practices within the school that encourages students to demonstrate what they can do with technology and apply their skills to a wide range of learning experiences.

Review of this area would involve:

- The quality of assignments teachers are producing
- Levels of expectation for student achievement
- Unique/creative opportunities for technology use
- Learning opportunities outside of the classroom
- Global applications of the curriculum

TEACHING AND LEARNING

How are teachers using technology in the classroom to support and enhance learning, teaching and inclusion? In this essential area, the review would focus on maximizing innovative, unique and appropriate use of technology, the extent to which it is used to support the learning of different groups of students, and whether best practice is being shared.

Along with gauging how widespread technology use is across grade levels and curriculum areas:

- What styles of pedagogy are being used?
- Are teachers encouraged to try unique and innovative methods and share outcomes?
- Are students and teachers well versed in Web literacy skills, such as Web safety, finding and managing web-based resources, how to use RSS and social bookmarking tools?
- Are students and teachers well versed in web-based communication skills?
- How much do teachers know about ethics, safety and critical thinking skills on the Web?

ASSESSMENT

This essential area can help districts/schools consider whether they are making effective use of technology to engage in unique assessment practices, for example, providing opportunities for:

- Authentic assessment whereby students present their work to audiences around the world
- Real time assessment within the classroom
- Continuous assessment with online portfolios
- Collaborative assessment with other members of the faculty
- Innovative forms of assessment that offer students feedback from members of the community, or teachers and peers outside of their schools
- Individualized practice and make-up assessment

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Planning for professional development should encompass individual development needs as well as align to the district/school's vision for technology and curriculum. Professional development activities include:

- Traditional workshops
- Peer support
- Online courses
- Student support and coaching
- Increased opportunities for shared practice
- Shared best practice
- Self-directed personal growth
- Collaborative resources
- Podcasts
- Blogging
- Social bookmarking
- Managing learning with RSS
- Issues dealing with learning styles and critical thinking

Is the district/school providing:

- A range of professional development tools?
- Global collaboration?
- Opportunity for engagement with families and members of the community?
- Opportunity for student to support their teachers

COMMUNITY

This essential area concerns the level of awareness and understanding by all staff of the opportunities for extending learning beyond the school. Technology provides the tools for teachers and students to expand the boundaries of learning. It provides opportunities for high school students to participate in higher education, for younger students to take academic field trips, for experts in the community to become more connected with the schools and to build stronger relationships with families and social service agencies.

Districts/Schools can take advantage of:

- Creating bridges to and partnerships with the community
- Challenging students to work on solving real problems and presenting solutions to community members and organizations
- Engaging with the local and global community
- Enhanced relationship with families

About November Learning

Alan November has been an education technology consultant since 1995. Since then he has helped schools, governments and industry leaders improve the quality of education through technology. In 2004 Alan expanded November Learning to include a team of educational specialists and a wider range of educational materials. The November Learning Team is a highly specialized group of educators. We have a range of expertise in educational issues, with a primary focus on community building and technology integration. The November Learning Team is dedicated towards supporting and challenging teachers and students to expand the boundaries of learning.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

This essential area is concerned with the provision, capacity and support of technology resources used within the district/school. The area also considers the quality and sufficiency of technology resources, including software applications and variety of tools, such as handhelds, white boards and probes.

Access to the Internet and bandwidth issues are also central, as well as the effectiveness of technical support. Every school needs access to some form of technical support and the measure of its effectiveness should not be on how this is organized, but on how effective the arrangements are in minimizing disruption to learning and teaching.

Procurement needs to be well planned, evaluated and closely related to the district/school's strategy as well as to curriculum, subject or departmental needs. Issues, such as how the district/school acquires its technology resources are also important. There should be a clear view as to how effective the district/school current technology resources are in meeting learning and teaching needs and whether there are strategies in place to identify priorities for future developments.