

School Evaluation Summary

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Fishwater is a low-income community with the 2009 median income level of a family being \$27,500 compared to the national average of \$62,363 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey, 2010). The present day economy of Fishwater is based on recreational activities such as hunting, rafting, fishing, and jet boating (Fishwater Chamber of Commerce, 2010), so much of the population works in hospitality and tourism services. As in many rural towns, community members support and actively participate in school functions (Fishwater Boosters, 2010). Because of the low-income status, 36% of students do not have a computer at home and a larger percentage (48%) does not have Internet access in their homes (School District, 2009).

Fishwater is located in the Big Canyon about 150 miles from Boise, Idaho. The town is located at approximately 1800 feet elevation surrounded by rugged canyon mountains (Fishwater Chamber of Commerce, 2010). Despite the geographical challenges, the two schools enjoy high speed internet connectivity via Metro Ethernet, which is currently 5MB (bidirectionally), but can be increased to 35MB delivered over copper, or 100MB over fiber. With over 150 devices, and 115 students, the district is technology rich. In addition, the State's Educational Network video teleconference center provides additional online access to neighboring schools and universities. Access is available to all students and staff

In 2007, Fishwater Elementary and Junior Senior High School deconsolidated from a larger district to form the Fishwater Joint School District. The split was made to prevent bussing 1 hour each way for its (at the time) 140 students. The formation of a new district has allowed many decisions to be made locally, instead of at a distant district office. One decision was to

implement new technologies with various grant funding opportunities. Another was to implement the Fishwater Online Learning Center dedicated to asynchronous classes, blended learning, and dual-credit courses. The center is proctored by a non-certified, but highly qualified, staff member. At any given period, the center is filled to capacity. Students use laptops, headphones and microphones to complete the interactive coursework.

This technology is not confined to the online learning center. Similar technology and related resources are available for all curricular areas. Classrooms are equipped with overhead projectors, sound systems, computers, dedicated student workstations, student response pads, and Interwrite™ pads (interactive note pads). Some classrooms also feature interactive whiteboards and document readers. In addition, each school (elementary, middle, and high school) has a wireless laptop cart holding 12 laptops. Teachers use the cart regularly. Laptops have headphones/microphones that will eventually be used to consistently be tools for student creativity. High School teachers have access to digital still and video cameras, Kindle e-readers (15) and iPads (5); elementary teachers have access to an iPad lab (20 iPads).

The professional technical programs use technology and current industry standard software to produce such real-life products as the student newspaper, which is printed in a local area newspaper with a 3,000 – 5,000 delivery, providing an excellent venue to display student work. The desktop publishing class partners with the photography class to design, create, publish, and bind the yearbooks. The shop class use a CAD suite to design and manufacture various products that they later sell at a benefit auction.

Approximately 20% of teachers have fully adopted the student response pads and report they are invaluable assessment tools in both spontaneous and comprehensive assessment. Other teachers that use the pads occasionally report the pads take too long to initiate and cause too

much of a classroom distraction. Most teachers indicate their interest in fully integrating the response pads if they could have additional one-one specialized training. Unfortunately declining funding prevents additional training. The teachers that have fully adopted the clickers have agreed to be mentors, but they have yet to actually do it.

Students and staff are heavily dependent upon information resources and use them daily, and resources are fairly comprehensive, providing depth or diversity, and moving toward a balanced delivery. Staff, students, and parents use Powerschool for administrative reporting, data collection, and progress monitoring. Grades are entered and reviewed using a web interface. Areas that continue to need development are training (using available tools for more advanced activities), assessment, and availability of formal and/or informal tech support.

The administration is fully in support of professional development in educational technology and is eager to implement new and emerging technologies. The district is technology rich, and professional development is offered to teachers three times annually. Despite the available technology, few teachers use it to its capacity Curriculum is somewhat dependent upon technology and used in multiple ways in most classrooms. The science teacher is a model of technology integration, whereas four of the fifteen teachers rarely use any technology. Interestingly enough, most veteran teachers (10 years or more of service) are eager to learn the new technologies. 20% of teachers cite lack of time to learn and plan for the technology as the main reason new technologies remain unused in their classrooms.

Currently the technology leadership team is comprised of one administrator, two board members, the technology coordinator, the business manager, the online classroom proctor, the science teacher, the first grade teacher, and one student are developing a new comprehensive technology plan and policy. Formal policy exists, and further planning and policy is currently

under development for approval by the board of trustees. The comprehensive technology plan will be submitted to the state board of education in mid December after board approval. Two main themes are in place over the next three years: virtualization and integration of student's devices.

The district has been operating for five years and has only recently begun to examine the cost of maintaining and acquiring new technology. Prior to this time, funding has been provided by a number of large (\$50,000-75,000) grants. The grant funding has also provided professional development for staff members. They plan to have a technology line item for FY2013 of approximately \$30,000, excluding the fractional time of a staff member maintaining the technology.

Currently the district is technology rich with full administrative support, high speed bandwidth, a glut of computers, current industry standard software, and a well maintained network infrastructure. At this stage it lies in the "integrated" status, with a few areas of immediate improvement. Additional resources and planning in staff development, technology integration, and more advanced skills taught to staff and students are still necessary to become an "intelligent" model.

Resources:

U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey. (2010). *American Factfinder - Results*. Retrieved from Factfinder2:
http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_5YR_S1903&prodType=table