Blended Learning
Planning Grant

[Elementary School]

[School District]
Submitted to: Capital Area Intermediate Unit

Date: March 11, 2016
Section I. School Description:

The 2015-2016 school year brought invigorating and positive change to our school. The year began with a new principal and the implementation of a positive school-wide intervention system (PBIS). As a building, we united in a clear vision to personalize student learning through the delivery of student-centered instruction, the use of engaging performance tasks and focus on relevant content in accordance with our district rigor, relevance and relationship initiative (RRR). We strive to develop students' literacy and problem solving skills and infuse technology into our instructional approaches to create a progressive learning environment that prepares all students to be 21st century learners. The discipline, staff morale and overall instructional approaches improved in our school through the consistent and pervasive implementation of our RRR initiative and PBIS program. We are united by strong communication, data driven instruction, productive collaboration and commitment to transforming instructional approaches. We created an integrated delivery process for authentic learning opportunities. The positive changes we see in our staff, students, instruction and learning community result from commitment to both RRR, and our belief that we must educate the "whole student" through blended learning to prepare them for achievement in middle school, high school and beyond as members of our global community. Our use of blended learning, progress monitoring, data informed instruction, technology integration, authentic learning tasks, active student led classroom discover, staff collaboration and community resources will personalize student learning; subsequently, developing students' literacy skills, problem solving capabilities, content knowledge and ability to be leaders in a 21st century community. We are a school with an inspiring supportive culture infused with enthusiasm and a desire to work as a team in order to make a difference. Our elementary school is the largest elementary in our dynamic and progressive school district. Our district is in its fourth year of an instructional initiative focused on creating student-centered learning experiences. As the largest elementary in the district, we have taken a leadership role by embracing such instruction transforming our school and pursuing broad implementation of blended learning. We are socially and economically diverse with 654 students, 27% of whom are of a minority and 28% qualify in the low socioeconomic status. Our 61 staff members deliver enlightened and differentiated instruction to students in grades K-5 with support from a data driven RtI program, reading specialists, technology facilitators, data specialist and learning support teachers. We conducted a Bright Bytes survey in February 2016. Our results indicated students' believe they are
advanced and proficient in foundational and multimedia skills, but are emerging in online skills. Likewise, teachers indicated they are exemplary in foundational skills, but proficient in multimedia and online skills. Both students and teachers share an exemplary belief that technology is imperative for meaningful and personalized instruction. Furthermore, both teachers and students indicated our technology use for classroom instruction and our technology school resources were only emerging. Ultimately, our results indicated a strong desire to utilize technology but a need for resources and professional development. Compared to the survey we conducted in 2013 our staff and students use of technology, proficiency and desire to use technology all increased. Our survey results support that our staff is delivering rigorous and relevant instruction to personalize learning opportunities, but we currently lack the technology and resources to accommodate the large size of our school's population, instructional goals and diverse needs. Our building currently only has one computer lab and one cart of LearnPads. We are working to further obtain and integrate resources through fundraising and staff professional development.

Section II. Academic Model:

Our school vision focuses on personalizing learning to create active learning environments supporting technology exploration and student driven instruction. This is an important segue to prepare students for learning in our secondary buildings, which are already BYOD. To achieve our vision, we are undergoing a paradigm shift in instruction and student learning. We emphasize higher level questioning, meaningful performance based assessments, data driven instruction and student-centered classroom learning. Our goal is for each student to continually demonstrate growth. If chosen to be the recipient of the planning grant, our school will build upon the strong foundation created through the district's RRR and BYOD initiative to evolve our instruction using a rotational model for instruction student collaboration and personalized learning that will transcend learning barriers across skill levels, grades and buildings. While our initial focus will be on 3rd through 5th grade instruction, we will still infuse such strategies school-wide. We will deliver instruction that meets students at their level, progress monitor to understand students' changing needs and develop learners that take ownership of instruction. Our students must have the ability to internalize learning, form strong personal connections and synthesize understanding in performance based assessments. We need to educate our students in the 'way they learn' to equip them with a strong foundation of literacy and problem solving skills; rather than, just focusing on dissemination of assigned grade level content. Our
ultimate goal is to create a learning lab and flipped classrooms utilizing a blend of teacher instruction, online resources, station rotation and individual exploration through online resources. Students will drive their learning, engage in active problem solving, collaborate with peers and communicate their understanding in multiple mediums. Subsequently, our students will be prepared to thrive in a technology rich BYOD environment and equipped with the skills necessary to be leaders in 21st education.

In order to implement a rotational model, we must effectively utilize our resources and instructional approaches to create relevant learning approaches centered on student discovery. We will work with the PTA to fund a central learning lab equipped with collaborative learning stations and computers for individual online learning. We will also progress monitor students through iReady to tailor instruction to each student’s learning needs. In addition, we will provide staff with professional development to further implement the use of flipped classrooms, online learning clips, learning stations and performance based assessment. The use of a rotational model will create an active and challenging personalized learning environment ensuring all levels of learners make meaningful connection founded in authentic applications. Our school currently uses many of these approaches; such as, the Daily 5 reading stations, guided math learning centers, First in Math online enrichment, and Lexia online reading instruction. We also have SmartBoards in all our classrooms that are used to engage students in class discussion. If provided support through the planning grant, we plan to take our efforts further by working with our community, incorporating additional technology, creating online learning opportunities and developing flipped classrooms.

Through implementing the rotation model, the teacher’s role will change from the focus of the classroom to a facilitator that guides and supports student driven learning. Our district currently provides professional development and support to help teachers effectively implement such instruction through the RRR initiative. Our staff has participated as district teacher leaders in all five cohorts of our district’s RRR initiative. Our current efforts to obtain professional development to support our movement towards a blended learning environment would be further supported through the funds and opportunities provided by the planning grant. We believe the traditional model of a teacher-centered classroom limits instruction to the teacher’s learning styles, perspective and approaches. Consequently, when the student is made the center of learning and actively pursues their own discovery of content through the use of well-planned personalized learning opportunities and technology based instruction, all learners will
connect with content, learn in a manner that adheres to their learning style/needs and actively make authentic connections between their life, content and the world around them. The teacher will provide resources, develop performance tasks, support student investigation and create a dynamic learning environment founded in progressive student learning and collaboration. Therefore, through our current and continued pursuit of professional development, the teacher will become a researcher apprised of current personalized learning resources, a collaborator mindful of their instruction’s connection to student learning needs and a facilitator able to skillfully guide student discovery and elicit well-developed original student responses.

Just as the role of the teacher and the focus driving learning will change, our physical environment will change. While we are working to fundraise to achieve such transformation, the grant would provide us with the support needed to begin researching and implementing professional development and blended learning approaches. The classroom will no longer be a place for students to passively sit and record their learning. Rather, our classrooms will become active centers of authentic learning investigation, peer collaboration, student led instruction and discovery. We will need to adjust seating, form learning centers, create student discovery labs and incorporate additional technology into our classrooms to construct an engaging learning environment that supports students as the driving force behind their learning. Furthermore, we will need to create a collaborative culture that is open to guest speakers (live or online), community based activities, and cross-curricular/cross-grade level learning to personalize learning and develop meaningful, long-lasting connections that ensure continual growth in all students' learning.

Section III. Readiness:

We are ready to take instruction to the next level and transform our school to meet 21st century learning demands. This process requires a school that is unified, has coherent curricular instruction across teachers/grades, can acquire and utilize multiple technology resources and effectively communicate with their surrounding community creating a dynamic learning environment. Our school is prepared to meet each and every demand. Our teachers meet and plan as a grade level, cross-curricular, as well as a faculty. We use learning stations, reflective writing, higher level questioning and performance based assessment to ensure our instruction is rigorous and relevant. We empower students to problem solve, collaborate and take on the role of teacher. The staff is eager to adapt their
instructional approaches to meet students’ individual needs. This is evident by the staff’s continual commitment to learning and implementing the most effective and modern research-based instructional approaches. Curricular gaps have also been closed and instruction scaffolded to ensure students are building on prior knowledge, demonstrating growth and achieving at a high level through the implementation of an organized curriculum. We continually progress monitor and evaluate our approaches to adjust them as needed to meet learners’ needs. Our use of progress monitoring ensures we reflect on data and make informed instructional decisions.

Through our local fundraising efforts and district instructional initiative, we have taken steps towards transforming staff skills, learning approaches, learning resources and our environment. We are meeting with district experts to understand the most beneficial devices and resources available to move our instruction into a technology-based format. Our school is in a unique and empowering position to take our current resources and knowledge in relationship to technology’s role as a foundation for further incorporation of such approaches through the grant’s resources. Because implementing and sustaining such progressive and transformative efforts requires support, we maintain a strong PTA and community involvement for our current pursuit of funds and delivery of content. We can build on this strong support system to acquire further resources, to keep our resources current, provide professional development, collaborate with existing blended learning environments and work with the community to ensure authentic and personalized learning for all students. If selected to receive the grant, we would be able to focus on professional development, staff empowerment and collaboration to successfully determine the best way to implement personalized instruction in our school. Through the knowledge we will gain, we plan to use acquired PTA funds and community support to construct a centralized school learning lab, equip classrooms with document cameras, implement iReady for progress monitoring, acquire two carts of Chrome Flip Books for one to one learning opportunities and investigate online learning resources to further our use of personalized instruction.

Section IV. Collaboration:

Our goal for the initial planning grant is to research and access blended and personalized learning environments for professional development and to establish a clear vision for implementation that will meet our school’s needs and elevate our instruction. As a team, we have already visited the blended learning environment at East Pennsboro Middle School to begin better understanding the role of blended learning in both instruction and
learning. We have also attended the PETE&C conference as well as the Mid Atlantic Conference on Personal Learning. We look forward to attending other blended learning environments and conferences to gain insights into effective resources and approaches. Planning grant funding will enable exploration and collaboration with successful blended learning environments and resources in preparation for transforming instruction, personalizing student learning and creating a blended learning environment founded in the use of technology. Through such collaboration and professional development, we will transcend learning barriers, meet students’ individual needs and prepare students to be global citizens. Furthermore, it will provide us with an informed and strong foundation to serve as leaders in our district’s RRR initiative by presenting our efforts to administrators, the school board and staff throughout the district. Our team is comprised of administrators at every level of instruction as well as teachers across 3rd through 5th grade. Subsequently, we will be able to utilize the resources and understanding we develop through our planning grant to transform instruction in our building and create an effective implementation plan. We will work as a cohort to share the resources and approaches we ascertain during our planning period and experiences at our building level throughout the district. As we become increasingly well-versed in blended learning, we will present to staff, speak to administrators, present to the school board and community. We would be willing to attend IU training days to present to other schools in the region and serve as instructors during staff professional development summer academy days. In addition, we would abide by an open door collaborative approach by welcoming staff from other buildings or schools as well as community members to meet with us and explore our movement towards effectively transforming instruction through blended learning. Finally, as we gain a better understanding of how blended learning can be best implemented at our school to meet our vision, we would communicate our efforts through social media, a principal’s blog, parent technology nights and open house meetings.

Section V. Other:

Professional development is essential in our movement towards blended learning. We will create opportunities for staff to engage in professional development through online resources, collaborative staff workshops and development of professional learning communities. Our district will support our movement towards digital cohorts and student centered instruction through their established RRR initiative and BYOD policies. The provision of such supports will ensure our efforts are focused and successful.
Section VI. Core Planning Team:

The core planning team was developed to ensure all grade levels and district stakeholders were provided opportunity to share their expertise and insights as part of our team. The dynamic and diverse members of the team represent central administration, leaders in the field of technology, administrators at every level of instruction, teachers from each grade level and support staff. In addition, several members of the team are community members and one member is also a parent of students at our elementary school. The comprehensive formation of the team ensures we are able to successfully unite our current support systems, promote collaboration across the district and maximize the benefits and impact of the grant’s resources to achieve our vision of developing strong problem solvers and active 21st century learners through personalized instruction.

Superintendent: The superintendent has been a positive force in our district for the past four years and an administrator at multiple levels in our district for over fourteen years. The superintendent has a BA in Mathematics, Masters in Education and Doctorate in Educational Leadership. Over the past four years, the superintendent has worked with Scholastic Achievement Partners to elevate instruction through an initiative focused on meeting all students’ needs through rigorous and relevant instruction founded in collaboration and strong relationships. In addition, the superintendent has worked with the school board to develop and implement a Bring Your Own Device Policy at our schools. The superintendent has a passion for doing what’s best for students and has successfully implemented the largest professional development undertaking in our district’s recent history.

Instructional Technology Specialist/Consultant: The district instructional technology specialist/consultant has owned and operated her own company for 18 years supporting many Central PA school districts in their efforts to embrace and use technology resources in the classroom. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science and Information Systems, along with a Master of Science degree in Instructional Technology. She is experienced in a wide variety of instructional technology resources including learning management systems such as Moodle and Canvas, and manages a Canvas resource site developed for the district providing information, links, tutorials and integration ideas for teachers and district staff. She has developed a team of Technology Facilitators (one or two teachers in each of the district’s schools) that act as technology resource/mentors in the schools.
School Improvement Specialist: The school improvement specialist has a masters in Teaching and Curriculum and is currently working on obtaining a Math Coaching Endorsement through the State. In addition he has worked in the district for five years spending four years as an educator at the elementary level prior to obtaining a central administration position. The school improvement specialist also served as a technology facilitator at the elementary level for three years.

Principal A: Principal A is an assistant high school principal with 15 years of experience in education. He is in his sixth year as a building principal after spending 9 years as a special education teacher. He holds a dual certification in special education (N-12) and elementary education. He also holds a Masters Degrees in Instructional Methods and Special Education. Along with the Masters Degrees, he is working on obtaining a Doctorate in Educational Leadership. Principal A is also a parent of two students in our school and serves as a liaison between our team and the PTA.

Principal B: Principal B is a middle school principal with 16 years' experience in education. He is in his fifth year as a building principal after spending 4 as an assistant principal. He has a Master's in Middle School Education, his K-12 principal certification and is working towards a Doctorate in school system leadership.

Principal C: Principal C is an elementary principal with 14 years' experience in education. She is in her third year as an administrator. She has a Masters in Reading as well as Masters in Educational Leadership. She has 11 years of experience delivering literacy instruction as a high school English teacher, served as the assistant principal at the middle school level for two years and served as a collaborator on the District Writing Manual that is utilized by all staff at the district's secondary level. She is currently in her first year as head principal and pursuing a Doctorate in Educational Technology.

Elementary School Counselor: The elementary school counselor has served as a counselor for 16 years and also holds certifications in elementary education and special education having worked for six years with students with emotional disturbance, learning disabilities, and multiple handicaps. She is a national certified counselor and holds a PhD in educational psychology. She teaches a broad range of guidance lesson topics to students in grades K-5 by implementing technology into the guidance curriculum. Additionally, she is an adjunct professor in the counseling department teaching synchronous online master level classes.
Data and Instruction Specialist: The elementary data and instruction specialist has served as D&I for 9 years as well as department chair for 7 years. As the Data & Instruction Specialist, she collects benchmark data and progress monitoring data for reading and math. She supports the staff with analyzing the data to drive instruction. Additionally, she is part of the school’s leadership team, as well as, the coach for the PBIS team and a member of the PBIS Tier 2 team. As a member of the Pennsylvania State Education Association, she has been an elected member of the Council on Instruction and Professional Development where she has helped plan professional development conferences and stays well-informed with the latest information in education.

Gifted Support Teacher: The gifted support teacher brings 20 years of social studies and gifted education experience from the high school, middle and elementary school levels and has been an early adopter of technology in the classroom throughout her career. Her experience includes: first cohort for Classrooms for the Future grant and completed 30 hours of instruction in 21st Century Learning, course creation in Moodle and Canvas, created and taught blended courses at the high school level, including AP courses, utilized Blackboard as a College in the High School instructor in Criminal Justice, and developed and delivered curriculum in a 1:1 school. In addition, she served her former district as a member of an Online Learning Consortium. She earned a B.S. in Secondary Ed. from West Virginia University and a M.Ed. in Training and Development from Penn State University.

Teacher A: Teacher A is a 5th grade teacher has been an educator in the district for 11 years. She holds a Master of Science in Education degree for Curriculum and Instruction and is the process of adding her Math Coaching Certificate. She is the fifth grade representative on the district’s Elementary Math Committee and has attended several conferences and workshops focused on Math Education and technology. She is currently being trained in Student-Centered Classrooms and will assist in training staff to implement strategies in the upcoming school year.

Teacher B: Teacher B is a fifth grade teacher and has been in education for 14 years. He holds a Master of Science in Education degree in Curriculum and Development, and has completed his courses in Educational Leadership. He is a member of the student assistance program which allows him to work with staff and students across all grade levels. He also serves as Dean of Students which allows him to continually work on staff relations while also incorporating problem solving skills.
Teacher C: Teacher C is a 4th grade teacher that has been teaching for over 13 years and has served as a district Technology Facilitator for over 5 years. He has a Master's Degree in Education in Educational Leadership. He has trained staff in the use of technology through faculty meetings, before/after school meetings, and summer academy sessions. He has helped to successfully bring Smartboards, LearnPads, and WIFI to our elementary school. In the classroom, Teacher C often incorporates technology into his lessons. Currently, his students, and other students in our school, are using coding.org to broaden their understanding of how technology works.

Teacher D: Teacher D has been an educator with the district for 10 years and served as a Technology Facilitator for over 5 of those years. He has provided technology instruction to students and educators and has personal experience with educational software as well as basic html and javascript coding. He has been on the planning teams to successfully bring SmartBoards, LearnPads, and Wifi to our and continues to support those initiatives. In addition, he has experience teaching both 1st and 4th grade. He currently has a Masters in Education and is looking forward to beginning his Doctorate in Instructional Technology.

Teacher E: Teacher E is a third grade elementary teacher and is certified to teach Pre-K through 6th grade. She graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a dual degree is Early Childhood and Elementary. Recently, she graduated from Wilkes University with a Master's Degree in Education. She holds a previous Bachelor's degree from Millersville University in Graphic Design. She worked as a graphic artist for several years before choosing to go back to school for education. She is familiar with Adobe Creative Suite and is quick to pick up on new computer programs introduced. She is very interested in using the best teaching techniques to reach the needs of all her students. She has experience in online platform and being a student in an online setting. She currently has third grade students learning and using Hour of Code during their Computer time.

Teacher F: Teacher F is an elementary special education teacher and has 2 years of experience and certifications in Special Education and Elementary Education. She has experience differentiating instruction for students with a plethora of different needs, by utilizing websites and applications needed to make these students successful. She also has ongoing experience with online classes due to taking graduate classes online to become a Reading Specialist. She is looking forward to continuing her learning on technology to implement personalized instruction for all students.
Section VII. Spending Plan:

Our team’s spending plan is focused on supporting research and professional development efforts. We will continue to visit successful blended learning environments to collaborate with educators and determine both resources and instructional methods that will work in our school to ensure our implementation of blended learning is supported and successful. In addition, we plan to use funds to attend conferences and further develop our understanding of resources as well as connect with vendors and experts in the field of personalized learning. Lastly, the planning grant funds will enable us to provide supplemental contracts to fund blended learning coaches in our school that can lead staff professional development workshops, investigate curricular resources, test devices and support staff lesson construction. If awarded the grant, we will begin researching and reviewing online resources, technology tools and scheduling visitations to local schools as well as informative conferences to help us devise a successful implementation plan that will benefit all of our students and staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Washington DC, Baltimore and PA school visits</th>
<th>$2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISTE Denver, CO</td>
<td>$3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INACOL Blended and Online Learning Symposium, San Antonio, TX</td>
<td>$4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitutes (for professional development trainings, conferences and local blended learning school visits)</td>
<td>$4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental Contracts (2 Blended Learning Coaches; Supplemental Pay for additional staff hours)</td>
<td>$3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Expenses</td>
<td>$2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology (iReady Progress Monitoring Assessment Licenses, trial devices, curricular materials and trial software licenses)</td>
<td>$2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assurances
and Signature Page
Holder