Proposal Abstract

Personalized Blended Learning will be implemented in grades PK – 5 at Dr. Weeks Elementary School, a Priority school, and Meachem Elementary School, a Focus school, in Syracuse. This initiative will help transform learning environments through the integrated use of instructional technology in classrooms and the school library; and will provide sustained professional development to increase the skills of teachers and the school Library Media Specialists in the use of instructional technology in coordination and implementation of the Learning Standards of New York State.

Blended Learning is a formal personalized education program in which a student learns at least in part through delivery of content and instruction via digital and online media with some element of student control over time, place, path, and pace. Corresponding to the Common Core, this innovative initiative will broaden and expand the role of technology in acquiring and sharing knowledge and will tighten the link to other forms of communication for the students.

This initiative will support the District's endeavor to transform education to a personalized blended model of learning and teaching, and will provide the schools with necessary assistance to remain on track with this plan. Professional development will enable teacher leaders to lead model classrooms for other teachers to observe and emulate. Non-public schools in Syracuse will also be included in this initiative.

Personalized Blended Learning will allow instruction to be targeted to each student's strengths, needs and interests. By utilizing digital content, each student will focus on their own needs, at their own pace. The teacher will utilize the data provided through regular online assessments to quickly assess gaps in each student's skills and understanding, then intervene as needed, by providing more practice in small group instruction for students as necessary, and stretching students who have achieved mastery. The daily infusion of technology as a tool for learning, evaluating and producing will provide students with the digital literacy that they will need to be successful, productive members of society.

The three-year transformation plan will target two grade levels each year. By Year Three, the entire school will implement the station rotation model of Personalized Blended Learning. The schools will develop a culture of personalized learning in which students will take ownership for their learning, have opportunities to work collaboratively, independently and in small groups, as well as achieve fluency with selecting and using appropriate technology. Technology will be seamlessly integrated into curriculum as a means to gain knowledge and skills. Through the professional development, teachers will attain expertise in infusing technology meaningfully into their daily lessons aligned to the New York State Learning Standards (including Common Core).

The initiative will result in increased academic performance by the students of the schools, specifically: improved ELA and Math scores on New York State assessments; gains on STAR assessments in both Math and ELA; and increased digital literacy.

Dr. Weeks and Meachem Elementary Schools
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