

1.) Describe the range of critical needs facing Spring Wells High School at this time.

Currently, Spring Wells High School is facing some daunting and frustrating challenges. They have one year left to bring 100% of their staff with a novice certification and 75% of their staff at practitioner certification. They currently only have 75% of staff at novice practitioner certification and 40% at practitioner certification. If they fail to achieve the goals, then their state technology funding will be forfeited. For Suzanne Garner and teachers like Sandy Green, this is unacceptable. Sandy Green uses computers nearly every day in her science classroom and has for the past 15 years. Without the technology funding, maintenance and upgrades to the computer equipment cannot be performed.

Additionally, the school has been designated as “in emergency” for low test scores. The school had two years to improve this status to “continuous improvement” by improving test scores. The school is already in the second year and while test scores did rise by 6%, it was not enough to earn the designation “continuous improvement.” If they fail to raise the designation the state will step in and decide on such matters as budget and educational changes.

The stakes are very high for Spring Wells High School. They need to implement change in both areas to avoid losing funds and / or control of the budget and school.

2.) Identify the available resources and existing constraints that apply in this case.

The school has many computers available to them to use in technology training as well as courses and programs designed to improve test scores. For the past three years, Spring Wells has been receiving funding from the SchoolTech Equity Funding from the state. The school has also been granted \$20,000 to “improve teacher skills and knowledge in providing new environments for learning” from the Teacher Professional Development Grant Fund (Franklin). Suzanne Gardner had, in previous years, offered after school workshops to get teachers and staff certified, however, many teachers did not attend stating that they were too busy to do it after school.

While the school has ample computers on hand, many teachers either do not know how to use them or include them in their classrooms, or they refuse to use them. Teachers like Phil Nelson doesn't believe in technology in the classroom and nearly refuses to participate in the workshops designed to bring him to at least novice certification. Phil is probably not the only one with this mindset.

3.) Describe a plan for meeting the needs identified in question 1.

Basically, student test scores need to improve and teacher familiarity and certification rates with computers have to increase or the school will lose funding and control of budgets and educational decisions. Both of these outcomes are not acceptable.

Some of the additional \$20,000 in funding to provide some workshops those teachers could attend. These workshops would be held during school hours and on an in-service day. The workshops would be mandatory in this setting and teachers would be free from classroom work for the day in order to attend. During the workshops, various activities could be implemented that show the potential for motivation that technology provides to students. The workshops could also cover internet safety and resources for teachers to implement use of the internet in the classroom.

The workshops will be held at the beginning of the year so that teachers can implement technology into their lessons and units so that the benefits to the students can be maximized.

Some of the funding will be used to purchase a content filter service that will help to ensure that students are not only safe while online, but not viewing inappropriate content, or participating in activities that detract from the educational goals of the various lessons and activities.

Some of the funding will also be used to educate teachers and other staff that are responsible for the computers to maintain the machines that they control. Proper maintenance is essential for error-free computing.

There is already a proficiency template in place to measure current classroom curriculum as it aligns with state standards. The template is designed to identify areas and standards that are not being addressed. Some funding should be used to teach teachers how to use this tool and why it is important. Emphasis should be placed on the benefits of knowing what areas are lacking and what areas may be being covered too much.

With a more positive attitude towards technology, teachers will include it in their lessons, activities, and classroom more and more often which will lead to higher student motivation and interest. If the students are interested more, then they will learn more and rising test scores should correlate with increased motivation and learning.

4.) Specify the steps required for implementing the plan you developed in question 3, keeping in mind the resources and constraints present in the case.

A needs analysis has to be done to determine what types of workshops to offer. An assessment tool has to be developed to determine if the teachers and staff have achieved the desired proficiency. This tool may already be in place with the novice / practitioner / expert certification guidelines. Pre-assessments should be conducted and preliminary surveys as well so that Suzanne Gardner can properly design workshops that will be informative and motivating so that teachers will bring more technology into their classroom. Each teacher should use the proficiency template to determine the areas that their curriculum needs improvement or new content and adjust accordingly by implementing technological tools and computers into the lessons. A needs assessment

should be conducted to determine current levels of technological expertise in order to develop guides and procedures for regular computer maintenance. With the addition of all of these factors, student achievement and test scores should rise. An assessment of student skill levels should be conducted as well and the post assessment should be administered regularly possibly in the form of MAPS testing or something like it three times yearly. This gives teachers the ability to determine if what they are doing is helping and what students or areas need more work.

5.) What are the ethical issues related to the use of funding for assessment and curriculum alignment when the grant was originally written for technology professional development?

The money was granted to the school to use for professional teacher development in the areas of technology. While, I can understand the desire to use the funding to help raise test scores, it is not ethical and, depending on the grant, could result in losing further grant monies but possibly needing to repay the current grant.

It is also worth noting that if teacher's certification rates are not improved, other monies from the state could be lost.

It is clear. The grant money should be used as it was intended for—to provide professional development opportunities for teachers in the field of technology. If the money is properly used for this purpose, school test scores will rise as a result. Now, there is nothing saying that that the money and programs funded by the grant money cannot be used quickly.