

case study

Critical thinking Processes Help District Develop Complex Technology Initiative Plan for Digital Transformation



Recap/Key Points

- Involving stakeholders increases understanding and guarantees better results
- Using TregoED processes ensures that the decisions and planning required around complex initiatives are done systematically, collaboratively and transparently
- Planning for complex initiatives requires a clear, shared vision and consideration of both potential opportunities and potential problems.

District Information

Located on Long Island, NY, the Sewanhaka Central High School District serves 8,600 students (grades 7-12) in its five schools. The District receives students from four demographically distinct communities, diverse both economically and ethnically—each with its own separate elementary system. Each community sends two trustees to the Sewanhaka Central High School's Board of Education.

Problem/Challenge

The Sewanhaka Central High School District was faced with the enviable challenge of using a one-time infusion of state funds to accelerate their district digital transformation in a



manner that is equitable and sustainable across their five (7-12) high schools. Among the goals of their technology plan was to make students more competitive and college ready, have the support of the community and to ensure that the plan would be sustainable after funds were depleted. Along with meeting those requirements, the challenge necessitated developing a comprehensive transformation plan including a shared vision for teaching and learning, selecting and purchasing devices, ensuring a supporting infrastructure, preparing for a smooth rollout, writing new policies to support the changes, building a professional development plan, and forming plans for assessment.



Solution

Having been trained in TregoED collaborative processes, district leaders understood that including stakeholders in the decision-making process in a meaningful way, was one sure-fired way to increase transparency and buy-in. An Ad Hoc committee comprised of students, parents, teachers, department chairs, school and central office administrators was tasked with learning financial parameters, discussing and defining criteria, researching models and products and making a recommendation to the Board of Education with justifications and potential problems gleaned from working through the Decision Analysis and Potential Problem Analysis processes.

The recommendation of a 1:1 program was approved as it provided a consistent platform for teaching and learning and bridged the home/school resource gap to all students 24/7 access to rich learning resources. Once this initial approval was received, they had to begin work on platform decisions and implementation.

Using Decision Analysis, they created a list of criteria and invited three primary platform vendors to present a Technology Expo to members of the entire school community. Based on the criteria, all participants were asked to provide input on the best fit for the district. The data was collated and analyzed by the Central Cabinet, Principals, and Technology staff. Following the platform decision, they had to begin planning for implementation; this included a financing plan, communications plan, training and professional development and logistics. As collaboration was at the heart of all steps, people were well informed and excited about the initiative. A multi-faceted communications package with print, electronic, and personalized approaches was developed. They established a proactive approach to training and professional development that has provided teachers with the confidence they need for successful implementation.

Results

They have seen many positive results during year one of their three-year roll-out plan. Stakeholders involved in the process, including vendors who have shared the process with other districts, were impressed by the thought put into criteria, risks, potential problems and buy-in. They have developed a stronger partnership with the elementary feeding districts, who benefitted from being involved in the Technology Expo.

Teachers, who in the past, had limited access to technology, both for their own learning and their students, have embraced new professional development opportunities on their own time. Pilot teachers have stepped up as true leaders in professional development and instruction. Communication with parents has improved as the technology has allowed them to share up-to-date assignments and grades. Observations and communications are now paperless whenever possible.

Parents and students are excited about the new opportunities that this initiative will provide for communication, transparency, and engagement. The new resources are helping the district remove barriers to learning by providing full access to technology in the classroom and providing technology for home use that puts students on a level playing field with their peers and provides opportunities for differentiation allowing all students to excel.



The training has proved invaluable in our work over the duration of this project as it has forced us to be more collaborative, more intentional, more critical, and more methodical about planning, researching, clarifying priorities, and more focused in our decision making. That has paid dividends on the implementation side, which is a necessity when dealing with \$3.2 million of tax payer money to provide the best learning environment for the 8,200 students of our District. We continue to be appreciative of the support and we continue to benefit immensely from the processes."

Dr. Ralph Ferrie, Superintendent



info@TregoED.org | 866-268-3980 | 609-252-2539 | 116 Village Blvd., Suite 300 | Princeton, NJ 08540 | www.TregoED.org

Copyright © 2015 TregoED, Inc. All rights reserved. | 11/23/16 672-10-P528615E