SWOT Analysis

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ESSENTIAL CONDITION ONE: EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL USES OF TECHNOLOGY EMBEDDED IN STANDARDS-BASED, STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING

ISTE Definition: Use of information and communication technology (ICT) to facilitate engaging approaches to learning.

Guiding Questions:

- *How is technology being used in our school? How frequently is it being used? By whom? For what purposes?*
- *To what extent is student technology use targeted toward student achievement of the Georgia Learning Standards (GPSs, QCCs)?*
- *To what extent is student technology use aligned to research-based, best practices that are most likely to support student engagement, deep understanding of content, and transfer of knowledge? Is day-to-day instruction aligned to research-based best practices? (See Creighton Chapters 5, 7)*

Strengths	*Weaknesses*	*Opportunities*	*Threats*
Many technology resources are provided that could improve student-centered learning. SmartBoards and SmartBoard software are used for instruction through all subject areas. Technology is used on a daily basis by teachers for management and instructional purposes. Technology use is directly based on the Georgia Performance Standards per requirements at our school.	Technology use is often limited to the use of direct instruction or improving skills versus engaging students. Students do not directly get to use technology on a daily basis. (Technology use is sometimes limited to Computer Lab use during Specials.) Teachers are not familiar with applying technology to increase constructivist learning. Technology use is not indicated as a goal for increasing student achievement in the school strategic plan.	Technology purchases are constantly being made to improve classroom instruction and engagement. SPLOST funds are geared toward creating 21st century classrooms.	Teachers do not have the desire to increase their technology use in the classroom. Teachers view technology use in the classroom as a way to provide drill-and-skill activities. Teachers do not have the time to teach students how to use technology so instead they just focus on the content without technology use. Teachers are most comfortable using direct instruction; therefore, do not see the benefits of constructivist learning. Professional learning

			opportunities about research-based best practices are limited or not available.

Summary/Gap Analysis:

Technology use at Austell Intermediate can be seen in all classrooms. Teachers use technology for management and instructional purposes. Management purposes range from attendance to e-mail to team planning. Instructional purposes include developing lessons using SmartBoard software to creating instructional graphic organizers and activity sheets to using resources from the Internet. Technology is used on a daily basis by teachers and administrators.

Unfortunately, technology use is not used as a means to engage students and provide high-order thinking opportunities. Technology use is really focused on the teacher while there needs to be a shift to the students being the main users of the technology in the classroom. Technology is really viewed as a means to increasing productivity which is appropriate, but it should also be viewed as a way to increase student-centered learning in the classroom.

The biggest challenge for this condition is getting teachers to view technology in a different way. The role of technology in the classroom needs to change to provide better educational opportunities for our students.

ESSENTIAL CONDITION TWO: Shared Vision

ISTE Definition: Proactive leadership in developing a shared vision for educational technology among school personnel, students, parents, and the community.

Guiding Questions:

- *Is there an official vision for technology use in the district/school? Is it aligned to research-best practices? Is it aligned to state and national visions? Are teachers, administrators, parents, students, and other community members aware of the vision?*
- *To what extent do teachers, administrators, parents, students, and other community members have a vision for how technology can be used to enhance student learning? What do they <u>believe</u> about technology and what types of technology uses we should encourage in the future? Are their visions similar or different? To what extent are their beliefs about these ideal, preferred technology uses in the future aligned to research and best practice?*
- *To what extent do educators see technology as critical for improving student achievement of the GPS/QCCs? To preparing tomorrow's workforce? For motivating digital-age learners?*
- *What strategies have been deployed to date to create a research-based shared vision?*
- *What needs to be done to achieve broad-scale adoption of a research-based vision for technology use that is likely to lead to improved student achievement?*

Strengths	*Weaknesses*	*Opportunities*	*Threats*
Cobb County School District has a technology plan developed and available that directly explains the district's vision. A technology committee is currently in place with members from each department to collaboratively work on the school's vision. Teachers believe that technology use can be a productive means for planning.	Teachers, administrators, parents, students, and community members are not aware of the vision. The school strategic plan does not include technology. Teachers do not see the connection between technology and student achievement. Technology is used a reward in behavior management systems versus as a way to motivate and	The technology committee could allow for invitations to parents and community members to increase the shared vision for technology. Staff can become more informed on the shared vision by releasing the agenda and notes from the discussions of the technology committee. The Cobb County School District technology plan could be implemented in a	PTA members may not view the shared vision of technology as a pressing need. Teachers do not have similar views and beliefs about the use of technology in the classroom. Technology use is not envisioned as a means to increase students achievement by all.

Teachers believe that students need to be skilled in technology use for future use.	engage all students. PTA and community members have not been involved in developing a technology vision.	professional reading study through out the staff to increase understanding of the county's shared vision. Discussions about the reading could be discussed during staff meetings.	

Summary/Gap Analysis:

The Cobb County School district has provided its staff and employees with a shared technology vision through their technology plan, but most employees are not aware of the shared vision in the county. Also, the school does not include technology in its shared vision towards student achievement. There is a disconnect between the shared vision between the teachers, administrators, students, and parents throughout the school.

These problems could easily be remedied if all involved parties where exposed to the county's shared vision and a school vision was started to be developed through the technology committee. The technology committee should included members from all school departments as well as parents and community members.

Teachers and administrators need to be exposed to the abundant research that technology use in the classroom has a direct correlation with increasing student achievement. The lack of this knowledge seems to be causing a divide in the vision shared by the staff.

ESSENTIAL CONDITION THREE: Planning for Technology

ISTE Definition: A systematic plan aligned with a shared vision for school effectiveness and student learning through the infusion of ICT and digital learning resources.

Guiding Questions:

- *Is there an adequate plan to guide technology use in your school? (either at the district or school level? Integrated into SIP?)*
- *What should be done to strengthen planning?*

Strengths	*Weaknesses*	*Opportunities*	*Threats*
Cobb County School District has a technology plan developed and available. A school strategic plan is available with some limited references to technology.	Few staff members are familiar with the district technology plan or how to access it. The school strategic plan does not specifically include a section on technology use.	Teachers could be exposed to the Cobb County School District Technology plan through a staff meeting or training. A technology plan could be created through the discussions and collaboration of the technology committee. Data collection through surveys and focus walks can guide the next steps necessary for implementing technology in the school strategic plan.	Technology Committee Members often focus more on access to technology versus the implementation of technology in instruction. The creation of a technology plan could be time consuming which would discourage teachers and administrators from participating. The current school strategic plan is created by administrators; therefore, there is little perspective on current classroom instruction.

Summary/Gap Analysis:

While there is a county technology plan available, there is not a school technology plan nor does the school strategic plan adequately include technology as an integral part of instruction. Generally, staff members are not familiar the county technology plan or the school strategic plan.

Teachers not only need more exposure to the county technology plan, but a school technology plan needs to be created. A technology plan can be created through the collaboration of the technology committee. In order for an adequate plan to be created, the

technology committee will need to focus on the implementation of technology in engaging instruction. Technology plans need to be created with perspective from administrators, teachers, parents, and community members.

ESSENTIAL CONDITION FOUR: Equitable Access

ISTE Definition: Robust and reliable access to current and emerging technologies and digital resources

Guiding Questions:

- *To what extent do students, teachers, administrators, and parents have access to computers and digital resources necessary to support engaging, standards-based, student-centered learning?*
- *To what extent is technology arrange/distributed to maximize access for engaging, standards-based, student-centered learning?*
- *What tools are needed and why?*
- *Do students/parents/community need/have beyond school access to support the vision for learning?*

Strengths	*Weaknesses*	*Opportunities*	*Threats*
LCD projectors are installed in each classroom. Classrooms are equipped with SmartBoards and SmartBoard software for instructional use. 3 to 4 computers and a printer are stationed in each classroom. Each teacher is assigned a laptop. There are two stationary computer labs available. There is one laptop cart available for check out. The Media Center is equipped	Many students do not have internet access outside of schools. Technology use is not considered in terms of maximize access for engaging students. Some technology is not adequately used (such as iRespond and scanners).	SPLOST funds continue to allow for more access to computers and digital resources. Trainings and professional learning opportunities can allow for teachers to learn how to maximize their resources for engaging, standards-based use. During Making Connections PTA night, parents can be exposed to ways to incorporate technology at home.	The amount of technology available can be overwhelming and confusing for some. 3 to 4 computers in a classroom is not adequate for all whole group instruction. Teachers do not have time to worry about computer labs and laptop carts sign up sheets and sharing with other teachers.

with a stationary computer lab that is available for media center purposes. Computers and laptops have a variety of productivity tools and content-based software. The school building has a wireless Internet connection. Each classroom has an iRespond System. Each classroom is equipped with a scanner.			

Summary/Gap Analysis:

The access to technology inside the classroom is quite vast. Each classroom is equipped with computers, a projector, a SmartBoard, a scanner, and a printer. Content-based software is available on all computers. A wireless connection allows for easy access to Internet resources.

While technology access is quite commendable inside the school, all students do not have quality technology experiences at home. Parents can be exposed to appropriate technology use through PTA nights and information sent home from the teacher.

The amount of technology available can be overwhelming to some which leads to some resources being underused. Teachers need adequate training in all resources and ample amount of time to learn how to use these resources.

Overall, the access to technology is outstanding, but there needs to be a focus on the quality of technology use in the classroom. Technology should be used to provide engaging, student-centered instruction.

ESSENTIAL CONDITION FIVE: Skilled Personnel

ISTE Definition: Educators and support staff skilled in the use of ICT appropriate for their job responsibilities.

Guiding Questions:

- *To what extent are educators and support staff skilled in the use of technology appropriate for their job responsibilities?*
- *What do they currently know and are able to do?*
- *What are knowledge and skills do they need to acquire?*

(Note: No need to discuss professional learning here. Discuss knowledge and skills. This is your needs assessment for professional learning. The essential conditions focus on "personnel," which includes administrators, staff, technology specialists, and teachers. However, in this limited project, you may be wise to focus primarily or even solely on teachers; although you may choose to address the proficiency of other educators/staff IF the need is critical. You must include an assessment of teacher proficiencies.

Strengths	*Weaknesses*	*Opportunities*	*Threats*
Teachers can adequately use communication tools such as e-mail. Teachers are proficient in the use of productivity tools such as Word, Excel, and Publisher. Teachers have developed skills on the use of SmartBoards and SmartBoard software through their own use and training. Teachers are adequate at using the Internet to research and find resources for instructional purposes.	Teachers are not well-versed in content-related programs and software available on our computers. Teachers are generally not skilled in using digital tools to increase classroom engagement. Technology is viewed strictly as a productivity/management tool by some teachers.	Teachers can access "help" manuals for most programs and software online. Online courses, videos, and tutorials are available online for some resources.	Teachers do not have time to test out new resources through "trial and error" experimentation. Teachers do not have time to enroll in trainings to increase understanding in resources that are weak.

Summary/Gap Analysis:

Teachers can adequately use technology for productive, management, and communication purposes. Teachers are especially proficient in Word, Excel, Publisher, and PowerPoint. Through practice and some training, teachers have developed the appropriate skills to create SmartBoard-based lessons and activities. Teachers are also able to use the Internet to find resources and activities to use in instruction.

While teachers are quite adequate at management and productivity tools, most teachers are not very skilled in using digital tools to increase higher-order thinking skills. Teachers need to expand their view to include engaging instructional tools.

ESSENTIAL CONDITION SIX: Ongoing Professional Learning

ISTE Definition: Technology-related professional learning plans and opportunities with dedicated time to practice and share ideas.

Guiding Questions:

- *What professional learning opportunities are available to educators? Are they well-attended? Why or why not?*
- *Are the current professional learning opportunities matched to the knowledge and skills educators need to acquire? (see Skilled Personnel)*
- *Do professional learning opportunities reflect the national standards for professional learning (NSDC)?*
- *Do educators have both formal and informal opportunities to learn?*
- *Is technology-related professional learning integrated into all professional learning opportunities or isolated as a separate topic?*
- *How must professional learning improve/change in order to achieve the shared vision?*

Strengths	*Weaknesses*	*Opportunities*	*Threats*
Professional learning and courses are available for PLUs. Teachers can sign up for professional learning through an online system. Informal professional learning opportunities are occasionally available in the school. Training is often provided when a new technology tool or resource is introduced.	Technology-related professional learning is not as available as content- and pedagogy-related courses. Technology training and professional learning is often isolated from other instructional strategies or best practices. Training and professional learning often does not go into enough depth for true understanding.	Administrators can set up professional learning opportunities in areas that may be deemed weakest in relation to technology. Professional learning opportunities that are available during the school day often pay for the use of a sub in the classroom. County school department employees and "experts" can provide informal and formal professional learning opportunities by request.	Teachers do not have time to attend trainings that are not during school hours. Teacher workdays have been cut to due to budget issues so there are not as many opportunities available during the school year. PLUs are no longer required so some teachers will no longer be motivated to attend professional learning courses or classes.

Summary/Gap Analysis:

Professional learning is highly encouraged within the county. Teachers can easily sign up for professional learning courses and classes through an online system. The online system also allows for teachers to determine what courses they have previously taken and the amount of PLUs accumulated. When a new technology resource is introduced, there is often some training required for that resource.

There is a lack of technology-related professional learning opportunities. There is a huge gap in the amount of professional learning opportunities that are available in regards to improving engaging instruction through technology use. It is important that administrators continue to set up training opportunities in areas of weakness as well as provide technology-related training on the few teacher workdays.

While cut of PLUs are as a requirement may result in the decrease of teachers participating in professional learning, additional motivational strategies will need to be developed to encourage ongoing growth in the teachers.

ESSENTIAL CONDITION SEVEN: Technical Support

ISTE Definition: Consistent and reliable assistance for maintaining, renewing, and using ICT and digital resources.

Guiding Questions:

- *To what extent is available equipment operable and reliable for instruction?*
- *Is there tech assistance available for technical issues when they arise? How responsive is tech support? Are current "down time" averages acceptable?*
- *Is tech support knowledgeable? What training might they need?*
- *In addition to break/fix issues, are support staff available to help with instructional issues when teachers try to use technology in the classroom?*

Strengths	*Weaknesses*	*Opportunities*	*Threats*
Equipment is generally in good working condition. Tech assistance is available. Work orders can be completed online to request the assistance of a tech support specialist. Tech support specialists are generally knowledgeable and well prepared to complete work orders. The Media Specialist provides technology support when necessary.	Tech assistance is only available through work orders. Tech support specialists are not available at all times as they are split between different schools. Tech support response time is inconsistent. Tech support specialists will not answer questions or provide assistance without work orders. Tech assistance and support is not available for instructional issues. Instructional Technology Specialists were cut from the current budget.	The Technology Support Line can answer general questions. Technical "emergencies" or dire situations can be expedited with administrator support.	Some teachers do not have time to complete work orders; therefore, broken technology resources go unrepaired. Tech support specialists are spread too thin between school staffs; therefore, they cannot take adequate time to answer all questions and issues. Teachers send in work orders for items that do not fall under the jurisdiction of tech assistance.

Summary/Gap Analysis:

Generally, technology equipment and resources are in good, working condition. In the instance of a program, tech assistance

is available through a support line and through a work order system. Work orders can be easily created online. Also, the Media Specialists can provide some support on technology related resources in the classroom.

Unfortunately, tech support specialists are unable to answer questions without the completion of a work order which can be frustrating when you have a simple or quick question. The response time for a work order is inconsistent as some times it only takes a day or two and sometimes it takes up to a few weeks. For emergency situations, the administrators can speed up the wait time for a work order to be completed.

Perhaps the biggest concern is the cut of Instructional Technology Specialists throughout the county. Teachers do not have adequate support in using technology within their instruction. Identified staff members need to be available to answer the questions teachers have about implementing technology in instruction.

ESSENTIAL CONDITION EIGHT: Curriculum Framework			
ISTE Definition: Content standards and related digital curriculum resources			
Guiding Questions: • *To what extent are educators, students, and parents aware of student technology standards? (QCCs/NET-S)* • *Are technology standards aligned to content standards to help teachers integrate technology skills into day-to-day instruction and not teach technology as a separate subject?* • *To what extent are there digital curriculum resources available to teachers so that they can integrate technology into the GPS/QCCs as appropriate?* • *How is student technology literacy assessed?*			
Strengths	*Weaknesses*	*Opportunities*	*Threats*
Curriculum resources are available to teachers and parents online through PICASSO. Technology standards are embedded into English/Language Arts standards. Standards-based report cards (in grades kindergarten through third) allows for teachers, parents, and students to directly see the technology standards that are being covered each quarter.	Few educators are aware of technology standards and how they should be implemented in instruction. Educators expect students to learn about technology strictly from computer lab instruction during Specials rotations. It can be difficult to locate technology standards within the Georgia Performance Standards. Student technology literacy is not adequately assessed even though it is a part of our standards.	Teachers can be exposed to technology standards in the curriculum through staff meetings and literacy/math planning meetings. Parents can be shown how to use PICASSO to see standards in PTA meetings.	Teachers do not view technology standards as a priority in the classroom. Teachers do not focus on technology standards as they are not strongly included on statewide testing (CRCT).
Summary/Gap Analysis:			

Unfortunately, technology standards have never really been in the spotlight in the curriculum. Teachers often focus on reading, writing, and math with lack of concern for technology. This is a direct reflection of the lack of assessment of student technology literacy. If students and teachers were held accountable for technology literacy, it is more likely that teachers would embed technology standards in their content instruction.

Curriculum resources are available online, but it can be difficult to find the specific technology standards. Teachers should be informed that it is their job responsibility to teach all standards (and not just pick and choose based on state testing).

The school technology plan needs to include information on increasing technology standards in the classroom and informing teachers the best ways to include these standards.