

JOURNAL



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= 0% Truancy

*Dr. David Haglund
Deputy Superintendent of Educational Services
Santa Ana Unified School District*

Anytime, Anywhere Access to Learning

How a Southern California district fit all the pieces together for a successful tech-based personalized learning program

Dr. David Haglund is the Deputy Superintendent of Educational Services at Santa Ana Unified, a Southern California district where 91% of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch and 60% are English language learners. In this interview, he discusses how he and his team are guiding the district through a transition to digital curriculum with the goal of “ensuring that all students have access to technology-enabled learning resources at school and at home.”

What was the spark for the technological transformation of Santa Ana USD?

I think that the true transformation going on here in Santa Ana is about personalization and enabling choice in both teaching and learning. That work is being facilitated with expanding access to various technologies. Technology enables personalization in a very powerful way, as evidenced by how people interact with the world nowadays.

What tech tools have been especially useful in personalizing students' learning in the classroom?

Chromebooks: Each child has access to a device, which enables them to work on individual projects or collaborate with peers as appropriate. These light devices are easily carried from room to room and from school to home, enabling learners to stay connected to their classroom resources and personal learning networks.

Google Apps for Education: The collaborative nature of our work in personalization is fueled by the connective nature of the Google platform. We are reducing printing costs and have reduced that amount of student homework that is “eaten by the dog” or lost in a backpack.

FlexCat: One of my favorite new tools. These desk pods have enabled teachers to leverage proximity in their classrooms, observe and overhear student small group conversations from across the room, and even insert themselves into a small group conversation without physically joining the group. If a small group has a question, they can push a button on the pod to summon the teacher in person or remotely.

One of your mantras is “It’s not about the devices, it’s about access.” How are you providing access to digital curriculum for all students?

We started first by instituting a BYOD policy in the schools. There is no need to provide a device to a student who already has one that they would prefer to use. We simply had to adjust our policies and allow for their use on our networks. This shift allowed us to focus scarce resources on the students who did not have access to the increasing number of digital resources accessible at school and at home.

From there, we looked to ensure that students have Internet access at home or very nearby. In some cases, they could hook up to a home network. In other cases, they could do so at a relative’s home on the same street. In cases where there was no access, we have begun to provide wireless hot spots that can be checked out to the family. We have also begun conversations with the city regarding deploying a citywide wireless network that ties existing networks together to expand the reach of the various wireless networks.

*Below:
Students use a variety
of technology and
follow the mantra, “fail
early, fail fast and fail
forward” to develop
an innovative mindset
and create new paths
in their learning.*



What are the additional challenges of a district with 60% ELLs, especially when it comes to adopting new technology?

Our parents—both English and Spanish speakers—need training on how to best manage the computer resources in the home, including how to mitigate risks due to theft, neglect, improper training, or inappropriate content. Because so many of our families speak Spanish, we have always developed training and resources in both languages.

Each school provides parent workshops and related computer training sessions. A CyberSafety course is required for both the parent and student prior to checking out technology to take home. There is a big push in the weeks surrounding the beginning of school, and those classes are very well attended.

What other technology or best practices are you using to help ELLs and LTELs?

Students and parents have learned to access Google Translate to assist with navigating the Web or words with which they are unfamiliar. Online or software-based language tools have been deployed at school and at home, and families are encouraged to share these tools. In classrooms, digital curriculum supports the ELD instructional program, giving students opportunities to record and play back their reading in order to refine pronunciation and hear errors they may be making. These tools also deliver just-in-time, personalized academic interventions that are accessed during classroom rotations and/or during our after-school program time.

How did you handle PD in preparing teachers for all these changes?

Holding to our commitment to support personalization, the district has transitioned to a PD model that encourages each teacher to identify and pursue a course of training that is most relevant to him or her. Our centralized PD staff provides a menu of choices that is informed by teacher surveys. We train throughout the school year and include summer “camps,” mid-year “mini-conferences,” and a quarterly EdCamp that allows teachers who are already proficient to drive the discussion and dig deeper into applications that they have curiosity about.

Has the shift in teaching and learning created any negative response from the community?

No. In fact, I would suggest that the community is driving the change. When we entered into our LCAP process, we asked students, parents, and community members what we were doing right, what we needed to stop, and what we needed to do differently if we hoped to see all students successfully complete high school and move on to college or a career of their choosing. One of the key goals established by the process was ensuring that all students have access to technology-enabled learning resources at school and at home. We listened, and are well on the way of hitting that target by June of 2017.

What’s the next step in Santa Ana USD’s transformation?

We are working hard, in short-cycle iterations, to improve our practice and to learn. Students, teachers, and school leaders are fully engaged in this work and providing critical feedback. We will continue to develop our digital project-based learning curriculum in partnership with the Buck Institute and the SCALE project at Stanford, and will continue work towards delivering a competency-based learning program at both the elementary and secondary levels.

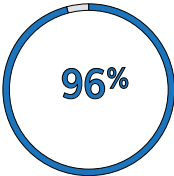
I am excited that micro-credentialing and digital badges will be a part of that process, which will lead to multiple different diploma tracks that will be aligned to high-interest career fields. We will continue to promote school choice and develop a portfolio of school and program options for parents and students. ■

*Below:
Students at Santa Ana's Advanced Learning Academy work in a unique space that supports competency-based learning and can be easily transformed to support project-based learning.*

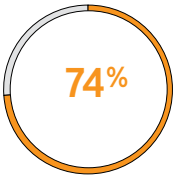


Does Your PD Strategy Stink?

Keeping up with the “new normal” for classrooms means a new level of PD for teachers everywhere



of K-12 teachers believe that technology plays a significant role in their classrooms



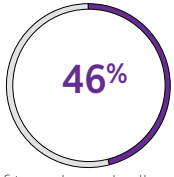
of school district officials, principals and teachers believe professional development is a top priority.



8 Billion is estimated to be spent on teacher development by the 50 largest school districts



the amount of time teachers devote annually to professional development training



of teachers believe they lack the training needed to integrate technology in their classrooms.

Just 5 or 10 years ago professional development consisted of lectures, short workshops or a “boot camp” offered a few times a year. To teachers, sessions were often not useful and even seemed a waste of time. A lack of follow-up and on-site help left teachers falling back to what they were accustomed to and comfortable with. Classrooms were isolated “mini-kingdoms” and PD had no follow up or accountability. Students were the only one’s suffering for it and not getting the full benefit of digital curriculum and all it can offer.

Sure, “educating teachers” should result in better classroom instruction, but even today there are no hard scientific studies to prove PD results. A 2007 report commissioned by the Department of Education found that only 9 out of 1,300 PD studies met scientific evidence standards. Thousands of dollars were being spent with little known results.

Google “PD and effects on student learning,” and you will notice multiple studies between 2001 and 2011 on the relationship between PD and student achievement. After that, the numbers dwindle except in math and science in the elementary grades. However, with more districts moving to 1:1 learning, PD is starting to change.

A paradigm shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning.

Older teachers feel a culture shock and may be intimidated by the technology. The shift is not so traumatic for millennials (born in the 1980s or later) joining the teacher corps since technology use is already a part of who they are and how they function.

Today the vast majority of educators feel that technology is the wave of the future. But districts often think “tech” before thinking through the implementation strategy. So devices may be distributed before PD can train teachers how to use them effectively in their classrooms.

Many educators are not waiting for district PD

A 2015 teacher survey indicated that 90% thought that tech was important in the classroom and nearly 60% wanted to integrate it into their lessons but needed more training to do so. Of those who were successful, 38% trained themselves how to use devices by using YouTube and Twitter chat without credit or salary incentives to do so.

One such example was Jessica Anderson, Montana’s 2016 Teacher of the Year. Jessica wanted to use devices supplied by her district to create and use blended learning lessons in her teaching. She used BetterLesson’s to create her own program to do so.

Districts develop tailored PD programs to support teachers in the 1:1 shift

- Salisbury Township School District (Allentown, PA) midway in a 1:1 initiative implementation, aligned PD goals to every aspect of their shift to student centered learning. This included hiring needed tech personnel, updating the librarian’s job description and creating a new position to support the transformation. They also personalized the PD program to fit each teacher’s needs, provided summer sessions and supported teacher attendance to tech conferences and workshops outside of the district. Administrators evaluated Salisbury’s PD initiative on how well it was meeting the developing needs during the changeover. The District’s program won the Apple Distinguished Program for 2015-17 for its successes in enhancing and extending teaching and learning with thoughtful and innovative implementations of

technology. The Apple Distinguished Program designation is reserved for programs that “meet criteria for innovation, leadership, and educational excellence, and demonstrate a clear vision of exemplary learning environments.”

- Another example is the PD initiative at Westside School in Seattle, WA. It was devised by IT departments, EdTech consultants and third party vendors. The initial classroom lesson didn't involve computers. It focused on academic habits, community building, aligning and thinking with students about using a tool to assist with learning. They then familiarized students with how tech could make life easier and how to use tech to achieve that purpose. They emphasized 'community building' between parents, educators and students which contributed to 1:1 success. As a part of this, students were even invited to take part—providing suggestions and giving feedback and critiquing teaching strategies incorporated in the 1:1 implementation.

Combining resources to improve support

Districts and companies are working together to support teachers and districts with PD. Some examples include the BLEgroup (supports small districts' change to 1:1 and PD), Common Sense Media (rates classroom materials and guidance in 1:1) and the BetterLesson's program (works to improve teacher performance). All offer PD support for teachers and district leaders moving toward 1:1 learning.

PD Training & Camps

Another common and intensive approach are on-site training or “camps” followed with continuous on-the-job assistance until teachers are able to run with it. Take, for example, the teacher and administrative training that Houghton Mifflin Harcourt brings with them when implementing their platform and digital content in a district.

Another successful example of a "camp" style solution is what Summit Public Schools in the San Francisco bay area is doing. They created a summit base camp that starts with two weeks intensive training to develop the new skill-set of teaching in a personalized learning environment. This is then followed with on-site follow up via a Base Camp leader who provides guidance and enables feedback by the teams.

PD is a hot topic and will continue to be for years to come. Successful examples across the country show that it is a collaborative activity. Give teachers power and say in the strategy and goals while administrators provide continuous support. ■

10 Tips to Assure That Your Professional Development Starts, and Stays, on the Right Track.

Many school districts approach professional development and training the wrong way. Start by providing plenty of coaching and opportunities for collaboration.

- 🍏 Free up teachers' time for collaborative professional learning
- 🍏 Avoid class sizes that are too large or have too much content crammed into one session
- 🍏 Make sure your trainers have the correct certifications.
- 🍏 Tailor courses to the specific needs of your district, school or classroom.
- 🍏 Use video and your learning management system to “flip” your teachers' professional development experience.
- 🍏 Encourage participants to move at their own pace.
- 🍏 Create leadership roles for expert teachers who develop their peers' skills and lead school improvements.
- 🍏 Allow teachers and leaders opportunities to share their professional learnings.
- 🍏 Recognize and reward the development of teacher expertise.
- 🍏 Require follow-up from your trainers.

Sources: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation | Education Dive | Center on International Education Benchmarking | TES Global | TNT

Digital Transition with Station Rotation = 0% Truancy

Technology Solutions for Intervention Success

From D.C.'s inner city schools comes a successful technology strategy and student intervention program

Over the last eight years, Washington DC Public Schools (DCPS) has been going through a huge transformation with teacher selection, teacher evaluation and teacher professional development. It goes without saying that one of the key factors in this transformation has been how to incorporate technology into instruction. The Learning Counsel spoke with Tracy Foster, the principal of Randle Highlands Elementary School, a school right in the heart of inner-city DC, to get a sense of what it takes to make the shift at school level.

“When I took the helm at Randle Highlands five years ago and there were only 5 computers in sight, a huge red flag went up for me. I knew this school wasn’t even on the radar when it came to digital curriculum and technology.” When Tracy reviewed where the students were at she found math at 20% proficiency and their reading scores were in the high 30s. Today they rank among the highest in the district. Last year 62% of their students grew in ELA and 87% of their students grew in math. The District average was 51%.

Randle Highlands demographics are what you would expect of an inner-city school: 99% African American, 13% special ed. 97% of students qualify for free and reduced meals and their ward is one of the two poorest in the District of Columbia. Last year their out of school suspension rate was 4%. Today, following a rigorous program to implement digital curriculum and devices and teacher training, Tracy has her long term suspensions down to 0%. The district did a student satisfaction survey and Randle Highland’s students gave their school a 96% satisfaction rating.

When Tracy looked at the school achievement data, she realized that 40% of their students were missing proficiency by 5 points. The district interventions that they had were too low—they were for students that were 2 and 3 grade-levels below—so they weren’t doing them any good.

“There was interest in technology but there was a lack of technology integration because we simply didn’t have the hardware or the infrastructure for it. My local school advisory team, which is made up of teachers, parents and union representatives decided to come up with a two-year technology plan to address intervention because it was just too much to ask the teachers to provide intervention and deliver grade-level curriculum. Our first year we allocated \$56,000 of our local

school funds. Then I re-purposed some human capital and saved another \$500,000 doing that. Then through a grant for technology we gained another \$250,000.”

The next problem Tracy realized she had was that you can’t just put technology in a building and expect teachers to know how to use it. Because then you’d have teachers using everything from Kahn Academy all the way to Nickelodeon and the lack of structure just won’t work.

Below: Students at the Randle Highlands Elementary School in Washington D.C.



Tracy and her team used the funds to focus first on upgrading infrastructure. They brought in 165 Dell desktops which meant that each of their classes had 8 computers. Each of their classrooms were also retrofitted with smartboards. They hired an instructional technology coach to get involved in every aspect of integration and be Tracy's eyes and ears on the ground.

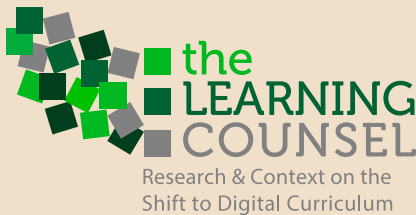
They had students of various different needs and the team's goal was to bring the school out of a period of intervention. Then, once they did that, they would be able to think about switching it out and using the digital content to enhance instruction. Randle Highland's station rotation model has two major blocks—two 120 minute blocks where they only engage for 10 minutes in whole-group-instruction. Then they rotate into three 35 minute intervals. From the teacher, to independent learning activities to digital content, and then a 5 minute closure. As far as digital curriculum providers, these include ST Math, IReady reading and math, Lexia reading and Myon.

"That change—continuing to grant teachers control and independence while knocking out whole-group-instruction—is the hardest part. I have windows to each classroom and I can peer into the classroom and I would peer into a classroom and I would tap on my watch to tell a teacher, 'get out of whole-group.' And there were times I would have to step into a classroom and say 'stop teaching whole-group please.' That's the hard part, if you can get over the hurdle of the culture and the management in the classroom, then it becomes easier."

Their station rotation model has now been adopted by the district for many of the Elementary schools. There are now 40 schools in the district that are incorporating technology into the learning. Ten are full-on blended learning schools that are following this model. ■



*Below:
Tracy Foster,
Principal
Randle Highlands
Elementary School*



The Learning Counsel helps education professionals in the K12 and Higher Ed sectors gain context on the shift to digital curriculum. We are an intermediary between schools and high tech companies, offering unique executive events and publications. We bring perspective and online resources for everyone in the fray, from school seekers-of-resources to industry partners.

Join us: 2016 Digital Curriculum Tactics Discussions

These regional meetings bring together interested district executives to discuss real strategy points, tactics and more. They provide perspective and organizational tools to assist leaders in the transition to digital.

May 20 West Long Branch, NJ
Sep 13 Tampa, FL
Sep 15 Denver, CO
Sep 20 Indianapolis, IN
Sep 22 New York City, NY
Sep 27 Portland, OR
Sep 29 Dallas, TX
Oct 6 Wichita, KS

Oct 11 Washington DC
Oct 13 Boston, MA
Oct 18 Sacramento, CA
Nov 1 San Diego, CA
Nov 3 Palo Alto, CA
Nov 14-15 National Gathering
Orlando, FL

(Dates Subject to Change)



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