Emerald School Environment Evaluation - NashR

Demographics

The demographics of Emerald School are very critical to understanding the outcome of the following School Environment Evaluation. The setup of the school is unlike public schools. In fact, the Emerald School is a private school. The school is staffed by a single teacher/administrator and one part-time employee hired as support staff. The Emerald School is relatively small, with less than 150 students. The school is not autonomous in its operation and is supported and heavily directed by a technologically strong parent organization which has established well-defined policies regarding technology use. The parent organization has incorporated technology extensively in the day-to-day administration of the Emerald School's program and in the delivery of all curricular materials to school, but has completely restricted the autonomous use of technology resources by students of the Emerald School. Electronic communication in all forms, from email to text messaging, between staff and students is banned by the parent organization. All facilities and technology resources are funded, maintained, and repaired as needed by the parent organization, so little budget flexibility is offered to the school to enhance and customize technology resources. The parent organization is a global organization.

School Environment Evaluation

Administrative
Policy
> *Behavioral – Intelligent*
> *Resource/Infrastructure – Intelligent*
>> Because of well-defined technology policies from the parent organization and local adherence to those policies, the Emerald School (hereafter abbreviated as "ES") is rated Intelligent behaviorally and with regard to resources and infrastructure.

Planning
> *Behavioral – Emergent*
> *Resource/Infrastructure – Emergent*
>> Because technology use plans are largely determined by the parent organization with no input from the ES, except in terms of whether or not available resources will be used in the school's one classroom, no attention has been given by the school to formal planning. The single teacher/administrator decides when and how to use available resources, and those decisions aren't even budget driven, but are merely policy and preference driven. Resources and infrastructure are used informally without a plan.

Budget
> *Behavioral – Islands*
> *Resource/Infrastructure – Emergent*
>> Behaviorally, ES technology budget policies are dictated by the parent organization, so the process is formalized. Higher priority for technology is not guaranteed unless desired by the single teacher/administrator. School budget funds are minimal and simple; most technology bills are paid by the parent organization. Resources and infrastructure are emergent as little is given to the school for technology expenses.

Administrative Information
       Behavioral – Integrated
       Resource/Infrastructure – Intelligent
              Behaviorally, ES is integrated as most admin systems are electronic, but not all. The trend is toward intelligent (all admin systems paperless). Resources and infrastructure are intelligent—the two staff members have full access.

Curricular

Electronic Information
       Behavioral – Intelligent
       Resource/Infrastructure – Island
              Behaviorally, staff at ES are technologically dependent and rely heavily upon available tech resources on a daily basis. Resources and infrastructure are not basic and include more than electronic encyclopedias, but students do not have access to any of the resources unless displayed (audio-visual, text, etc.) in class. All students have access to presentation material in class (only one subject is taught).

Assessment
       Behavioral – Emergent
       Resource/Infrastructure – Emergent
              Unless attendance data is considered such, assessment has not been used in the ES with the current staff. This will change in the 2011-12 academic year.

Curriculum Integration
       Behavioral – Integrated
       Resource/Infrastructure – Intelligent
              Behaviorally, ES has virtually all elements of the curriculum available in digital format, and though non-digital formats are available, the teacher only uses digital formats. Every once in a while, technology is not used with certain parts of the curriculum. Resources and infrastructure are intelligent—all aspects of curriculum content are supported by technology.

Teacher Use
       Behavior – Integrated
       Resource/Infrastructure – Intelligent
              Behaviorally, technology is used daily by the teacher, but does not have to be. Technology resources and infrastructure are available to all employees in their individual work areas.

Student Use
       Behavioral – Emergent
       Resource/Infrastructure – Emergent
              Rating this is difficult for the ES because students have no autonomy with technology resources. Students are exposed to technology on a daily basis in class, but in the form of digital music/video and PowerPoint and only as part of lesson presentations. Resources and infrastructure are, again, only available in lesson presentation; students have no personal access to technology.

Support

Stakeholder Involvement
       Behavioral – Island

Resource/Infrastructure – Emergent

There are a handful of stake holders involved with the ES, but most are in the position of looking "down" the chain of command, so to speak, or of providing support to, not receiving support from the school. Hence, all planning and implementation decided upon solely by the school involves only one other stakeholder besides the teacher, and that involvement is so minimal that, behaviorally, the school is emergent in this filter. The same is true for resources and infrastructure.

Administrative Support

Behavior – Intelligent

Resource/Infrastructure – Intelligent

While the ES has limited ability to involve stakeholders in locally planning and implementing procedures, several groups sit in administrative and supportive positions over the school. Behaviorally, these administrative groups are extensively involved in the planning, practice, and implementation of technology support, largely because of their global or centralized management role. The same is true of resources and infrastructure. This filter could have been rated in a manner more consistent with the previous (excluding all but the one stakeholder), but that would not accurately reflect the administration situation of the school when one is looking "up" the chain of command. These categories are difficult to rate for the ES.

Training

Behavioral – Intelligent

Resource/Infrastructure – Island

All staff members at ES participate in training and seek additional training as necessary. Behaviorally, ES is intelligent. However, taking into consideration the role of the school's parent organization—who provides all training to the school—formal training is provided by a limited number of external persons, making the training infrastructure an island.

Technical and Infrastructure Support

Behavioral – Intelligent

Resource/Infrastructure – Intelligent

The parent organization, as a global organization, has extensive formal and informal support resources and numerous full-time support staff trained at multiple levels of technological expertise available for ES and other schools like it.

Connectivity

Local Area Networking

Behavioral – Intelligent

Resource/Infrastructure – Integrated

All services available (no WAN available for ES, but there is an Intranet service available from the parent organization), from data sharing to printing to audio, video, and other online content are used extensively by the two staff members at ES, especially the teacher/administrator. The infrastructure is high-speed in all working-environments, but not expandable because of limitations from the parent organization and its affiliates who maintain infrastructure.

District Area Networking

Behavioral – Intelligent

> > *Resource/Infrastructure – Intelligent*
> > > The ES is not part of a public school district (does not have WAN), but does have Intranet access through the parent organization. Considering this access equivalent to WAN for public schools, all staff use Intranet resources on a regular basis, including audio-visual resources. WAN resource/infrastructure descriptions in this filter are hard to relate to the parent organization's Intranet, but the intelligent rating was still given here as well.

> Internet Access
> > *Behavioral – Emergent*
> > *Resource/Infrastructure – Intelligent*
> > > For staff at the ES, behavioral ratings on the Internet Access category are intelligent, but no students use this Internet Access, so this category was filtered as Emergent. In terms of infrastructure, however, wireless Internet Access is fully available in corner of the facility to every school-owned computer/device.

> Communications Systems
> > *Behavioral – Intelligent*
> > *Resource/Infrastructure – Emergent*
> > > Email is definitely an integral part of the administrative functions of the ES—in fact, it is the primary means of communicating—and is also used for teaching purposes, though not in communicating with students. While the email resource is available to all staff, including all staff of the parent organization, it is not available for students, therefore this category type (resource/infrastructure) was filtered as emergent.

Innovation
> New Technologies
> > *Behavioral – Intelligent*
> > *Resource/Infrastructure – Intelligent*
> > > Again, both ratings are made with the parent organization being considered. While some technologies are not considered necessary or appropriate for the parent organization's curriculum taught by the ES, the parent organization has a very large group of technology experts who incorporate new technologies routinely and apply them to the entire organization, including ES.

> Comprehensive Technologies
> > *Behavioral – Intelligent*
> > *Resource/Infrastructure – Intelligent*
> > > The parent organization is again being considered on these ratings. In-house sponsored technologies ranging from video conferencing to phone bridges to satellite broadcasts to streaming audio and video to global digital databases (and much more) are readily available from the parent organization. All of these are incorporated as much as possible by the teacher/staff at ES.

Conclusion/Summary

The extensive technological development and resources of the parent organization often give the Emerald School Intelligent ratings, but the parent's equally extensive development

of policies limiting autonomy of technology use at the local, or school level regularly leave the Emerald School with Emergent ratings. The result is an unbalanced, but obvious split of 10-4-4-20 (Emergent-Island-Integrated-Intelligent). The overall evaluation of the Emerald School is Intelligent, but this is primarily because of the parent organization and not solely because of the Emerald School or its staff.

Before beginning this evaluation, I considered evaluating the parent organization as if it were the school and ignoring localized factors related only to the operation of the Emerald School. I am not, however, completely familiar with the inner workings of the parent organization, therefore I chose to evaluate the Emerald School in light of input and direction received from the parent organization. Even though this would result in somewhat unconventional conclusions that are hard to summarize, this approach would allow me to give the most accurate evaluation possible.

The diverse factors that characterize the technology environment of the Emerald School is unlike that found in many public schools, but the environment is effective for the purposes and aims of the Emerald School and its parent organization. This effectiveness is continually evaluated, however, and change is always occurring within the parent organization, and, consequently, on behalf of the Emerald School.