

ABSTRACT

Located in Broome County in South-Central NY, the Binghamton City School District (BCSD) is a Focus District wherein all 10 component schools are Focus Schools. For years, the district's schools have faced challenges in achieving acceptable levels of proficiency in ELA. In fact, data indicates consistently low proficiency levels in all seven K-5 elementary schools as evidenced by their grade 4 ELA results over time.

In 2014, the district took steps to address this issue by implementing a reform initiative across all grades K-5 in all seven elementary buildings. This initiative is a nationally acclaimed, research-informed instructional model for teaching and learning the art and science of writing called "Writer's Workshop". Optimum implementation of the model requires that students have access to technology for research, drafting, organizing, sharing and presenting information as they navigate the writing process. To support this need, the district has begun implementing a "Google Classroom" model using Google Certified Educators and mobile carts of Chromebook tablet computers. Consequently, this proposal focuses on making each of the district's elementary libraries into Google Classroom support hubs with a focus on supporting the district wide implementation of Writer's Workshop at grade levels 3-5.

In each of three years, two BCSD elementary schools, each with four-member implementation teams consisting of a library media specialist, a tech mentor and two grade-level teachers, will collaborate with a partnering non-public school to infuse technology into the teaching and learning environment by becoming Google Certified Educators, deploying mobile tablet computers from their respective libraries (chromebooks) to be used daily as "Writer's Notebooks" (a required component of the Writer's Workshop model) and designing, piloting and sharing web-supported, digital lessons in support of Writer's Workshop implementation. The two target public schools will change in each year of the grant such that six elementary schools will become fully engaged by the end of year 3. Building level team configurations will engage teachers from grades 3, 4 and 5 in aggregate, every year of the grant.

Specific objectives for this effort are as follows:

OBJECTIVE 1: Students in grades 3-5 in the participating elementary schools/classes/grades will demonstrate increased mastery of the 3-5 ELA writing standards; especially #'s 1 (opinion/argument), 2 (explanatory/informational) and 3 (narrative text) and 6 (presentation/collaboration)

OBJECTIVE 2: Students in grades 3-5 in participating schools will have access to qualified staff who demonstrate the skills and knowledge needed to help students "use technology strategically and capably" (Key Design Consideration – CCLS ELA and Literacy)

OBJECTIVE 3: School libraries will become Google Classroom Support Centers. (BOR USNY and BCSD Technology Plans 2012)

OBJECTIVE 4: Student access to technology will increase (District Technology Plan 2012)

Ultimately, the project will engage 300 students in becoming skilled writers, enable 31 educators to support a district-wide implementation of Google Classroom by becoming Google Certified Educators and decrease the student:computer ratio in a very high-needs district.