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           CLERK U S DISTRICT COURT
               DISTRICT OF ARIZONA
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IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE DISTRICT OF ARIZONA

Roy and Josie Fisher, et al.,	No. CV-74-00090-TUC-DCB (Lead Case)
Plaintiffs	
and	
United States of America,	
Plaintiff-Intervenor,	
v.	
Tucson Unified School District, et al.,	
Defendants,	
and	
Sidney L. Sutton, et al.,	
Defendants-Intervenors,	
Maria Mendoza, et al.,	No. CV-74-0204-TUC-DCB (Consolidated Case)
Plaintiffs,	
and	
United States of America,	
Plaintiff-Intervenor,	
v.	REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION
Tucson Unified School District, et al.	
Defendants.	

R&R: Professional Learning for Technology

Special Master's Report and Recommendation re Professional Learning for Technology

On October 10, 2019, the District submitted its revised plan for professional learning related to the utilization of technology with a focus on teachers. On October 24, the Mendoza plaintiffs filed their objections to this plan. The Special Master had earlier criticized the District plan because, among other things: (a) the plan did not address some of the more sophisticated instructional uses of technology to facilitate student learning that could not be done well without the use of technology -- such as simulations and transactional problem-solving, and (b) there should be more emphasis on content pedagogy. After reflecting on the proposed content of the professional learning plan, the Special Master believes that the competencies that the District seeks to achieve among its instructional staff are a reasonable first step that will give teachers a foundation on which to build more ambitious applications of technology.

Fortunately, there is an abundance of lesson plans keyed to national standards available online that teachers could use if the District made the search costs low for locating such resources and indexed these resources to the TUSD curriculum. Such materials are available by googling PBS teacher lesson plans and there are lesson plans on the ISTE website, among other sources.

The Mendoza plaintiffs assert that the District did not respond adequately to the Court's direction that it make clear how it will evaluate the effectiveness of TTLs. The District describes a number of ways that can be used to describe what it is that TTLs do. However, the goal should be to link what TTLs do with what it is that the teachers they are supporting do. The District has developed a Technology Integration Observation Tool. This tool focuses attention on the particular type of technology the teacher and the student are using-- such as computers or document cameras. Or software such as Office 365 or web browsers. But it does not focus on the purposes for which the technology is being used. This Tool (form) should be modified to include what it is the teacher is doing with the technology to enhance student learning. The courses now available for professional

learning identify several ways technology can be used to facilitate learning. The District contends that the five Education Technology Integration Specialists would do this assessment. But, as the District acknowledges, it will require three years to cover the teaching staff. This might be adequate in the long run but not now when many teachers are being introduced to the use of technology and instruction for the first time. In any event, this evaluation should be formative rather than summative if for no other reason the TTLs are recording much of the data that will be used in evaluations. Formative evaluation significantly reduces the incentives to misrepresent actions or to give too little time to teachers who may need more support. And formative purpose will foster better relationships between the TTLs and those they serve and make it easier for teachers who feel they need help to seek it.

The District says that it plans to use the modified Danielson teacher evaluation instrument to assess how well individual teachers are using the technology. There are, however, one or two relevant items on the Danielson instrument so other strategies for evaluation would seem to be more productive.

One might ask, isn't the way to evaluate teacher effectiveness in the use of technology to investigate what students do in the classroom? Yes, this would be a good idea but totally impractical. That will require individual monitors other than teachers to record what the teachers were doing at any particular time and relate that to how well students were learning. Moreover, there are many other influences on what students do with the technology much less whether they are learning. These would have to be controlled for and would almost certainly be determined by the socioeconomic background of the students' family.

Recommendation

The District should modify its Technology Integration Observation Tool so that it aligns with instructional strategies and learning goals for students. This is important if, as the district asserts, it's evaluation strategies will be used to guide professional development. When the District so modifies this tool and it is approved by the Special

1 Master, the District should be awarded unitary status for the utilization of technology. One

2 way to do that would be to list the uses of technology on one axis of a chart and put learning

3 goals on the other axis.

Respectfully submitted, November 14, 2019

s/Willis D. Hawley
Willis D. Hawley, Special Master