Launching the Learning Commons:
Digital Learning & Leadership Initiative

Presenter: Mandy Bellm

Presentation Link: goo.gl/6BRQMd
Waconia Public Schools ~ 15 mins west of Eden Prairie on Hwy 5
~4000 students: 3 elementaries, 1 middle school (6th-8th), 1 high school
Presenter: Mandy Bellm, Media & Digital Learning Coordinator
Licensure: M.Ed, K-8 Math/Spanish, LMS + Certificates in EdTech & Reading
Awarded LSTA 2015 elementary library grant
Awarded LSTA 2016 middle school library grant
Selected to represent MAGE at Nat Geo Summer Institute in DC - June 2017
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Outcomes for today’s presentation:

- Knowledge of available grants
- Understanding of the grant process - beginning to end
- Knowledge of elementary and secondary grant case studies
- Ideas for Library Learning Commons uses and student groups
- Staff Collaboration and training resources for Learning Commons
- Community Partnership ideas to engage students and families
What does my school/library need?

- Devices: laptops, Chromebooks, iPads, carts, projection
- Furniture: flexible / ergonomic seating, tables, makerspace
- Resources: software/apps, accessories, ebooks, time
- Training: EdTech, collaboration, assessment, creativity tools
- Students: clubs, leadership/responsibility, digital citizenship

Got a hunch? Not sure? Survey them with Google Forms!
Collect anecdotal data, make observations, interview kids.
Elementary Library Needs:

- Chromebooks & carts to teach library & tech skills, collaborative projects
- Update search stations from old, slow Dell 2007 models (15 per library)
- Staff training: e-reading options, Google Apps, Chromebooks in the classroom
- Curriculum: Digital Citizenship, research skills, e-reading, copyright issues
- Student leadership clubs: Library Squad, Tech Squad for 4th graders
- Parent training resources: Schoology & Google, public library devices available

- Elementary Survey - [click here](#)
Middle School Library Needs

- Update library devices from static to mobile, need carts
- Flexible “Collaboration Station” needed for Media/Technology lessons
- Flexible furniture needed: new couches, love seats, cafe tables & chairs
- Staff training: Google Apps, Learning Commons/collaboration, creation tools
- Curriculum: Digital Citizenship, research skills, e-reading, copyright issues
- Student leadership clubs: Library Squad, Tech Squad
- Student creativity clubs: Minecraft Club, Coding Club

- Middle School Survey Results - click here
What grants are available?

- **LSTA Grants** - Future of IMLS during Trump era: [article from December](#)
- ALA Grants - [click here](#)
- Scholastic Library Grants - [click here](#)
- Educational Technology Grants - [click here](#)
- Library Grants - [click here](#)
- National Geographic Educator & Student Grants - [click here](#)

Grant Writing Tips: [click here](#) and [here](#)

"Don’t go it alone!"  “Keep the students front and center”
Apply for your grant!

1. Who - grant manager, staff, tech/media assistants, finance, admins involved
2. What - select your grant, target grades/projects, give it a catchy name
3. When - identify application, implementation and evaluation timelines
4. Where - buildings, storage, meetings, presentations, mailing application
5. Why - from “needs assessment” - how will your audience(s) benefit?
6. How / much - time, money, resources, staff needed; will district “match” any?

Tip: Be reasonable and practical. Don’t ask for the moon.

Waconia Example: Both grants were <$50,000
Receiving and using grant funds

1. Congrats! You got your grant. Check for promotion directions. Do you need to wait before letting people know? Do you need to include grant logos?
2. Complete grant purchases as soon as you can. Tech Dept help is advisable!
3. Develop and implement curriculum, train staff before using with students.
4. Develop assessment tools, complete mid-year progress evaluations
5. Ongoing - grant reporting, financial reports, changes to scope & budget
6. Ongoing - share progress, take pics/videos, save work samples
7. Complete end of grant evaluations, assessments, reports, finances
Learning Commons 101

- Check out this awesome Edutopia article on Learning Commons!
- Flexible, multi-purpose space. Not just library checkouts anymore!
- Perfect for interdisciplinary projects with print and digital needs.
- Great alternative learning environment to re-engage students.
- Media & technology hub: support, training, use of devices.
- Makerspace area: students can create, tinker, collaborate
- Emerging dual role of librarian + instructional technologist
- Full-time technology and/or media assistants critical!
- After school homework hub, club space, book checkouts
- “Zoned” work areas - instructional, collaborative, silent → (Green = talking, Yellow = quiet work, Red = silent/reading)
Create collaboration and training resources to support grant activities

- 21st Century Skills Framework
- Collaboration Station user guide
- Chromebook Creation Tools
- Elementary Student Chromebook setup
- Elementary Symbaloo
- Garage Band / iMovie MacBook enrichment
- MacBooks for Instruction
- Media & Leadership club info sheet
- Middle School Symbaloo
- Minecraft in the Classroom
- Screencasting Tools for staff & students
- Waconia Web Tools parent handbook
Reflect on grant progress & goals

- What was the impact on... students, staff, families, community, partners?
- Do certain grant goals need to carry over to the new year?
- Were there unexpected outcomes (good or bad)?
- Where do we go from here?

Waconia Elementary grant example
Questions? Concerns? Comments?

Thanks for attending! Connect with me any time!

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