

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

### Preliminary Information:

A handful of staff members in the Corning Painted-Post School District have invested a substantial amount of time, energy, and planning to develop a District Web Site and the district has made a sizeable investment in the start-up process of developing the web site. Several recent circumstances/incidents brought about some concern regarding the quality and content of the site:

- Board members and community members complained that the information on the site was outdated – information was not kept up to date (example: as late as December the Superintendent’s opening day statement was still prevalent on the home page).
- The visionary or key person responsible for the development (and much of the maintenance) of the site recently took a new job in another district.
- In October BOCES introduced a web-based tool that teachers can use to develop classroom web pages, but did not tell the district the web-based development tool would be available prior to unveiling the service.
- Parents have complained that web page links are not current
- Several pages on the site contain punctuation/spelling errors
- Teachers have been contacting the Computer Coordinator demanding that changes be made to their classroom pages in the weeks following the web page-involved employee’s departure.
- The commercial company that houses the site recently revoked all FTP privileges after their server was violated using the school portal.

There was clearly a problem. The Computer coordinator asked the Technology Instruction Support Specialists to determine how serious they deem the problem to be and to report back to him. The team developed the following strategies:

- They asked the district secretaries if they had a record of parent complaints and the exact nature of the complaints regarding the web pages.
- They matched the required web page authorization forms to the web pages that were currently linked to the site.
- They viewed teacher sites to determine whether they were up to date.
- They contacted Pixelhead, the corporation that houses the current pages.
- They tried to determine how many users in the district had access to the Pixelhead server by questioning “key” technology players in each school building.
- They questioned school leaders on the Technology team asking for their “take” on the situation. Specifically:
  - Were the teachers themselves maintaining current teacher web pages or were they maintained by the employee who recently left the district?
  - Would teachers be receptive to the idea of creating their own web pages now that the Teacher Digital Toolbox was available?

- Would teachers have time to keep their classroom pages up to date?
- Did teachers need training in web page design?
- Were there individuals in each building who might consider taking responsibility for the individual school home pages that link off the district page?

After the initial investigation, the Instruction Support team made the following recommendations to the Computer Coordinator:

- Maintenance of the “static” and district pages of the site (approximately 25% of the site) should be managed by the school public relations director and should continue to be housed on the commercial Pixelhead server. Pixelhead agreed to create a user-friendly mode of update for the director that did not require FTP access to their server.
- All individual school home pages and instructional pages (that traditionally required frequent updating) should be transferred to the BOCES server (but would link from the district pages).
- The maintenance of individual school home pages would be assigned to a person in each of the schools to assure accuracy and current information. That person would receive training and technical support from the Instruction Support Team for FrontPage.
- The teaching staff would be encouraged to transfer any classroom pages to the Teacher’s Digital Toolbox format so the teachers themselves could handle maintenance and updating of their individual pages.

The Computer Coordinator has agreed to personally attend to and take responsibility for the first three recommendations (though the Support Specialist will be responsible for the FrontPage training piece). He has asked the Support Specialists to perform a needs assessment and to analyze the learning context needed to get all teachers “on board” and using the Teacher’s Digital Toolbox to create classroom web pages. The needs assessment from this point forward will narrow in focus to the problem of organizing and developing the teacher/classroom web pages.

### **Symptoms of a Problem**

An initial evaluation of the 125+ teacher sites indicates that many sites are not being kept up to date and the sites that are currently posted vary in quality (appearance) and content. Some sites were created in FrontPage, others in Teacher Toolbox, and still others were created and are currently housed on a variety of servers like Homestead and FortuneCity. District policy requires that each site posted by a staff member (and linking off the district site) must be pre-approved by a principal and the Webmaster (however, there is no formal webmaster in the district).

## **Preliminary Problem Statement**

The Corning Painted Post School District does not adequately advise or train its instructional staff in regard to the expectations and district policies associated with creating classroom web pages.

## **Verification of the Problem/Determination of Specific Needs**

Statistics gathered to date indicate there is a problem with consistency and district compliance in regard to teacher/classroom web pages. In looking through the files left by the previous employee who volunteered to handle all web page information these forms have not been submitted by over 60% of the staff members who have a current web presence. A cursory review of the 125+ sites indicates that 70% of the sites are not current or up to date and 90% do not comply completely with the district policy for posting a web page. The technology team members were informally interviewed at the monthly Technology meeting and reacted favorably to the idea of switching over to Teacher Toolbox for teachers web pages.

Careful consideration has been given in developing a procedure to identify and collect data about Web Page implementation and teacher migration to using the Teacher Digital Toolbox for web page production of classroom/teacher sites. Anonymity of the teachers who are being questioned is not vital, but could prove effective in obtaining honest responses and obtaining information in a timely fashion would be helpful since administration and parents have voiced some concerns about web pages. Sending questionnaire forms via e-mail to building staff members seems to be the most efficient means of gathering data to develop a sense of how teachers feel about using Teacher Toolbox to maintain and/or develop web pages. The questionnaire has been sent out via district e-mail and teachers have been asked to print and leave their anonymous forms in boxes that have been placed in each main office. Teachers were given a deadline of February 8<sup>th</sup> to respond.

Note: The following matrix was simply one tool used to help provide focus in the verification/determination process.

TYPE OF INFORMATION	SOURCES OF INFORMATION		
	OBSERVATIONS	INTERVIEW	DOCUMENTATION
<b>AUDIENCE = Teachers</b>	Examine current web page presence for quality and content.	Interview Computer Coordinator and technology leaders from each building.	Establish how many teachers are involved at each building level.
<b>TASKS = use Teacher Toolbox</b>	Check current Teacher Toolbox pages for content and district policy compliance.	Anonymous questionnaire sent to staff members via e-mail.	Match current Web Page Production Authorization forms with pages that are currently posted.
<b>CONTENT = Create a Teacher/classroom web site</b>	Work with David Bates, the Teacher Toolbox designer to create effective training materials and to get the Help link for the program working.	Meet with BOCES personnel and Pixelhead to establish procedure for linking to BOCES server and inquire about the process for uploading files.	Review district guidelines for teacher web pages for relevancy and practical application.

## TEACHER WEB PRESENCE ON THE DISTRICT WEB SITE

Please answer the following questions so that the Instructional Support Team can develop a sense of how the teaching staff feels about the development of Teacher Web Pages for the District Site. Answer the questions using the form below, print the page upon completion, and place it in the box provided in the main office of your building by February 8th. Please do not put your name on the questionnaire, but do ask the secretary for a raffle ticket so that your name will be put in a district drawing for a Palm Pilot. All teachers who respond to the questionnaire will have an opportunity to win (only one raffle ticket per teacher please!) and the winner will be announced when you return from your Winter Break. Thank you ahead of time for your thoughtful consideration.

1. How important do you rate a teacher web site in terms of curriculum integration and student management?

Very  Somewhat  Not important at all

2. How important do you rate a teacher web site in terms of parent/public relations/as a medium of communication?

Very  Somewhat  Not important at all

3. Do you currently have a web page that links to the District web page?

Yes  No

4. If your answer to number 3 was yes, who currently maintains your site?

I do  a student does  a district employee  other

5. If you answered yes to number 1, which program was/is used to create/maintain your web page?

FrontPage  Teacher Toolbox  Other  I'm not sure

6. Which of the following features do you feel would enhance a teacher web page (check those that apply)

Posted homework assignments

Posted announcements

Links to sites recommended by the teacher

Flash cards created by the teacher for review

A place to post student work

A calendar feature

A link to uploaded worksheets, PowerPoint presentations, etc.

A link to e-mail the teacher

Please feel free to add any other features that may not have been listed by clicking on the following gray box and typing your response:

7. If you **do not** currently have a web site please click the phrase that best describes the reason that you don't

I don't have time

I don't know how to create a web page

I see no value in creating a web page

I do not have easy access to the Internet

8. If you have a web site or think you might like one some day which phrase(s) best describe(s) how you feel right now

I would like to be able to update my web page from home or school

I would like to learn how to FTP my site to a server

I would like to attend a workshop to learn more

Other. Please describe by clicking on the following grab box and typing your answer:

9. Are you aware of the district policies regarding teacher web pages?

Yes  No

## **Prioritized Needs:**

Needs that may be uncovered through the questionnaire process:

- Teachers may not feel there is a need to have a web page
- Teachers may need training (for software/district policy awareness)
- Teachers may feel they need additional time/compensation to keep a site current
- Teachers may need available access to the Internet in order to maintain a site
- Teacher priorities may vary
- A webmaster may need to be hired

## **Revised Problem Statement (based on data gathered to date):**

The Corning Painted Post School District does not adequately advise or train its instructional staff in regard to the options available for creating web pages and does not adequately define expectations and district policies associated with creating classroom web pages.

## **Instructional Goals:**

- The Instructional Support Specialists need to make teachers aware of district policies for web design (newsletters, e-mails, faculty meetings, handouts)
- The Instructional Support Specialists need to make teachers aware of the Teacher Toolbox capabilities and ease of use (faculty meetings, staff release days, newsletters)
- The Instructional Support Specialists need to design and offer workshops in a computer lab environment so teachers can learn how to use Teacher Toolbox/FrontPage through hands-on experience (teachers would receive in-service credit)
- The Instructional Support Specialists need to provide follow-up support to teachers following the workshops (create user lists, make appointments to visit with staff, include Teacher Toolbox Tips in monthly technology newsletters)