

LEADING EDGE CERTIFICATION for educators

An alliance of educators has created technology trainings and certifications for both teachers and administrators.

For leaders of schools in the 21st century, it seems there is a never-ending demand on what we need to be doing. Just when we thought we had a handle on traditional testing and ways to improve student achievement, along comes the Common Core Standards, which change the game in many ways. As you know, the Common Core will require students to have an in-depth understanding of skills that require higher-order thinking infused with technology. But Common Core is not the only game changer on the horizon.

For years, many have stressed the need to make sure our schools and districts are educating students who possess the skills needed in the 21st century. Tom Torlakson, our state superintendent of public instruction, has created a technology task force to develop recommendations that will incorporate the skills and knowledge and will become part of a new blueprint for education in California.

Are we finally moving away from “drill

and practice” and “random acts of technology” to a more comprehensive look at how these tools and skills can help our students achieve in ways not possible 10 years ago? The answer is yes! But the big question is this: How do we prepare our staff, parents and school boards for these changes? How will we know the correct path to leading our educational communities?

Moving toward a new level of success

Kevin Silberberg, superintendent of Standard School District, recently told me, “It has been said that the enemy of creativity and competency is success. Once you achieve a certain level of success, you slip into a ‘status quo’ mode and let important research, technology innovations and proven leadership strategies pass you by. When I feel stuck, I look for quality professional development that will begin again the movement toward a new level of success.”

By Rowland Baker

Where is the quality professional development that Silberberg speaks of?

One new example is the curriculum being offered through Leading Edge Alliance. The Alliance is a group of educational leaders who came together under an idea put forward by Mike Lawrence, executive director of Computer Using Educators. He felt strongly we should look at what is on the horizon, and what we are doing to prepare our teachers and administrators for these changes in our schools. Responding to this challenge, the Alliance was born.

This group of outstanding educators has been working for the last few years to develop trainings and certification programs for teachers and administrators on many of these new areas that are not being taught in our traditional credentialing programs. The Alliance has developed a certification program for teachers of blended and online classrooms, which has received raves and was featured in *Education Week*, as well as many other publications. In July 2012, the certification program for administrators was launched.

The training and certification program for administrators took more than a year to develop, field test and pilot. The six- to eight-week curriculum has the most up-to-date resources available anywhere, and was developed by outstanding leaders across the state. The majority of the Leading Edge Certification training is done online, which allows you to work it around your schedule. The participant-to-trainer ratio is very low, which allows for a lot of one-to-one help.

Nobody needs one more thing to do. So why should you spend your precious time going through this program? Besides the certificate and the impressive electronic badge you will receive, the skills, expertise and credibility you will develop and employ will help you lead your school or district much more effectively, and ultimately help your students excel.

Even though the program began this summer, many have been following its creation and helped in the development and fine-tuning of the certification.

In a recent conversation, Bob Price, superintendent of Empire School District and recipient of ACSA's Marcus Foster Award,

said, "Today's leaders need to be more than just tech savvy – much more. They need to have leadership skills, to know how to use data to drive decisions and understand digital citizenship. Leading Edge Certification can provide site and district leaders with the skills they need for effective 21st century leadership. The certification is proof of a skill set that leaders can bring to an employer to ensure demonstrated proficiency."



Tim Landeck, a technology leader for many years and the director of technology for Pajaro Valley Unified School District, took the training this summer. I was really curious how someone with his skill set would view the certification program. Tim was one of the first participants to sign up and said after completion of the course, "I found the coursework to be relevant and intriguing, and it opened my eyes to a variety of ways to further support the integration of technology into the K-12 environment."

Hands-on tools for staying current

Sandy Miller, leader of the ACSA Technology Academies and a summer graduate of LEC said, "The Leading Edge Certification Program for administrators provides the latest information, as well as hands-on experience for today's educational leaders. Most importantly, it provided me with the tools for staying current with technology and working with principals and teachers."

Staying current is important to all of us. With the Common Core Standards, we will be expected to have many things in place in

our schools to ensure success of our students when measured against these standards.

Superintendent Kevin Silberberg explained, "Learning, teaching, assessment and technology infrastructure are four areas targeted nationally and within our state for major changes. This certification program is designed specifically to equip the leader to be a successful 'navigator' in the new paradigms of learning. I can't think of a bet-

ter experience than what is now available through Leading Edge Certification.

"ACSA acknowledges that the world is changing and kids are different. Our schools must meet these changes or quickly become outdated. For this to happen, school leaders must keep their skills and knowledge at a high level." He added, "Every administrator needs to ask himself or herself: Are my skills keeping up with these changes?"

How to get involved

If you are looking for a way to obtain a new certification in technology, or just looking for some new ideas for your school or district, this may be the training for you. You can view the public domain curriculum at <https://sites.google.com/site/lecfta/home>. To find out more about how to get involved in the certification program for administrators, visit <http://leadingedgecertification.org>. ■

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