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# Can We Afford Not To?

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SPRINGBORO, Ohio –Why do we need more money to keep student achievement at a high level? This is a legitimate question that has been asked by community members. “We did not need this much money for instruction ten years ago.” Like most questions regarding the education of students, there is not an easy answer. Research tells us the most important influence on student learning is the adults that are supporting students in their learning. Without quality teachers and administrators students will not meet their academic potential. However, teachers cannot do this huge task by themselves. Support systems are costly. Among them are textbooks, technology, administrators and curriculum support personnel.

The first support is the need for textbooks. The formal evaluation and adoption of a textbook series in one subject area requires at least one year of study. Multiple series are studied by a committee of teachers, curriculum coordinators and administrators, comparing the degree in which the textbooks support the Ohio Academic Content Standards. A textbook series for grades K-12 is reaching \$500,000. This does not include the cost of the evaluation process the previous year. We are also looking for a series that we do not need to purchase multiple ancillary resources in order to effectively implement the text. Teachers need to learn how to best implement that newly adopted textbook series. This equates to professional development dollars.

Another area that is different from ten years ago is the need for students to be proficient with a multitude of technology and correlating resources. It is estimated that 1.5 exabytes ( $1.5 \times 10^{18}$ ) of unique new information will be generated worldwide this year! (Did You Know video; to view the entire 8-minute video click on the hyperlink: [http://www.teachertube.com/view\\_video.php?viewkey=799aaa845e1c2e8a762b](http://www.teachertube.com/view_video.php?viewkey=799aaa845e1c2e8a762b)) Information is increasing so rapidly, it is necessary to shift the teaching and learning away from details to concentrating on concepts, connections and “learning how to learn”. A big part of this will be using digital learning tools. This means costly computers, infrastructure and professional development for teachers to understand and adapt to this new way of teaching. Principals are needed to help support teachers in these new instructional strategies day in and day out.

Not only do teachers need to teach students how to use technology, they need to understand how technology can be a key in helping them be more efficient with the identification of students’ needs through the use of data. Instructional decisions must be data-driven in order for lessons to be flexible and fluid to meet students’ individual needs.

As you may have already realized, teachers must be constant learners. In order to support teachers in the most effective and efficient manner Springboro School District has “experts” in the curriculum department. Within the curriculum department there is a district literacy coordinator, math/science curriculum coordinator, gifted education coordinator and educational technologist. Each is only an email or phone call away. They do much of the behind-the-scenes work to assist teachers in their quest in helping each child reach their academic potential. Just some of what their responsibilities include:

- Facilitate the articulation for continuity of instruction across grade levels, and from grade to grade
- Search out cutting edge research-based instructional strategies and share them with teachers individually and through group professional development
- Provide classroom demonstrations of new instructional strategies
- Provide data analysis reports of all State mandated assessments. Each teacher receives the most current data for their students. This offers insights to individual student needs.
- Link State and Federal educational mandates with classroom practice
- Coordinate all the testing mandated by the State and Federal governments
- Coordinate student instructional programs, i.e. reading intervention, Title 1 math tutoring, tutoring for English Language Learners, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) programs, etc.
- Provide ongoing professional development with technology hardware and classroom integration of software
- Coordinate Progress Book for over 7,000 users
- Facilitate evaluations of textbooks and programs for district adoptions

As our society changes, so must the education we offer our students. Our mission is to “empower our students to become lifelong learners, productive citizens and future leaders.” We must prepare students for careers that have not yet been created, and give them the insight to make decisions on products that have yet to be invented. To accomplish our mission in our quickly changing global world, we must create an environment that will prepare our students with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.