

Dear Houston ISD Administrators,

In recent years, we have seen many changes within the education system. We continue to see the impact of COVID-19 in our students and the significant learning gaps it has left. As a fourth grade teacher I have observed students who struggle to read and cannot write complete sentences, but they are still expected to write a fully developed extended constructed response on a state test. We have also seen an increased use of technology within our classrooms, yet students have very limited computer skills. As educators, these are two huge opportunities we must address if we want to give our students the best chance of success in the new world they will be entering after graduating from school.

What can we do to address this opportunity? We can implement a blended learning model focused on developing our students' writing skills as well as their computer skills. Blended learning will allow teachers to become learning designers, mentors, and facilitators to reach each student in ways that traditional teaching has not before (Horn & Staker, 2015). Students will be able to learn partly through online at their own pace and teachers will be able to better differentiate to individual needs.

I am proposing to adopt a rotational blended learning model for writing where students will work in different stations. Students will be split up into small groups and switch between three stations within sixty minutes. In one station students will be receiving direct instruction from the teacher on how to address questions and help them develop their ideas on paper. The next station will consist of online programs to help students develop their computer skills. Lastly, in the third station students will have the opportunity to transfer their writing online using different word processing tools like Google Docs or Microsoft Word and even possibly get feedback using AI since AI will be used to grade their state exams.

There are many benefits to adopting this rotational blended learning model. First, this will increase student engagement and interest in their own learning by allowing them to see their own progress online. By implementing blended learning in the classroom, we will create a student-centered environment in which we are able to better differentiate to individual needs. Finally, it will help us focus on developing skills that students will be using for higher education and beyond that as they prepare to enter this new world in which these skills will be necessary for success.

I am asking to pilot a rotational blended learning model in my classroom for the next year. As we are already a 1-1 campus, there are no additional resources needed other than your support and the time to do so. Throughout this next year I plan to gather data and based on student growth, I hope to share my findings with colleagues and continue to develop this idea on a bigger scale. Together, I believe we can close some of these gaps and better prepare our students for what is to come.

Sincerely,
Joseline Sanchez

References

Horn, M., & Staker, H. (2015). *Blended: Using disruptive innovation to improve schools*. Jossey-Bass.