



# Integrating Blended Learning Into All Aspects of School, including Social Emotional Learning



# Executive Summary

Bayfield Middle School models blended learning in all aspects of its activities, starting with staff orientation and the way requisition forms are handled. Email is used only for confirmation. Discussions are posted to staff on the school's group page and re-shared directly into advisory, when appropriate for students. These practices reflect a shift in work style, where academics, the culture, and some intervention work are all enabled by blended learning techniques. Moreover, by weaving blended learning into all aspects of the school, Bayfield opened up new opportunities. It was able to think more creatively about how to use its budget to acquire needed technologies and about how to use technology to improve student health and safety.

## Stats



Bayfield 10 Jt-R



Bayfield, CO



Rural PK-12



1,377 Students



# The Idea

When blended learning is integrated into all aspects of the school, it is not only easier for teachers to adopt the practices in their classrooms, but new opportunities arise in how to use the school budget as well as support student health and safety.

# How it Works

**Integrate Blended Learning:** start by shifting the work style of the school, incorporating blended learning techniques into how day-to-day work is performed. For example, post resources for staff orientation in a learning management system (LMS), and require staff to go to the LMS for requisition forms. Discourage the use of email as a means of discussion and instead have staff post to the school's group page. Make it possible for staff to transfer the results of their collaboration and discussion directly to the student advisory sections.

**Provide Explicit Training for Teachers:** Bayfield initially used a grant obtained through San Juan BOCES to enable staff to take classes covering online and blended learning as well as how to use its learning management system, Schoology. After the grant, the district was able to shift to using the courses delivered by [iLearn Collaborative](#) with financial support from Colorado Empowered Learning. This allowed the school to provide professional development that went beyond basic "how tos" of using the technology to a deeper understanding of various core models of blended learning that inform how to integrate technology with strong instructional practices.

**Plan How Blended Can Enable Your Strategic Priorities:** Bayfield had priorities around English and Math, school culture, and social emotional learning. It prioritized using blended learning to support these areas and leveraged the consulting services provided by iLearn Collaborative with financial support from Colorado Empowered Learning, receiving feedback based on on-site walk-throughs and advise on next steps for strategic planning.

**Analyse the Budget:** the staff said that more than anything, they needed Chromebooks, but the district was not going to ask for a Mill Levy override for technology. To afford the Chromebooks, the school looked for opportunities to save money in other areas and then got board approval to pull from several different pots of money. For example, whenever there was a curriculum adoption, the school would look to see if there were opportunities to repurpose its textbook budget and use online resources. When it was time to get licenses for products like MS Word, because they were using Chromebooks, they found that they had a diminished need for MS Office products and could eliminate some licensing fees. They looked at ways to save costs around imaging the machines, identifying remote options for support. They partnered with a neighboring school to utilize the same instance of Schoology, the learning management system. They minimized the need for projectors by casting instead, using commercial grade Google Chromecasts. This also saved on the cost for wires. And of course, with a little investigation they were able to get good deals on the carts of Chromebooks themselves.

**Lay the Foundation for Your Plan with Needed Technology Infrastructure:** Bayfield launched a learning management system that will be expanded to other schools in the district. It set up the processes for checking out the computers and screen monitoring for students. Specifically, the school decided to take advantage of Gaggle, a third-party tool that monitors Google Suite services, providing content analysis, expert review, insight and analytics, and security to protect students from self-harm, cyberbullying, pornography and other harmful situations. And finally, Bayfield established standards on how to use technology and set relevant learning targets.

**Find Additional Resources:** with regard to social emotional learning, Bayfield turned to the work of Generation Schools, which partners with Random Acts of Kindness, using their theories and resources as the foundation of programming. Bayfield then sought to move these materials where appropriate into its Learning Management System, allowing everyone to see the same materials and created a resource base that could be tied into instruction that is differentiated for each and every student.

**Engage Your Community:** school leadership presented the work they were doing at the school board meeting, emphasizing that tools like Gaggle were used to promote student health and safety, preventing unwanted behaviors, and not as a disciplinary measure. At this meeting, they also painted a picture of what blended learning is, and what it is not. Specifically, the school does not allow kids to play games. Technology is only used when it is appropriate, and it is closed when it is time to move onto other things. The technology is not a distraction or a reason students are off task. Students are not behind a screen all the time - rather the technology offers a concerted balance between screen time and human interaction and supports students' social emotional well being. Similar messages were shared at parent night presentations.

# Purpose & Impact

## Achieving Strategic Priorities

The work Bayfield is doing is not specifically about blended learning. It is about achieving its strategic priorities around English and Math, school culture, and social emotional learning, with a focus on behavioral health supports. With the technology infrastructure in place, and staff trained in how to fully utilize it, Bayfield was able to make strong progress on these goals. Recent curriculum adoptions in mathematics and social studies now have resources that are fully online. The Discovery Math Techbook also has paper workbooks for students. TCI curriculum for social studies provides a host of activities and resources but is not a step-by-step approach to history. In both cases, students experience a mixture of online-supported activities and hands-on activities and discussions that promote learning.

## Support Students.

Bayfield MS is now sharing the tools and approaches it has established with the high school next year and with its principal association. The school intends to invest in its staff so that they can become the best trainers for others, helping key teachers get certificates and deeper levels of understanding.

## About Colorado Empowered Learning

Colorado Empowered Learning is the implementation support program that aims to help educators statewide combine the use of technology with great instructional practices. Program services are delivered by non-profit providers Colorado Digital Learning Solutions and iLearn Collaborative.