SWOT Analysis - Eagle Pass Independent School District

After interviewing Mr. Patrick Salinas, the Instructional Technology Director of Eagle Pass Independent School District, the SWOT analysis is below.

Strengths:

> The Eagle Pass Independent School District (EPISD) operates a wide-area network that is interconnected with local area networks at each school and department. The Chief Technology Officer, along with his team of technicians, ensures that the network and internet access are readily available and breakdowns in the network are quickly addressed and repaired.
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> The EPISD has a dedicated department to collect and secure the necessary data throughout the school district and synthesizes the data into reports required by the district, state, and TEA.
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> The EPISD has a Career Technology Education Director responsible for connecting with students and ensuring they understand the multiple career pathways.
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> The EPISD has an Instructional Technology Director who ensures that educators and students have the most up-to-date technology in the classrooms and that it is appropriately integrated into their daily lessons.
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> The EPISD conducted a "Data Documentation Comprehensive Needs Assessment," mainly focusing on data to streamline reporting systems to the stakeholders, state, and TEA.
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> The EPISD updated its District Improvement Plan for 2023-2024.

Weaknesses:

> The EPISD does not have a technology plan; the Superintendent delegated this task to the district's technology committee.
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> The EPISD should re-evaluate its technology structure, addressing all technological needs and challenges. This includes staffing the departments according to priority and need.
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> The EPISD's technology direction is fragmented into multiple departments, each forging its direction via a mission statement based solely on its localized needs. I was not able to collect the necessary data to determine how the interdepartmental lines of communication are formulated in the area of technology, including defining strengths and needs and how and who develops actions that address challenges regularly.

The technology area does not have a single focus ongoing monitoring system that evaluates the entire technological needs of the school district, nor are they able to respond and make adjustments as a unified technology department because of the single independent departments operated within the area of technology.

The Instructional Technology Director ensures technology integration and support for the classroom and students at all school campuses. This demonstrates the priority and focus of instructional technology within the school district.

The EPISD updated its District Improvement Plan for 2023-2024 but did not include technology in its planning.

I could not find information related to an equipment and digital supplies inventory to determine the ratio of devices to students at each school. Thus, this ratio could not be established.

Opportunities:

The EPISD, through its District's Technology Committee, has the opportunity to convene a "technology summit" that includes a diverse group of stakeholders, both internal and external, that can provide the expertise and guidance for the school district to produce a comprehensive technology plan that considers, connectivity and broadband, accessibility that includes devices in the recommended quantities by school and classroom, instructional design software and other software to integrate classroom instruction, appropriate training in all these emerging areas, and an instructional department adequately staff with qualified staff that can support all teachers and students in the use and integration of technology in the classrooms.

The EPISD can review its organizational structure and establish local instructional design teams composed of local teacher expertise and the district instructional design teams, working together to address emerging challenges and creating expedited action plans that support educators.

The Instructional Design Department needs to stay ahead of the curve, evaluating Robotics, AI, and VR software and developing appropriate guidance for use in the classroom as part of the curriculum.

The Instructional Design Department has the opportunity to review the effectiveness of teacher training and introduce new training methods, creating training using new "authoring software" to make online training (eLearning) more engaging.

Review and develop a secure process for teachers to access student data that is necessary for them to develop better strategies to assist them in the classroom.

Evaluate the instructional department's level of expertise and develop a consultant pool with all the elements necessary to implement an instructional design program that utilizes all the nuances of 21st-century technology.

Threats:

The school district's greatest threat is themselves, learning to get out of the way and committing to change, thus embracing structural changes, the district can move beyond the 21st Century.

A commitment to training and hiring visionary employees who understand the district's vision and have the commitment and skill set to drive the district toward achieving its goals.

A competitive nature of each school. Every Principal's goal is to get the largest budget possible to support the school's priorities. Therefore, the focus is always local. The higher priorities that transcend all schools get lost and usually are not funded accordingly to make any real efforts.

Individuals tasked with solving problems often lack the necessary expertise, leading to bigger problems and a larger bureaucracy.

Another internal threat is how the district views challenges, and after reading the District's Improvement Plan, I see that they focus on student performance in the statistics or widgets, as I refer to them. At no time did anyone mention in the report the need to review how technology is being used to integrate into the classrooms or doing teacher training needs assessment to improve teacher performance and thus positively impact student performance.