



**Florida Council of Instructional Technology Leaders
Instructional Technology Leadership Award:
2014-15 Innovative Principal of the Year
Nomination Form**



District Name: Santa Rosa School District

Nominating FCITL Member Information

Nominating FCITL Member (must be voting member for district): Vickie Beagle

Street Address: Professional Development Center, 6556 Firehouse Road

City/State/Zip: Milton, Florida 32570

Country: USA

Phone: 850-983-5110

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Representative Email: beaglev@santarosa.k12.fl.us

Principal Nominee Information

Name: Michael A. Thorpe

Professional Title: Principal, Milton High School

Work Address: 5445 Stewart Street

City/State/Zip: Milton, FL 32570

Work Phone: 850-983-5600

Work Fax: 850-983-5610

Work Email: thorpem@santarosa.k12.fl.us

All information described in directions needs to be organized into a single MS Word document or Adobe PDF electronic file and sent as an attachment in Word format. Completed nomination materials and digital videos are due by December 14, 2007. Nomination materials are to be sent via email to Gary Evans (gary.evans@audioenhancement.com). Digital videos are to be sent to Andrew Denard, Florida Center for Interactive Media (FCIM), 2010 Levy Avenue, Suite 217, Tallahassee, FL 32306-2737.

FCITL Instructional Technology Leadership Award: Innovative Principal of the Year

Santa Rosa County's candidate, Michael Thorpe, is the epitome of a connected principal. He has been an educator for twenty-one years. Now in his sixth year serving as principal he continues to push the envelope of innovation. His entire administrative career has been focused on developing, nurturing, and promoting innovative technology at Milton High School (MHS). Initially a math teacher, Mr. Thorpe quickly moved into the area of instructional technology due to the growing interest and need for this type of curriculum. His dedication and leadership in this area are well-known throughout the district. Before attaining his dream job—principal of his beloved alma mater—he served four years as the Business/Technology department chair, seven years as the technology coordinator, and three years as assistant principal, always working tirelessly and with complete devotion to make Milton High School the best. His contributions to developing academic programs and creating a school-wide culture of excellence in technology have been unsurpassed. Mr. Thorpe has been asked to present at multiple **state-wide and regional conferences**, including FETC, Technology and All That Jazz, and CTE conferences. He has been selected as **Teacher of the Year** twice—first at Holley-Navarre Middle School and then again at Milton High School. He was recognized as **Santa Rosa County High School Assistant Principal of the Year** for 2009. In 2010, he was the Santa Rosa County **Innovative Principal of the Year**, finishing as one of Florida's Top 3 Finalists. In 2014, he was chosen as the **High School Principal of the Year** for Santa Rosa County. This 2014 year marks his **second nomination** as Innovative Principal of the Year for Santa Rosa County. He is currently a member of the Florida Association of School Administrators (FASA), Santa Rosa County Association of School Administrators (SRCASA), the City of Milton Education Committee and the Santa Rosa County District Technology Committee.

Milton High School is located in the panhandle of Florida and was established in 1915. Being the only high school in the city of Milton, it carries long-standing traditions, community pride, and quite a diverse population of students. Its 1,780 students come from rural, urban, and military settings, with **52% of the student body being classified as economically disadvantaged**. As principal, Mr. Thorpe has an unparalleled commitment to excellence for his school, students, teachers, and community. His knowledge, experience, and leadership have brought Milton High School's academic achievement to a higher standard. Under Mr. Thorpe's leadership, within his first year, MHS **increased four letter grades, from a D School in Corrective Action, to an A School**. The school has maintained an A or B status, while increasing yearly in most academic areas.

	Lowest Quartile Reading	Learning Gains Reading	High Standards Reading	Lowest Quartile Math	Learning Gains Math	High Standards Math	High Standards Writing	Points Earned	School Grade
2009	42	50	51	50	71	79	72	471	D
2010	45	53	52	68	77	80	85	510	A
2011	51	57	57	63	75	81	84	523	B
2012	58	59	58	42	49	58	83	475	B
2013	65	68	63	53	66	61	61	524	A
2014	74	75	64	68	81	76	81	590	Pending

Believing that technology would make the difference for his very diverse student population, he has worked tirelessly to maintain cutting-edge technology instruction in which students develop a solid basis in knowledge and experience for future careers. Besides traditional academic classes, under the leadership of Mr. Thorpe, MHS offers a variety of programs for both college and career-focused students, including dual enrollment, honors, and advanced placement classes. One of MHS's crown jewels is the **Milton Institute of Technology (MIT)**. MIT provides certified instruction in the Adobe suite of software products, as well as instruction in television production, computer programming, and technology support. MIT also includes the Principles of Technology and Physics courses that support the school's highly successful competition in robotics and electrathon racing teams.

The level of comfort that teachers demonstrate using technology at Milton High School is directly related to training that has been personally provided by Mr. Thorpe. Mr. Thorpe's **emphasis on**

continual professional development has been demonstrated through his **Period Zero** idea. Using **weekly Principal Vodcasts, Facebook, twitter, Linked In, and Edmodo and YouTube**, Mr. Thorpe engages students, teachers, parents and the community in all things related to MHS. After becoming principal, Mr. Thorpe changed the school's master schedule from block to a unique flex schedule which incorporated block and traditional classes. Within the flex schedule, he was able to work in a common 45-minute planning time for all 100 teachers on campus. During this common planning time, which is referred to as "Period Zero," Thorpe regularly schedules technology trainings, which he himself frequently delivers. The Period Zero time is also used for the 21st Century Science classroom learning community meetings, Smartboard team meetings, and other learning community activities that benefit teachers. Mr. Thorpe has also used the Period Zero activities to nurture leadership within his faculty. He often features "teacher technology experts" in specific instructional technology areas. He gives these *experts* opportunities to train and show others what they are doing in their classrooms. Within this immersive technology culture, even reluctant teachers have started experimenting with technologies, even "flipping" their classrooms.

Using technology to focus on student improvement in core areas, Mr. Thorpe has promoted the use of interactive Smartboards, Read180, Algebra Nation, Achieve 3000, Compass Learning, educational apps, Discovery Education, GPS devices, and FCAT Explorer. Through progress monitoring and data analysis, in conjunction with individual student data chats, teachers have the evidence necessary to make instructional decisions that would directly impact student achievement. The consistent improvement within learning gains in math and reading as indicted in the table above are directly attributed to the innovative strategies through the use of technology used in instruction.

MHS students, under Mr. Thorpe's direction, have developed a strong presence in the Milton community. The Milton High School television production team has received numerous state-level awards and produces videos for the school as well as the community. In their latest project, they can be found combining printed pictures with video and the Internet to create augmented reality to promote student accomplishments and activities. Web design classes create web presence for several non-profit organizations. Through the use of 3-D printing, the digital design class does research and development to produce useful tech-related products for consumers, such as personalized cell phone cases and tablet cases for handicapped users. MHS students are involved in partnerships with local elementary schools in reading programs, STEM initiatives through robotics and aviation, and marine biology labs. In addition, the Archeology program is involved in a project that is excavating and documenting an 1830's Milton brick factory. The MHS Physics and Principles of Technology students are creating a 3-D scale model of our entire campus using CAD software and the 3-D printer. Through a partnership between the TV production, Aviation, and Physics programs, students are creating an aerial fly-over video of the campus using quad copters, Go Pro cameras, and video editing software.

Several CAPE academies have been implemented by Mr. Thorpe during his 5 years as principal. These include a **STEM/Aviation Aerospace Academy** and **Digital Design Academy**. He has also implemented an extended day online credit recovery model that is used in all district middle and high schools.

Throughout his educational career, Mr. Thorpe has demonstrated the ideal combination of skill, knowledge, dedication, and vision to become a principal of unique stature in the state of Florida. His mission has been to pursue and create new ideas and programs that lead to student success. His commitment and character are truly remarkable. The Santa Rosa County School District is extremely proud to recommend Mr. Michael Thorpe as the FCITL Innovative Principal of the Year for 2014.

Michael Alan Thorpe
4929 Creekside Lane Milton, FL 32570
Wk. (850) 983-5600 Cell (850) 698-6158

Education:

- 8/04 - 4/06..... Masters in Educational Leadership – University of West Florida
- 8/90 - 12/91... B.A. (Cum Laude) (President's List) 5th-9th Math/Science Education – University of West Florida
- 8/87 - 8/90..... A.A. Education – Pensacola Junior College

Professional Experience:

- 6/09 – Present: Principal; Milton High School
- 6/06 – 6/09: Assistant Principal; Milton High School
- 8/04 – 6/06: Dean; Milton High School
- 8/98 – 5/06: Teacher (Department Chair); Milton High School
- 8/92 – 6/98: Teacher; Holley-Navarre Middle School

Honors and Awards:

- 2014 District Principal of the Year, Santa Rosa County
- 2014 High School Principal of the Year, Santa Rosa County
- 2011 Top 3 Finalist for Innovative Instructional Technology Principal of the Year for Florida
- 2011 Innovative Instructional Technology Principal of the Year, Santa Rosa County
- 2009 High School Assistant Principal of the Year, Santa Rosa County
- 2000 Teacher of the Year, Milton High School
- 1996 Teacher of the Year, Holley-Navarre Middle School

Civic/Professional Activities:

- Production Manager of Television Show for the City of Milton
- Representative for Milton High School in the Chamber of Commerce
- Member of Santa Rosa County District Technology Committee
- Milton High School Data Team Chair
- Member of Milton High School Improvement Team
- Member of Florida Association of Career and Technical Educators
- Member of Florida Association of School Administrators
- Member of City of Milton Education Committee
- Media Production Director, First Baptist Church

Special Skills/Interests:

- Computer programming – developed registration software (e-Reg) for Milton High School and other schools
- Video production & editing
- Web design
- Network infrastructure development
- Future technologies (Augmented Reality, 3-D simulations, Hologram technology, Educational App development, Special Effects in Video)

Leadership Experience:

- Member of State of Florida Commissioner's Leadership Academy
- Santa Rosa County School District Supplemental Review Committee
- Santa Rosa County School District Discipline Review Committee
- Santa Rosa County School District HRMD Revision Committee
- Milton High School Business Dept. Chairman
- Milton High School Vocational Dept. Chairman
- Milton High School Technology Coordinator
- Milton High School Student Activities Director

- Milton High School -School Improvement Committee Chairman
- Developed a Numerous CAPE Academies for Milton High School
- Presenter at State/Regional/Local Conferences (FACTE, Technology and All that Jazz, FETC)

Presentations/Publications:

- Article: “*What’s Right in Education*”; February 20, 2013; Studor Education/Excellence in Education
- Article: “*The Clock is Ticking: The ABC & D’s of Reaching At-Risk Graduates*”; April 11, 2014; Studor Education
- Article: “*Can a D School Rise to an A School?*”; August 20, 2014; Studor Institute/Recognizing Great School Leaders
- 4th Annual Gulf Coast Aerospace Corridor 2014-2015 (June 2014)
http://www.gulfcoastaerospacecorridor.com/files/Chapter_III_workforce_052814.pdf
- Television Show featured guest: *Progress + Promise*;
<http://blabtv.com/vod/progresspromise/>
- Developed Website; Leadership - The Core of Instruction; <http://www.leadershipthecoreofinstruction.com/>
- Presenter/Coordinator of Leadership - The Core of Instruction Forum; May 17, 2013
- Presenter; DOE Countdown to Common Core Institutes; Santa Rosa & Sarasota Counties; Summer 2013
- Webinar Presenter; Consortium of Educational Leaders in the Big Bend & South Florida Regions; Reaching At-Risk Graduates; April & June, 2014
- Presenter at various State/Regional/Local Conferences (including FACTE, Technology and All that Jazz, FETC)

Civic/Professional Activities:

- Production Manager of Television Show for the City of Milton
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- Milton High School Data Team Chair
- Member of Milton High School Improvement Team
- Member of Florida Association of Career and Technical Educators
- Member of FASA
- Member of City of Milton Education Committee
- Media Production Director, First Baptist Church

Special Skills/Interests:

- Computer programming – developed registration software (e-Reg) for Milton High School and other schools
- Video production & editing
- Web design
- Network Infrastructure development
- Exploration of Emerging Technologies applied to education (Augmented Reality, 3-D simulations, Holographic Telepresence for education, Educational App development, Special Effects in Video)

Response to Questions

1. How do you help reduce or remove barriers for effective technology use in your school or school system? (250 word limit.)

As the instructional leader on campus, it is my job to reduce and remove barriers for effective technology use. First and foremost, I feel we must overcome the fear of failure concerning the use of technology. Teachers must believe they are in an environment that encourages exploration and experimentation. This culture is created by my providing the example for experimenting with new technologies myself. It is important for the teachers not only to see me experiment and succeed but also to experiment and fail. I set this culture by continuing to invest in teachers regardless of their past successes and failures.

Another barrier I strive to overcome is to effectively match resources with desired student outcomes. In an education environment, resources are very limited, so I must take the lead role in understanding, researching, and planning for any effective technologies for our campus. Knowing the desired student outcome, and the effective technology's role in it, is imperative in making instructional technology decisions. A principal with this practice will gain the confidence of his/her faculty. Digital leadership requires a principal to diligently seek funding resources and use those resources wisely.

The final barrier that I help to remove is access to adequate training for my teachers and students in the use of educational technology. I believe the principal should be the number one learner and number one teacher when it comes to technology professional development. The innovation level of a school is directly proportional to the innovation level of the principal.

2. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of digital technology use in your school or district? (250 word limit.)

Many educators would be quick to measure the effectiveness of technology by comparing the number of students with positive outcomes to the amount of financial commitment required to obtain the technology. However, I believe the effectiveness of technology can and should be measured in several ways. One measure of the effectiveness should be the level of engagement that it creates among the students. An engaged student is contributing to his/her learning. Another measure is to identify how well it connects students to the learning goal. Effective technologies directly impact the expected learning goal. Truly effective technologies should bridge the gap between student differences (socioeconomic, gender, race, and learning styles). It affords the opportunity for teachers to provide the ultimate in differentiated instruction. Finally, no instructional technology should be sought out without first clearly defining the expected student outcomes. Therefore, the most important measure of the effectiveness of technology is tied to student outcomes. If the technology assisted the student in reaching the expected outcome, then this technology is effective.

3. What is your vision of how digital learning can prepare today's students to be successful in attaining college and career readiness and what have you done to move your school towards this vision? (250 word limit.)

My vision is that we are creating students who are not only comfortable using various types of technology but also have the talent to choose the most effective technology to use for any required task that could benefit from a technological solution. As students leave the high school environment, they will be entering a technology-rich world regardless of their path.

The career path requires a highly motivated, connected problem solver that is comfortable learning new technologies and adept at collaborating worldwide through the use of technology tools.

A college-oriented student likewise must be ready for a connected environment of varied technology solutions to perform a multitude of tasks. Therefore, at Milton High School, our preparation for students includes the use of various operating systems. Our students are exposed to learning through laptops, tablets, cloud-based computing, and smartphones. Along with the variety of technologies used by our students, we also believe it is important to vary the type of assignments and projects which students must complete through the use of technology throughout their high school career.

We feel, as a school, that it is important for our students to be informed technology consumers of the future so that they can fairly judge the merits of different types of digital devices.

Our philosophy of exposing students to varied technological solutions for different types of problems creates an environment in which the fires of innovation are stoked, and students are prepared for a career path or college path that demands innovation to succeed.

4. How is the use of technology assisting your school's endeavors for monitoring student academic progress? (250 word limit.)

The model we have adopted at Milton High School for progress monitoring uses technology from start to finish. Initially, our students are assessed through Discovery Education Assessment, using laptops, desktops, or tablets, to determine a baseline for the year. Following the assessment, teachers analyze the data using Excel, use Powerpoint to create data presentations, and then use their presentation tools to share the data with their classes. The teachers use the data to identify students needing enrichment or remediation. They also rely on the data to develop an instructional plan targeting specific deficiencies. The development of this plan involves the use of online curriculum resources and online collaboration with other educators who are experiencing similar results.

Once deficiencies are identified, the teacher develops an individual remediation plan. Each plan includes a one-on-one data chat between the teacher and the student in need, where the teacher uses a deeper data analysis to clearly explain what areas will receive focus and for how long. Then the teacher monitors the student weekly through a series of mini assessment probes, created by the teacher in Discovery Education and individualized for each student in need. This progress monitoring cycle occurs three times throughout the year with the instructional direction of the class being driven by the data results from each cycle. These assessment cycles are referred to as Baseline (September), Mid-year (December), and Spring (March). An Excel analysis comparing assessment cycles shows the teacher the effectiveness of their instruction and progress achieved by their students.