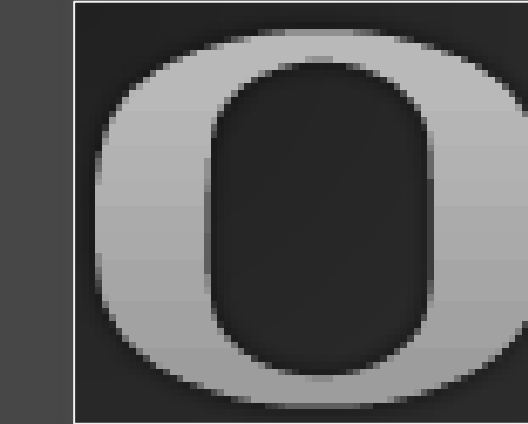


Increasing Student Social Engagement through Digital Media

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Background

West Lane Technical Learning Center is a hybrid public charter high school that combines online core curriculum delivery with a hands on vocational-technical program. Students have less opportunity to engage in typical social activities due to the structure of the school. As a result, while students report that they have positive relationships with their teachers, most students also report that they have little or no contact with other students in the school's program. Studies indicate that social engagement in the school environment is a strong component for creating a sense of belonging which in turn supports student achievement (Reyes, 2012). Studies suggest further that virtual environments can encourage out-of-school participation (Leese, 2009) as well as increased overall engagement (Nie, 2010).

School Improvement Goal

- Increase student social engagement through the use of digital media.

Predicted residual benefits:

- ❖ Increased year-to-year retention
- ❖ Increased online interaction with school staff and students
- ❖ Increased sense of "community"
- ❖ Increased year-to-year growth in academic achievement

Implementation

- Adopt a secure, school-age friendly social media site to integrate with school academic platform (Moodle).

Steps:

- ❖ Research possible alternatives, such as the University of Oregon based Obaworld.
- ❖ Communicate plan to stakeholders.
- ❖ Adopt platform.
- ❖ Integrate social media platform with existing academic platform.
- ❖ Train students and staff in use of new platform.

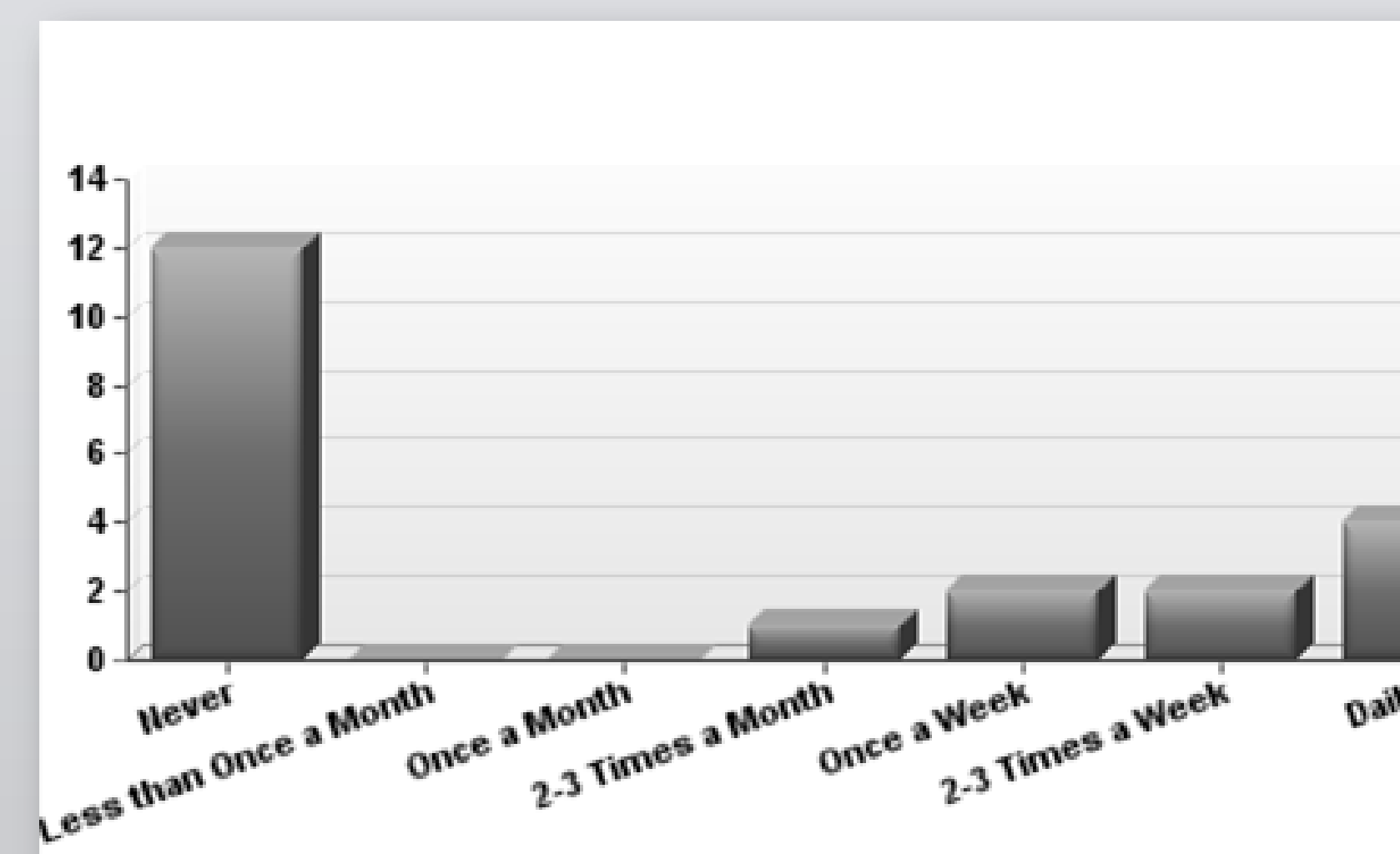
Proposed Budget

Budget Item	Unit Cost	Units	Total Cost
Platform	1.00	100	100.00
Labor	30.00	20	600.00
Total Cost			\$700.00

Student Social Engagement at WLTL

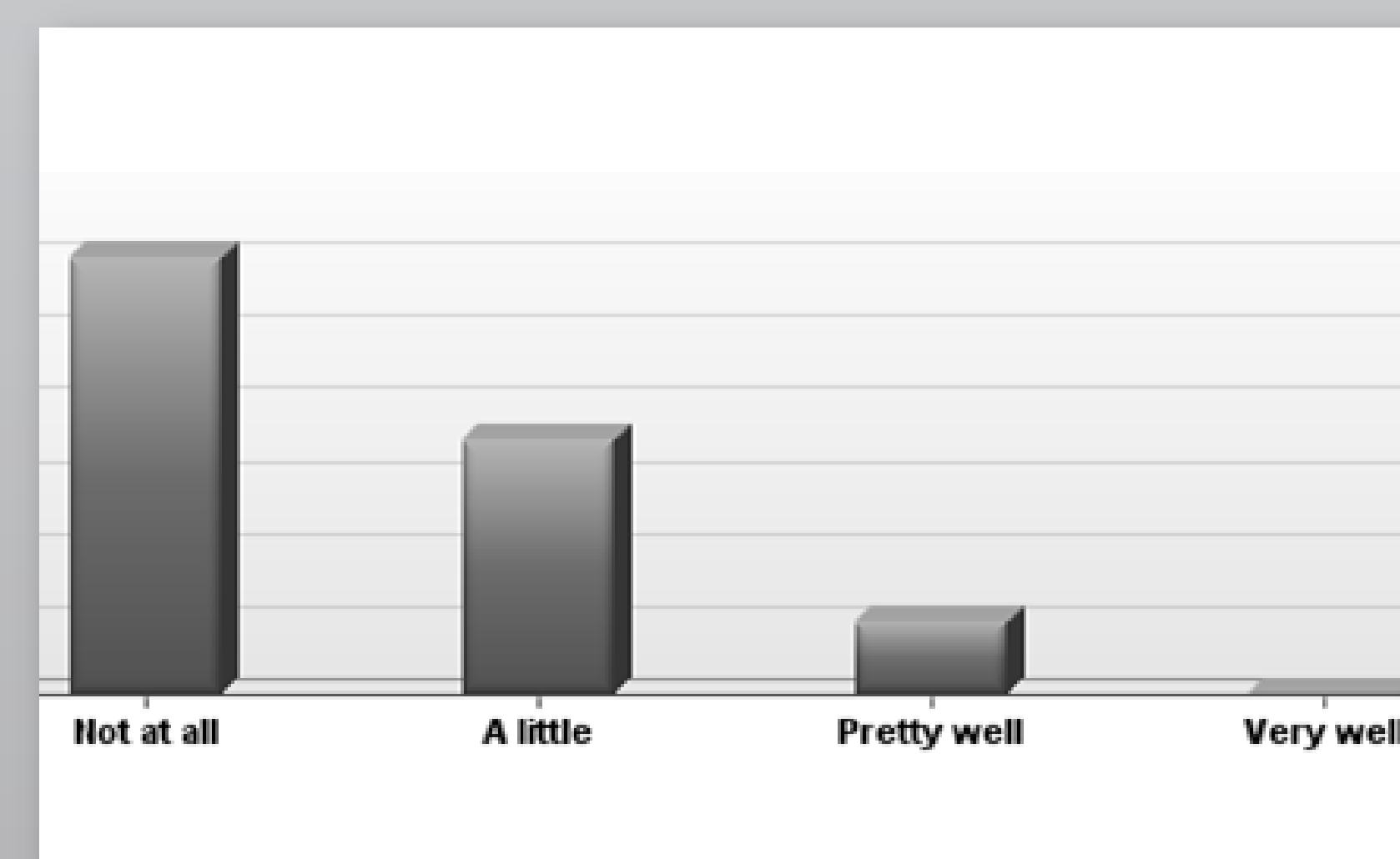
A survey of student perceptions of their own engagement at West Lane Tech was conducted. Out of 96 students, 22 students (23%) responded to the survey conducted over a one week period. Partial results of this survey are show below. When asked how often they communicated with other students at WLTL, the majority of students (57%) responded "never." The second largest response was "daily" with 19% reporting daily interaction with other students. This represents the hybrid nature of the school; some students participate directly in brick and mortar activities while many students are working only on core classes online. When asked, "How well do other students at WLTL know you?" again, 57% of respondents reported that other students did not know them at all. No students reported that other students knew them very well. This contrasts sharply with student relations with teachers. A majority of students reported that their teachers know them "very well" (24%) or "pretty well" (38%). These survey results indicate that students are not socially engaged in school activities with their peers.

How often do you communicate with other students at WLTL?



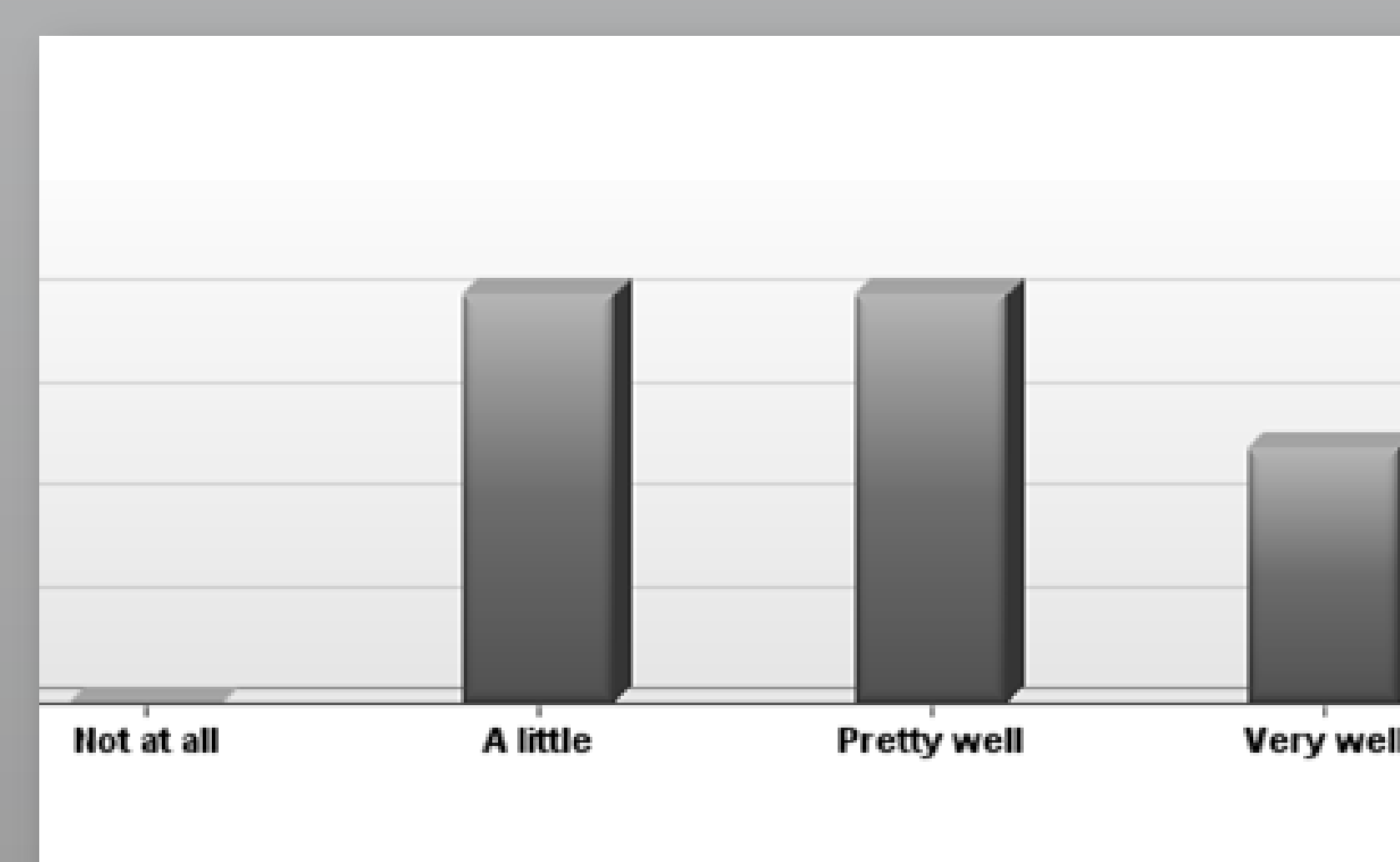
#	Answer	Response	%
1	Never	12	57%
2	Less than Once a Month	0	0%
3	Once a Month	0	0%
4	2-3 Times a Month	1	5%
5	Once a Week	2	10%
6	2-3 Times a Week	2	10%
7	Daily	4	19%
	Total	21	100%

How well do other students at WLTL know you?



#	Answer	Response	%
1	Not at all	12	57%
2	A little	7	33%
3	Pretty well	2	10%
4	Very well	0	0%
	Total	21	100%

How well do your teachers at WLTL know you?



#	Answer	Response	%
1	Not at all	0	0%
2	A little	8	38%
3	Pretty well	8	38%
4	Very well	5	24%
	Total	21	100%

Methods

An online survey was administered through Qualtrics. The survey consisted of 28 questions related to student perceptions of their experience in a predominantly online school. The survey was available to students from November 17 to November 26, a period of time that included a holiday period, which may have impacted the response rate. Respondents might be overrepresented by students not required to physically attend daily classes since those students access their core curriculum through the internet. The survey was voluntary and conducted anonymously. Survey answers were not linked to any identifying student information. The survey and directions for the survey were sent through the school's messaging system to all students.

Communication Plan Outline

- Share School Goal and Predicted Outcomes with Stakeholders

Audience: Decision-makers (Principal, Staff & Board)

Timing	Message Content	Delivery Mechanism	Sender	Date
Phase I	Idea Initiation	Email	Barrett	9/7/2012
Phase II	Present Implementation Plan	Presentation	Barrett	1/24/2013
Phase III	Report Status	Presentation	Barrett	4/15/2013

Audience: Parents and Guardians

Timing	Message Content	Delivery Mechanism	Sender	Date
Phase I	Announce Plan	Letter	Ken Woody Principal	2/15/2013
Phase II	Presentation: Q&A	Presentation	Barrett, Woody, Staff	3/1/2013
Phase III	Report Status	Letter	Woody	6/15/2013

Audience: Students

Timing	Message Content	Delivery Mechanism	Sender	Date
Phase I	Announce Plan	Email	Barrett	2/15/2013
Phase II	Training & Orientation	Presentation	Barrett, Woody, Staff	3/1/2013
Phase III	Feedback	Survey	Students	6/15/2013

References

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