

**At a Glance**

The Instructional Technology (IT) department of the Dallas Independent School District managed the Title II, Part D, Enhancing Education Through Technology grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education for the 2004-2005 school year. The grant provided \$1,496,517 to the district to facilitate improvements in the use of technology as part of educational delivery strategies employed by the district.

**Program Components**

Beginning Teacher Institute (BTI). The Beginning Teacher Institute is limited to 20 first- or second-year teachers. In 2004-2005, 12 teachers participated as the BTI focused on technology integration into the teaching process. The grant provided training and mentoring of BTI participants by teacher technologists. Teachers received a stipend of \$200 for attending all 15 sessions. The grant also provided a \$200 stipend to teachers who successfully completed a project involving introducing technology to students in a grade-appropriate and relevant way.

Focus/Password Fees. eSchool® Online is a division of Classroom Connected Incorporated, a Harcourt Education company. eSchool® Online developed the Focus program, a nationwide program that is customized specifically to fit the needs of each client school district, including DISD. In 2004-2005, the grant primarily paid the fees for Personal Identification Numbers (PIN) facilitating DISD teacher access to the Focus program. Teachers report favorable impressions of the program.

Dallas Institute for Urban Leadership Website. This was an initiative to fund further website development for the Dallas Institute for Urban Leadership using Blackboard technology. Program management changed during 2004-2005 and there was no activity on this initiative.

Read 180. This is a reading program for high school students where students rotate among teacher-led instruction, computer aided

instruction, and independent work. The grant provided funding to upgrade the READ 180 software. The upgrade did not present a change in curriculum; instead, it incorporated functional improvements into the operational characteristics of the software. The software functioned more smoothly and effectively. Money from the grant also purchased a few headsets to replace damaged and worn units.

Teacher Laptop Program (TLP). In 2003-2004, 9,432 teachers and media specialists received laptops for lesson planning, grade book maintenance, and general classroom use. The 2004-2005 funding was to support the first year of operation and implementation, as well as training and providing laptops for new teachers, and those who did not receive a laptop in 2003-2004.

The Technology Department randomly surveyed 100 laptop recipients selected from elementary and secondary schools in the spring of 2005. Relatively few respondents used their laptops for grade/attendance reporting (38.8%), parent communications (32.7%), multimedia activities (30.6%), or desktop publishing (26.5%). The low utilization of laptops for grade and attendance reporting probably points to a need for additional spreadsheet training opportunities for teachers. In the spring of 2005, the Technology Department began testing a new course called Level II Technology Pedagogy ConNEXTion (TPC) that will offer training modules in Word, PowerPoint and Excel that are expected to increase teacher's utilization of their laptops in the classroom.

Masters Across Technology (MAT). The University of North Texas (UNT) developed and offered a masters program designed to help teachers obtain the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) Technology Certificate. Graduates earn a Master Teacher designation by completing a Computer Education and Cognitive Systems (CECS) Master's degree called Teaching and Learning with Technology. The grant provided funds for 20 teachers to take six courses within the program during the 2004-2005 school year.

New Horizons. New Horizons provides computer training, specializing in Microsoft applications, nationwide. During 2004-2005, the grant funded 280 days of Type A training at New Horizons. Type A training includes desktop applications such as Microsoft Access, Word, Excel and PowerPoint. The complete training catalog may be viewed at [www.newhorizons.com](http://www.newhorizons.com).

Computer Literacy Revision (Computer Applications). In 2003-2004, DISD developed a new curriculum for the required semester in Computer Literacy class in middle school. In 2004-2005, funding was provided to the developers of the curriculum to support the first year of implementation.

Blackboard Project. Blackboard is online software used to support teaching and training in several DISD programs. DISD provided online Professional Development courses for district teachers and other educators. Five departments offered 74 professional development courses and 13 communication tool websites in 2004-2005. The grant paid for personal identification numbers necessary for access to supported programs.

Technology Outreach Program. This initiative provided donated, refurbished laptops to students for their personal use. More than 1,200 computers were distributed through this program.

Campus Technology Consultants. The grant provided funding for one full-time technology consultant at Bryan Adams High School and a second at Molina High School to provide technical training and services to the staff and faculty.

Atomic Learning. This is a subscription-based online training provider. DISD subscribed to training in hand-held technology for district employees. The grant funded personal identification numbers necessary for DISD teachers to have access to the training websites.

TCEA Scholarships. The TCEA scholarship program funded 104 teacher technologists to attend the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention & Exposition meeting held in Austin, Texas, February 7-11, 2005.

## Summary

The DISD Instructional Technology department used grant monies to fund 13 vital technology needs within the district during the 2004-2005 school year. Most projects focused on training for DISD teachers.

Training programs included the BTI for new teachers and the Focus/Password Fees program for teachers who may be experienced, but were new to DISD. The MAT program participants continued on the pathway to earning a Computer Education and Cognitive Systems Master's degree. New Horizons provided more than 280 days of training for district personnel. The Blackboard project supported 74 Professional Development courses and 13 communication tools websites for DISD employees. Atomic Learning provided tutorials on the use of hand-held technology.

The TLP continued to support teachers' use of laptops in classrooms throughout the district by providing equipment, training and technical support for users. More training is needed for teachers to effectively utilize laptops for grade book records, parental communications and other uses contemplated by the district when the program was implemented.

TCEA scholarships, supplemented by grant funds made it possible for teacher technologists to attend the annual meeting of the TCEA in Austin, Texas during February of 2004.

The Computer Literacy Revision program and the Campus Technology Consultants provided support for teachers' use of technology in 2004-2005

The funds provided through the Title II, Part D, Enhancing Education Through Technology grant program were a crucial element allowing the Instructional Technology department to deliver critical services to district personnel in 2004-2005.