

Title II, Part D, Enhancing Education Through Technology: 2007-08

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At-a-Glance

The Instructional Technology (IT) department of Dallas ISD managed the Title II, Part D, Enhancing Education Through Technology grant awarded by the U.S. Department of education for the 2007-08 school year. The grant provided funds to the district to facilitate improvements in the use and integration of technology as a part of educational delivery strategies employed by the district. The IT department applied the funding to six major program areas within the district.

- Beginning Teacher Institute
- Dallas ISD Online
- Services to Private Schools
- New Horizons training classes
- Interactive Video Conferencing
- Texas Computer Education Association (TCEA) Scholarships

Each of these programs was carefully integrated into a Districtwide plan to prepare both teachers and students to embrace and integrate technology in the school, workplace and home.

Instructional Technology continues to support the District Technology Plan which has evolved four over-arching educational goals. Each goal provides a solution to a specific area that, when combined, creates an environment whereby student achievement becomes the primary goal. The four goals are: 1) Academic, 2) Business Systems, 3) Infrastructure, and 4) Equitable Access.

Beginning Teacher Institute

The Beginning Teacher Institute (BTI) is a part of both the New Teacher Mentoring and Development and the Educational Technology Departments. This year, 11 first- or second-year teachers completed the BTI project, demonstrating their training and knowledge of integrating technology into their specific content area. A digital camera was provided to each teacher's school to document the project environment and student centered learning. Teachers received a \$750 stipend for completion and presentation of the project.

Dallas ISD Online

Dallas ISD Online is a continuation of what was previously called the Blackboard Project, a subscription website content management service. The Blackboard Academic Suite software is geared for public school systems to host district-specific online

training applications for teachers. Blackboard provided server space and a website shell for subscribers to post training, bulletin boards or other educational oriented material. The subscriber was responsible for developing and maintaining the content of each website. The total number of Blackboard users stands at 8,314. This was the final year to subscribe to Blackboard. At a great cost savings, funds were set aside to incorporate Moodle in Fall 2008. Currently, over 17,000 users were registered, including all teachers, paraprofessionals, campus and central administrators. Of these, 41 administrators and 129 teachers were trained as instructors for their peers. Access is through www.mydallasisonline.org. Almost 100 campus staff members attended a seven week "Moodle U" to train and develop a library of well-made courses addressing identified needs. The best courses available on the Blackboard portal were migrated to the Moodle installation. With these and the newly developed courses, the Moodle library contains 264 courses.

Services to Private Schools

In connection with No Child Left Behind, Dallas ISD provided technical services to area private schools. The Catholic Diocese of Dallas was the largest recipient. The Diocese used its funding primarily for hardware and subscriptions to digital media in 2007-08.

New Horizons Training

New Horizons provided computer training, specializing in Microsoft® applications. District employees were eligible for training at the Dallas area facility. The grant funded 325 days of desktop training such as Microsoft® Access™, Word™, Excel™ and PowerPoint™.

Interactive Video Conferencing

The Interactive Video Conferencing program began implementation during the 2006-07 school year fielding 31 video conferencing carts to district schools. Another 11 were funded through this year's grant.

Carts were equipped with a flat screen monitor, a Kodak projector and speaker system, and other equipment necessary to facilitate an interactive conference or virtual field trip. Each cart was assigned to a managing technologist, who has had extra training to maintain the equipment. Seven hundred and forty

teachers completed basic training on the carts' operation in 2007-08.

The Interactive Video Conferencing program hosted a total of 247 courses or events. Subjects ranged from math and science to writing and performing arts. Elementary schools hosted the majority of video conference events (229), involving 7,848 students.

The IT department hosted 34 teachers to attend the Texas Distance Learning conference held last spring. This conference serves as training and an inspiration to teachers and helps them form a vision of how video conferencing can enrich their classroom.

Texas Computer Education Association Scholarships (TCEA) Program

The TCEA scholarship program funded 108 teacher technologists to attend the 28th Anniversary Convention and Exposition held in Austin last winter. Exhibitors included computer supplies and accessory providers, software vendors, systems networking products suppliers, training and education materials suppliers, classroom product suppliers, and others. Breakout sessions included presentations of successful technology integration programs from around the state. Technologists attending were surveyed upon their return. Technology integration was the focus of the topic or skills of the workshops for 83% of the attendees. Almost 50% attended workshops on podcasting, presentation software and computer lab lessons. After attending the conference, all teacher technologists stated they were better able to integrate technology into the classroom. Conference attendees also frequently responded that ongoing or further training on current technology would be beneficial to Dallas ISD.

For more information, see EA08-183-2, available at www.dallasisd.org/eval/ or contact Rebecca Dyer at 972-925-6404.