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 2005-2006 school year. The grant provided $1,509,954 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 2005-2006, 10 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.

Services to Private Schools. In connection with No Child Left Behind, DISD provided services to area private schools. The Catholic Diocese of Dallas was the largest recipient. DISD funded a full-time counselor and a technologist to serve the Diocese. The Diocese used their funding to purchase an after-school program from Twenty-First Century Learning of Phoenix, Arizona.

DallasISD Online. This was a continuation of what was previously called the Blackboard Project, a subscription website content management service. Blackboard provided server space and a website shell for subscribers to use to post training, bulletin boards or other educationally oriented material. The subscriber was responsible for developing and maintaining the content of each web site. Subscribers purchased access for a specific number of individuals and for a specific amount of server memory space. Each individual user must be licensed. There were 3,700 licensed subscribers in 2005-2006.

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 2005-2006, 798 laptop computers were distributed to teachers and media specialists who passed the TLP Level 1 Technology Proficiency assessment. The computers were HP / nx5000 or HP / nc6120 machines equipped with Star Office. In 2005-2006 the TLP also rolled out the Level II training program called TLP Level II Technology and Pedagogy ConNEXTion. To be eligible for the Level II training program a teacher had to have successfully completed the TLP Level I, and be in possession of either a Compaq EVO N800v or Dell Inspiron Laptop Computer. Some 85 teachers successfully completed this training.

Also new in 2005-2006 was the Intel Teach to the Future program that awarded HP / nx9010 laptops to principals. One-hundred and fifty-seven principals received laptops under this program.

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 19 teachers to complete the Master’s program during the 2005-2006 school year.
New Horizons. New Horizons provides computer training, specializing in Microsoft applications, nationwide. During 2005-2006, the grant funded 98 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.

Interactive Video Conferencing The Interactive Video Conferencing program was suspended throughout much of the 2005-2006 school year. The funding for this program was temporarily suspended by the district pending a resolution of issues surrounding Technology Department vendors.

Technology Outreach Program. This initiative provided donated, refurbished laptops to students for their personal use. More than 1,280 computers were distributed through this program. The program also donated over 600 refurbished computers to DISD classrooms.

Atomic Learning. This is a subscription-based online training provider. DISD subscribed to training in hand-held technology for district teachers and students. In 2005-2006, seven 3rd and 4th grade bilingual teachers (134 students combined) were selected to participate in the program. Each teacher received a Teacher PDA, a classroom set of PDAs for student use, and a desktop computer and a projection device for the classroom.

TCEA Scholarships. The TCEA scholarship program funded 104 teacher technologists to attend the 26th Anniversary Convention & Exposition meeting held in Austin, Texas, February 6-10, 2006.

Summary
The DISD Instructional Technology department used grant monies to fund 10 technology programs needed in the district during the 2005-2006 school year. Grant funding supported 10 new teachers as they completed projects for the BTI. The grant funded a technologist and counselor for the Catholic Dioceses of Dallas.

Teachers participated in a comprehensive Internet-based interactive program designed to reinforce best practices in teaching, and to introduce and reinforce district expectations for teaching practice through the DallasISD Online website.

The Scholastic READ 180 program used grant funds to upgrade the basic software used by teachers as one leg of a three-legged program. Although the software upgrade was successful, problems remain, mostly associated with hardware and connectivity problems at using schools. These were hardware problems that cannot be remedied by software improvements.

In 2003-2004, DISD issued more than 9,000 laptops to teachers and media specialists under the TLP. In 2005-2006, the grant funded continued training and support for these users. The grant also funded the purchase of laptops for teachers new to the district, and those not issued one the previous year. Training was also funded under the grant.

Nineteen participants in the MAT program completed their Master of Computer Education and Cognitive Systems degree at UNT. The grant funded 98 days of Microsoft applications training at New Horizons, a corporation that delivers training to Microsoft applications users nationwide.

The Interactive Video Conferencing program was suspended throughout most of 2005-2006. The TOP program provided more than 1,280 donated computers to DISD students through the CAST component of the program. The CFC component distributed 600 computers to schools for classroom use.

The grant provided funding to support seven bilingual DISD teachers’ and students’ access to subscription-based short, on-demand training programs offered by Atomic Learning. The tutorials focused on the use of hand-held technology.

In 2004-2005, the grant provided funding for 104 teacher technologists to attend the 26th Anniversary Convention & Exposition meeting of the Texas Computer Education Association in Austin, Texas. Attendees were able to review and examine technology related offerings including hardware, software, packaged instructional programs, classroom teaching aids and other products.