

Iowa Learning Technology Commission Final Report

December 2009



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Appendix: Individual Project Reports.... Available online at www.iowaltc.org

<http://www.iowaltc.org/projects.html> Pictures and Videos of student work

External Evaluation Reports (available online)

Iowa State Final Report on Des Moines and George Little Rock

<http://www.iowaltc.org/eval-DSM-GLR2008-2009.pdf>

University of Northern Iowa Final Report on Ames and Jefferson-Scranton

<http://www.iowaltc.org/eval-AMES-JS.pdf>

University of Iowa Final Report on Harlan and Griswold

<http://www.iowaltc.org/eval-harlan-griswold.pdf>

ILTC Observations, Conclusions, and Recommendations

High Level of Interest

One hundred-eighty three applications were received over 3 years, 18 of which were funded by the legislature. A total of \$1,361,256 has been awarded to school districts from this initiative.

The number of ideas submitted annually indicated the existence of need in the field of education that was greater than the Commission could fill. This may be a reflection of how difficult it is for districts to keep up with technology, especially as it relates to infrastructure, wireless access, and other basics. In terms of promising practice, the Commission is forced to eliminate a lot of deserving ideas due to funding constraints.

Our report shows that most grants awarded are having a positive impact on kids due to careful planning on the part of school leaders.

Promising Practices

Commission members have observed promising practices with regard to positive and innovative integration of technology into instruction. There was agreement that the grant process was worthwhile, captured promising and innovative practices, and included a large range of stakeholders who supported the programs. This support, it is perceived, leads to student and staff engagement, as well as community and parent enthusiasm and investment in the educational process. Community engagement, in particular, was impacted by participation in the pilot projects, bolstered by the requirement for stakeholder role in the implementation of and/or the funding match for the project, as well as expectation for ongoing support of stakeholders.

In each round of grant awards, there was far more demand for access to grant funding, especially among small districts than the given appropriation could accommodate.

Parents and community members are proud of the accomplishments of their schools. There is agreement that these accomplishments need to be communicated to Legislators, Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB), Iowa Technology and Education Connection (ITEC), and School Administrators of Iowa (SAI).

Over the course of these grant cycles, the commission has seen the development of instructional practices worthy of replication, such as but not limited to, project managers (Des Moines), 1 to 1 laptop initiatives (Clay Central-Everly, North-Cedar), building on current

practices. Okoboji was one of the first districts in Iowa to use Moodle and provide online content for students. Now all the AEA's have adopted MOODLE and are providing training to teachers in how to use this tool to create online lessons.

Life-Long Learning

Education is moving toward a 24-7 model and promotion of life-long learning. ILTC members were encouraged by the promising practices and innovation observed during on-site visits to participating schools. High levels of student, staff, and parent engagement were evident. Teachers were observed integrating technology into classroom instruction. Additionally, support for multiple student learning styles is being addressed through the use of technology.

Engagement

All students benefit from greater access to technology because technology integration is a teaching and learning strategy that works for kids. Commission members witnessed firsthand the high levels of student engagement. In most cases, the data reported regarding decreases in discipline referrals may be an indicator of student engagement. Technology can support a diverse set of learning styles. Students impacted by these pilot projects are not only engaged in learning, but are immersed in exploring a greater variety of sources of information.

In planning for participation in these pilots, each district selected the type of project that fit its needs; therefore, each participating district has experienced different successes. For that reason, it would be difficult to identify one single project that exemplifies best practice.

Sustainability

Sustainability of efforts is another difficulty facing technology grantees. Technology efforts that are funded for a one-year period will be difficult to sustain. To maintain their efforts with technology integration, schools may be forced to seek alternate means of funding. Additionally, it is clear that staff turnover/continuity has an impact on the success of such projects. Without the sustained commitment of all staff, success is unlikely. Sustainability is often impacted by teacher training support. Technology resources must be accompanied with teacher training to ensure that technology is integrated into existing teaching practices.



Professional Development

It is generally agreed that instructional practice is key to the success of technology integration efforts. This equates to the need for professional development, a necessary component for ensuring that teachers are comfortable with technology, and know how to successfully integrate technology into existing effective teaching practices.

Recommendations / Findings

Based upon these conclusions and observations, the Commission provides the following recommendations and findings:

- Legislature should keep in mind that initiatives like this take three years to actually be able to develop then monitor results.
- Personnel turnover is detrimental to implementation fidelity of the project.
- Many of the most successful grants were those that were built into an existing program infrastructure.
- Local control often impacts implementation
- Take implementation from the administrative level to the building level.
- Dedicated local staff to manage the project improved the implementation, reporting and overall success.
- Fulltime statewide coordinator to manage and oversee all grants.
- Better communication of best practices among school districts, the community, legislators and the media.
- Ensure grantees are trained in reporting on mandated data points and understand legislative intent.

- Consider reinstating funding for this grant program, given that the demand for this initiative has consistently out-paced available resources.
- Grant awards that emphasize innovation regarding the use of technology as a tool to enhance instruction and learning are generally successful.
- While there were few 1 to 1 laptop initiatives before the commission, there are now 16 around Iowa.