Support $500 Million for Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) Program in FY11

MESSAGE

Technology is critical for moving the U.S. education system into the digital age. It is imperative that our students and teachers take advantage of modern digital tools and resources to learn, to live, and to work collaboratively. It is also important that we use robust broadband connectivity to learn and work as 21st century professionals so that we can remain competitive in the emerging world economy. Today's digital age students are ubiquitous technology users, are engaged by all forms of technology and have shown that they can achieve when instruction is delivered via technology. Education can and must adapt to meet the expectations, needs and potential of this and coming generations.

CoSN, ISTE, SETDA and SIIA believe that all successful 21st Century schools will have: technology-proficient educators, well-equipped classrooms, sufficiently supported administrative structures, and a curriculum that recognizes the role technology plays in all disciplines. The federal government has supported school efforts to incorporate all of these essential conditions through the Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) program, which has funded state and local capacity building, leadership, and professional development to effectively leverage classroom technology.

Yet, after funding EETT in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the Obama Administration's FY11 Budget proposes to eliminate EETT, the sole direct federal instructional technology funding resource, and to infuse technology throughout all federal education programs. While we support meaningful, quantifiable integration of technology across all federal education programs, we contend that it must be complemented by and coordinated through a separate ed tech funding source, such as EETT. Only with continued, dedicated funding of EETT or its successor will there be adequate state and local capacity and appropriate professional development to properly coordinate and implement the infusion of technology throughout our education system. Without EETT (or its successor), we fear that substantial federal investments in school technology infrastructure through the E-Rate will be devalued, if not lost altogether.

Therefore, CoSN, ISTE, SETDA and SIIA support funding the EETT or successor program to at least $500 million in the FY11 U.S. Department of Education appropriations. This funding would enable states and school districts to maintain momentum in ensuring that all classrooms are technology rich and that adequate local expertise exists to coordinate technology's infusion across our educational system.

LEGISLATIVE AND FUNDING BACKGROUND

Congress authorized EETT within the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to provide school districts, particularly those serving low income students, with the resources necessary to integrate technology into learning. Congress supported EETT because it recognized that technology has an important role to play in achieving key NCLB goals – raising student achievement, ensuring high quality teaching, and increasing parental involvement – among others.

EETT allocates funds to states based on the Title I formula. With the current EETT program, states distribute funds through a formula and competitive grant process to eligible local entities and may retain 5% of the funds for state administrative activities. As of FY06, states have the flexibility to allocate 100% of EETT funds for competitive awards to eligible local entities. While districts must reserve a minimum of 25% of all EETT funds for professional development, recent studies indicate that most EETT recipients use far more than 25% of their EETT funds to train teachers to use technology and integrate it into their curricula.

While authorized in NCLB at $1 billion per year, EETT has never received more than $700 million in annual funding, and was cut to just $267 million in each of FY06-09 and to only $100 million in FY10. While EETT received $650 million through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the Administration FY11 Budget proposes to eliminate EETT.

Now, as Congress and the Administration are poised to rewrite the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which NCLB updated, it is clear that technology can and must support the four principles/assurances of ARRA. Specifically, technology plays a critical if not indispensible role in accomplishing the "four assurances" through:

- **Achieving equity in teacher distribution and quality**: Online learning can deliver high quality instruction to students isolated by geography or in underserved areas. Online professional development and learning communities enable educators to improve their knowledge, skills and effectiveness.
- **Establishing longitudinal data systems**: Data systems are comprised of technologies such as software applications and data storage servers. Local and state data systems enable the use of real-time student data (including formative assessment) to improve instruction, decision making, and accountability.
- **Enhancing the quality of academic assessments and improve State academic standards**: Computer-based and online assessment provide real-time data, adapt to individual student responses, enable alternative test-items for special populations, and are necessary for robust assessment of the knowledge/skills required for success in the changing global economy.
- **Supporting struggling schools**: Technology is the engine for a continuous improvement model, enabling personalized learning through real-time assessment, adaptive software, virtual learning opportunities, online professional development, and benchmarking of performance data.

TECHNOLOGY HELPS IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Evidence shows that technology, when implemented comprehensively, is effective in engaging today's digital-age students and can spark significant academic gains. EETT funding has supported a number of innovative programs that have delivered real results:

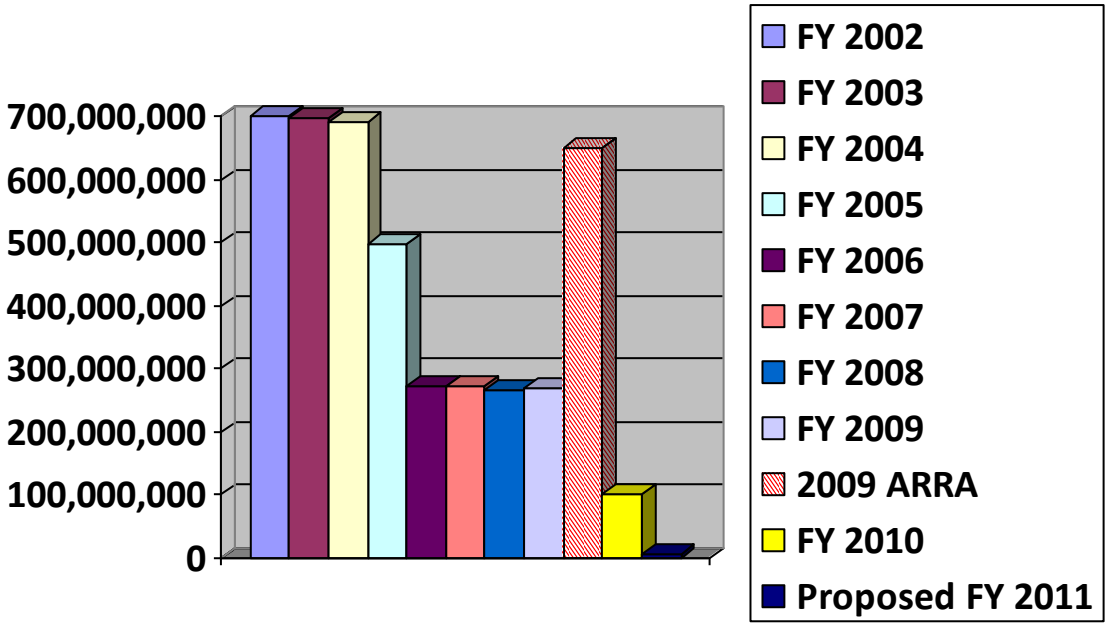
- In 11 states – Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Texas and Utah – schools have been using the Enhancing Missouri's Instructional Networked Teaching Strategies (eMINTS) program, which blends state-of-the-art technology with up to 200 hours of professional development for teachers. Instructional strategies focus on inquiry based teaching, higher-order thinking skills and cooperative learning. And eMINTS is paying off academically. An eMINTS classroom at a Missouri school repeatedly showed student achievement that was 10% higher than control classrooms at the same school. Additionally, after six years of eMINTS, students in special education at a low income, Title I school reduced the achievement gap by 50% in 4th grade mathematics scores. Another eMINTS benefit is increased teacher retention, with one rural district in Missouri reporting teacher retention rates going from 76% percent to 98% after the first year of eMINTS.

- In North Carolina, several high poverty elementary and middle schools implemented the IMPACT systemic reform program, which utilizes technology coaches and school library media specialists for on-going professional development. The results: teacher retention increased by 65% and students demonstrated that they are 33% more likely to improve one full grade level each year than in control/comparison schools.

- The Technology Immersion Pilot in Texas, which provides schools with technology resources and sustainable professional development opportunities, has produced large increases for one participating school, where its 6th grade standardized math scores increased by 5%, 7th grade by 42%, and 8th grade by 24%. In another school, 6th grade standardized math scores increased by 29 points, and 10th by 36 points.

- In New Mexico, the Innovative Digital Education and Learning (IDEAL) program is a statewide eLearning system designed to expand education opportunities and prepare students for the global competition, reduce the cost of technology access, reduce professional development costs with online course, and increase technology skills. IDEAL also provides online courses for students, professional development for teachers and administrators, and the statewide sharing of educational resources including digital content and instructional support. EETT funding was part of the scaffolding for the IDEAL project. Additionally, the Online Teaching and Learning Opportunity (OTLO) portion of the project provides middle and high school teachers with professional development training for creating and teaching online/blended courses to help improve academic achievement. OTLO helps teachers create standards-based, online/blended courses and enhance courses with Web 2.0 tools. OLTO also helps build the capacity of teachers in their use of synchronous online learning environments. In the last year, 1,124 students participated in IDEAL and 136 teachers were trained as eTeachers for IDEAL.

EETT FUNDING HISTORY



The Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) is the country's premier voice in education technology leadership, serving K-12 technology leaders who through their strategic use of technology, improve teaching and learning. For further information, visit www.cosn.org.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) is the premier membership association for educators and education leaders engaged in improving teaching and learning by advancing excellence and the effective use of technology in PK-12 and teacher education. Home of NETS and ISTE's annual conference and exposition, ISTE represents more than 100,000 professionals worldwide. www.iste.org.

The State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) is the principal association representing the technology leadership of state departments of education. The SETDA membership includes educational technology directors from the state departments of education of all fifty states, the District of Columbia, Bureau of Indian Affairs, American Samoa and the US Virgin Islands. http://www.setda.org

The Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA) is the principal trade association for the software and digital content industries, serving more than 500 leading high-tech companies. SIIA and our member companies have long collaborated with students and educators to improve education through the use of innovative learning technologies. Visit www.siia.net.