

APPENDIX B

GRANTS

The attached excerpt from a grant for Supporting Students with Disabilities in General Education Classrooms.

The district received over \$250,000 for technology and teacher training.

PROJECT ABSTRACT

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Applicant (Lead) Agency: Chester Township Schools

NGO Title: Supporting Students with Disabilities in General Education Classrooms **NGO #:** DY01

Our success model is a planned engagement supporting students with disabilities in general education classroom setting. Although our proposal addresses the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards associated with Language Arts Literacy, the methodology could be applied to any academic area. The thrust of our proposal is to support students with disabilities in the general education classroom so that they feel strangers and aliens no longer. To do this we will build a digital bridge through technology that insures that expressive and receptive language disabilities will not be barriers blocking success.

Through technology we capture the essence of the general classroom experience. We tailor this experience to the needs of the child by using Webstudio and laptop computers. With technology we provide a diagnostic support package that address specific needs and we communicate this to the home. In effect, the classroom is linked to the home. Through Webstudio information is provided for the parents to be able to both understand the child's disability, but also to enact a home-school connection that keeps the resource room in constant touch with the child's progress.

There is a need to engage the resources of technology to advance the process of "inclusion" to bring support services to the child rather than moving the child to the services. The challenge is to create conditions wherein the child maximizes the benefits derived from being in a general education class while minimizing the problems associated with keeping up with the other students. The general education classroom can present barriers for students with disabilities especially in areas that involve reading and writing. We concur with the Center of Applied Special Technology (cited in RFP Description of the Grant Program) premise, "just as stairs can bar access to a building, the medium of print can be a barrier for students with disabilities." We believe that technology can serve as a "digital scaffold" that both supports and augments the general classroom. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its 1997 amendments make it clear that schools have a duty to educate children with disabilities in general education classrooms. Inclusive education means that all students in a school, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in academic subjects, become part of the school community. When children are included in general education, they experience a feeling of belonging just as other students, teachers, and support staff. There is a need to facilitate achieve this goal utilizing the resources provided by technology.

There is a need to mobile our resources to increase student confidence and competence so as to ensure that students with disabilities are provided the necessary accommodations and specialized programs to support their achievement of the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards. We believe that this is accomplished in a collaborative setting that links the home and school together to forge a chain of success. This chain of success is a whole school initiative of active communication between the home and the school. We hold that in forging our partnership of cooperation we are creating opportunities to change patterns of behavior that may be counterproductive to achievement.

We need to utilize technology in an inclusive setting to address problematic issues such as:

- Disorganization
- Expressive and receptive language deficits
- Academic deficits/learning disabilities in reading, spelling, math, etc.
- Distractibility and short attention span
- Impulsivity
- Feelings of inferiority/poor self-esteem

Addressing these problematic issues in “Supporting Students with Disabilities in General Education Classrooms” we propose to create a virtual connection between the school and the home that provides

- Structure that is carefully pre-planned.
- Homework support.
- Develops and maintains good communication.

The partnership between Chester Township Schools and New Jersey City University has provided cooperative, specialized training in educational technology and telecommunications. This partnership is in response to a lack of technology training for teachers in Chester and surrounding areas. As a result of this joint venture, teachers have the opportunity to develop their professional skills at a professional center in western New Jersey. This professional center has become the hub of technology education, offering a Masters Degree in Educational Technology in the professional development center at Black River Middle School in Chester, NJ. This site has reached out to teachers in eight counties and has served 180 teachers from over 40 different schools. The Masters Degree in Educational Technology is project-based, utilizing telecommunication resources to design projects that are immediately usable in the classroom.

In addition, we are using technology to prescribe for individual students and are using the Internet to communicate between the home and the school. In development is a WebStudio with synchronous and asynchronous web-broadcast, with interactive capability directly linked to our university partner and other resources such as the Annenberg/CPB Foundation’s channel. We currently have 18% of our professional staff (50% of our special education specialists designated as support teachers facilitating this grant) enrolled in the Masters Degree in Educational Technology. These teachers are a lasting resource to help turnkey the benefits of technology throughout the school district. In effect, these teachers have become electronic mentors to champion and sustain our mission to integrate the potential of technology into the curriculum, to support achievement of the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards, and to promote increased learning with demonstrated increased achievement. We need to apply this technology specifically for special needs students in the most efficacious manner.

Access to Funding and Fiscal Capacity. The Chester Township Schools have actively sought funding for supporting students with disabilities. The aggregate of local and state support (Ad Valorem) is \$1,532,350 of which \$185,000 is Basic Flow-Through and Preschool Flow-Through for Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B. The IDEA funds have been earmarked almost exclusively for the purpose of tuition support for out-of-district placements. In addition, Chester Township Schools have made a significant investment in improving our technological capacity. The Summary Profile of Partnership Budget and Participation appears below.

2002-2003

Create Professional Development Center	\$30,000
Three (3) T1 Lines	\$18,000
Computers District-wide	284 systems
Technology Spending Total	\$135,732
Technology Spending Average Per Student	\$113.11
Chester Tuition Supplement for Teachers	\$11,888
Tegrity WebStudio	\$18,000
Online Performance Assessment	\$5,000
Skills Connection	\$5,000
Participation in Intro to Ed Tech.	10 teachers
Participation in Using Integrated Tech.	17 teachers
Participation in Using the Internet	18 teachers
Participation in Learning Theories	21 teachers
Participation in Distance Learning	25 teachers

The Chester Township Schools has assumed a leadership role in promoting technology. We have developed professional expertise and computer competence to apply our experience to create a program to specifically support students in general education classrooms. We believe that we have a workable model that will link the home and the school resulting in a partnership for success. Our available funds are exhausted. We need funding for our innovative effort. We stand ready to share our technology with our neighboring districts and turnkey this effort into a regional success.

Staff Development and Consultation

In most RFP application there is a request for staff development that will provide the necessary technical and professional skills to implement the proposal. In contrast, because of our association with New Jersey City University we have in place the professional competence to implement this program. Once implemented the benefit of the program can be share with other districts via the Internet. We stand ready to share this model with our regional schools. We will provide accessibility to neighboring directors of special services and will work with them to implement this program.

In stead of seeking staff development we are offering to serve in a mentorship role utilizing our mobile unit to help others implement services for students with disabilities in general education classrooms. It should be stated that our district will continue to offer course in technology for our professional staff and the staffs of all schools in northwestern New Jersey.