

Archived Information

STAR SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Goal: To improve student learning and teaching through the use of distance learning technologies.

Relationship of Program to Volume 1, Department-wide Objectives: The Star Schools Program supports Objective 1.7 (schools use advanced technology to improve education) by providing grants to support distance education.

FY 2000—\$50,550,000

FY 2001—Star Schools is proposed for consolidation under the Next Generation Technology Innovation program. Total FY 2001 request is \$170,000,000.

OBJECTIVE 1: IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH INCREASED ACCESS TO DISTANCE EDUCATION.

Indicator 1.1 Non-traditional settings: The number of learners in non-traditional settings (community centers, correctional facilities, etc.) who participate in distance education will increase annually.

Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality
<i>Number of students in nontraditional settings served by Star Schools</i>			<p>Status: Service to students in non-traditional settings including correctional facilities, community centers, and homes increased.</p> <p>Explanation: As new grants are funded through the program, an increasing number of projects target non-traditional settings. As a result, more students are likely to participate who traditionally have not had an opportunity to participate in distance learning activities.</p>	<p>Source: Annual performance reports, 1999; national program evaluation results, 1999. <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next Update:</i> 2000.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Site visits and project evaluations. Data correspond to an increase in the number of projects serving students in non-traditional settings.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: Data are reported by the projects, and no formal process for validating project reports has been conducted to date.</p>
Year	Actual Performance	Performance Targets		
1998:	278,744			
1999:	291,287	No target set		
2000:		Continuing increase		
2001:		Continuing increase		

OBJECTIVE 2: PROMOTE THE DELIVERY OF CHALLENGING CONTENT IN CORE SUBJECTS.

Indicator 2.1 Challenging content: Challenging content aligned with standards at all academic levels (including high school credit, advanced placement, adult education, and Graduate Equivalency Diploma courses) through distance education will increase annually.

Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality
<i>Number of full credit courses offered through Star Schools</i>			<p>Status: We anticipate that more on-line courses and enrichment modules may be developed over the next year due to increased interest in Web-based curriculum offerings. Program staff will be examining the extent to which challenging content, which may include credit courses, as well as new models of curriculum development will be available through distance learning activities.</p> <p>Explanation: Pending OMB clearance, data on alignment with standards will be collected in spring 2000.</p>	<p>Source: Star Schools project evaluations, 1999; annual performance reports, 1999; national program evaluation, 1999. <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next Update:</i> 2000.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Site visits and project evaluations.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: Data are from the project reports. As a consequence it is difficult to validate information.</p>
Year	Actual Performance	Performance Targets		
1994:	More than 30			
1997:	81			
1998:	105			
1999:	126	Continuing Increase		
2000:		Continuing increase		
2001:		Continuing increase		

Targets and Performance Data	Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality
		An annual on-line reporting system is being developed, and data will be collected in fall 2000 to determine whether content is aligned with standards.

KEY STRATEGIES

New or Strengthened Strategies

- ❖ Use NCES data to identify communities representing high populations of underserved students. Develop and update an on-line map of communities participating in the program.
- ❖ Work with project directors and program evaluators to ensure that relevant and high-quality data on schools, non-traditional settings, and technology access are collected on an annual basis.
- ❖ Provide access to standards materials on-line and via print (by subject area). Convene workshops and provide technical assistance about aligning standards to programming with resources from other federally sponsored programs.
- ❖ Disseminate information about Star Schools course offerings through the Department’s Web site, workshops, and national meetings.
- ❖ In collaboration with R*TECs and other ED programs, provide financial and technical assistance and disseminate information about successful models to support staff professional development.
- ❖ In collaboration with other programs, increase research-based practice about the use and impact of distance learning through research, evaluation, and dissemination activities.

HOW THIS PROGRAM COORDINATES WITH OTHER FEDERAL ACTIVITIES

- ❖ The Star Schools program is working collaboratively with the Technology Innovation Challenge Grant program, Community Technology Centers, and the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund to expand its efforts in the area of distance education to extend the range of professional development offerings. It is also working jointly with the Preparing Tomorrow’s Teachers to Use Technology program to link preservice training to K-12 classroom activities. Grantees are also taking advantage of the E-rate discounts provided by the Federal Communications Commission to leverage the telecommunications costs.

CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING PROGRAM GOAL

- ❖ One of the major challenges is gathering accurate data on unregistered participants in projects and in assessing project impact as one part of broader instruction. To meet this challenge, the program will fund a study that will look at the various stratagems to count unregistered participants and cable users. The program will also set aside funds to conduct an impact evaluation.

INDICATOR CHANGES

From FY 1999 Annual Plan (two years old)

Adjusted

- ❖ Objective 2 (promote the delivery of challenging and engaging content) was modified by deleting the word engaging.
- ❖ Indicators 2.1 and 2.2 were collapsed into one indicator.

Dropped

- ❖ Objective 3 (promote excellence in teaching by sustaining professional development and integrating new technologies into the curriculum) was deleted.
- ❖ Indicators 3.1 through 3.4 were deleted.
- ❖ Objective 4 (contribute to the available body of knowledge on use of technology to enhance learning to high standards for all students) was deleted.
- ❖ Indicator 4.1 was deleted.

From FY 2000 Annual Plan (last year’s)

Adjusted

- ❖ Indicator 2.1 (challenging content) was modified to read, “Challenging content aligned with standards at all academic levels....”

Dropped—None.

New—None.