

Archived Information

REVIEW GUIDANCE TECHNOLOGY LITERACY CHALLENGE FUND

The Technology Literacy Challenge Fund (TLCF) marks a major step toward ensuring that every student will have the basic skills needed to be technologically literate in the 21st century. In its first year, the Fund will provide \$200 million, 95 percent of which States are to award -- on a competitive basis -- to local districts to help integrate technology into their educational programs.

The Department believes that the review of applications is both a necessity (to determine if the plans meet the minimal requirements for approval and funding), and an opportunity to take the first steps towards an ongoing partnership with States aimed at achieving the President's four goals for educational technology.

Consequently, a State plan review has two parts: a review to determine if the State plan meets the minimal requirements set out in the statute, and a further examination leading to recommendations on each State's plan to improve their chances of achieving their goals, the objectives of the statute and the President's technology goals.

STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS

For a plan to be approved and a State to receive funds, a State Educational Agency (SEA) must submit an application that includes:

1. A completed cover sheet, including the signature of an authorized SEA representative;
2. A statewide technology plan that --
 - A. describes long term strategies for financing education technology in the State and how business, industry, and other public and private agencies, including libraries, library literacy programs, and institutions of higher education, can participate in the implementation, ongoing planning, and support of the plan; and
 - B. describes the steps the SEA will take to provide assistance to local educational agencies that have the highest numbers or percentages of children in poverty and demonstrate the greatest need for technology, in order to enable such local educational agencies to carry out activities authorized under the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund. (See section 3133 of ESEA)
3. A description, in its statewide technology plan, of the steps the State proposes to take to remove barriers that may exist to the equitable access to, or equitable participation in, activities that the State undertakes (not including administration) with federal funds under the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund in accordance with section 427 of the General Education Provision Act (GEPA). (See section 427 of GEPA and Appendix A of the application package) As a practical

matter, what the requirement of section 427 of GEPA means for TLCF applicants is that a State plan should describe how technical assistance the State provides to local districts using TLCF funds will be used to remove the barriers to equitable participation described under section 427 of GEPA.

4. The signature of the authorized SEA representative on the application assurance sheet.

Reviewers will use only the above requirements to determine whether a State plan qualifies for approval and funding.

STATE PLAN QUALITY REVIEW

The following focal points for the review of State plans have been developed to provide guidance for reviewers to examine the scope and quality of statewide plans and make suggestions for technical assistance. They are largely derived from the requirements for State and local applications in the authorizing statute for the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund (ESEA Title III, Part A, Subpart 2).

Focus 1: Building the Educational Technology Infrastructure for Reform

The first focus is on the four national goals for educational technology. While Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is the statutory authority under which these grants are being made, the intent of the administration in seeking funds for technology is to encourage States to invest in building an educational technology infrastructure, so that all children become literate in technology and are able to perform to world class standards in core academic subjects. While addressing the four national technology goals is not necessary to receive funds or to meet the requirements of the authorizing statute, we believe that State plans that are developed with those goals in mind will have the best chance of achieving the underlying purpose of the TLCF.

The Department is planning to evaluate program implementation and effectiveness, and to develop, with State assistance and advice, performance criteria that satisfy the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act. Both of these efforts will measure how State and local activities under the TLCF contribute to achieving the four technology goals.

Focus 1: The plan sets goals and annual benchmarks for the State in terms of the four national goals for educational technology that show promise of their achievement in the State within a five-year period.

The national technology goals are:

- ! All teachers in the Nation will have the training and support they need to help all students learn through computers and through the information superhighway;

In addressing this goal, States and reviewers might want to consider such questions as:

To what extent does the plan demonstrate a need for ongoing professional development and technical and administrative support for teachers using technology?

To what extent is professional development in classroom use of technology linked to assistance in improving instruction?

How will the State assist LEAs in developing or acquiring professional development resources?

- ! All teachers and students will have modern computers in their classrooms;

In addressing this goal, States and reviewers might want to consider such questions as:

Does the plan contain information about the current classroom availability of modern computers? The extent of the unmet need?

Does the plan demonstrate how the State will assist LEAs in providing adequate equipment in classrooms, such as by addressing problems of interoperability and obsolete equipment, for example?

- ! Every classroom will be connected to the information superhighway;

In addressing this goal, States and reviewers might want to consider such questions as:

Does the plan contain information about the availability of Internet connections in classrooms? The extent of the unmet need?

Does the plan address the problems of providing classroom access in schools where the provision of access is difficult or unusually expensive?

Does the plan address the potential impact of FCC decisions regarding the provision of telecommunications service to schools and libraries?

- ! Effective and engaging software and online learning resources will be an integral part of every school curriculum.

In addressing this goal, States and reviewers might want to consider such questions as:

Does the plan demonstrate how the State will relate software and online learning resources to State academic content and student performance standards?

What does the State do to develop or provide software or online learning resources?

Does the State enable wider access to such resources by LEAs?

Focus 2: State Plans for Financing Educational Technology

A major purpose of the TLCF is to spur States to develop plans and strategies for the long-term support for the use of educational technology in classrooms. For most States, this will require a marked and sustained increase in funding for equipment, network connections, professional development, and the purchase and development of software and other academic content products. While this focus for the review is much the same as the requirement in the statute for the content of a State plan, it is included here not to determine if a plan meets the minimum requirements for approval, but to provide reviewers direction in offering comments and technical assistance on the quality of the State=s plan.

Focus 2: The plan includes long-term strategies for financing educational technology in the State that show wide-spread commitment to the development and on-going support of an educational technology infrastructure.

In addressing this focus, States and reviewers might want to consider such questions as:

How are business and industry, and agencies such as libraries and institutions of higher education, included in the on-going planning and implementation of the plan?
How extensive is the range and level of additional support (including support from business and industry and other groups) for the plan?

How likely is it that the plan=s financial objectives will meet the four national goals in the State?

How does the plan build on other technology initiatives such as those supported under other ESEA programs, School-to-Work programs, Goals 2000, IDEA, and the Perkins Act?

To what extent does the State coordinate funding for education reform and educational technology?

To what extent does the plan include services to adults and families, including adult literacy services?

How does the plan encourage access for students with disabilities?

Focus 3: Targeting Assistance

A major policy concern in building an educational technology infrastructure is that no district falls so far behind that its students are left out. This is especially important in districts where parents are less likely to be able to afford access to technology such as computers and networks at home. Consequently, a central purpose of the TLCF is to take into account the needs of those districts serving many poor children and having the greatest need for educational technology. Like Focus 2, this focus for the review is much like the minimum requirement for approval of a State plan. Many of the questions reviewers may consider are derived from statutory requirements (e.g., under section 3132, a State must identify districts with the highest number or percentage of children in poverty). This focus for the review (and the questions) is included here

not to provide a basis for State plan approval, but to provide reviewers direction in offering comments and technical assistance on the quality of the State=s plan.

Focus 3: The plan targets for assistance those LEAs with the highest numbers or percentages of children in poverty and the greatest need for technology.

In addressing this criterion, States and reviewers might want to consider such questions as:

How will the State identify LEAs with the highest number or percentage of children in poverty and the greatest need for technology?

How will the State determine which LEAs have the greatest need for technical assistance in applying for funds?

What technical assistance in developing applications will the State provide?

Will the State give priority to LEAs with the highest number or percentage of children in poverty and the greatest need for educational technology through means other than assistance in applying? How effective are those means?

How effective are the State strategies in terms of the four goals= objectives of reaching all classrooms, teachers, and students in the State?

How will the State assist LEAs in using technology that meets the needs of special populations such as students with disabilities or limited-English-proficient students?

Does the plan provide for consultation with State agencies concerned with assistive technology, vocational rehabilitation, and special education services?

To what extent does the plan consider the potential effects of FCC decisions related to the provision of telecommunications services to schools in poor areas?

Focus 4: LEA Plans

The true focus of the TLCF is on the classroom. Funding under the TLCF is nearly all (95 percent) provided to local educational agencies, and the prescribed local uses of funds and application requirements in the authorizing statute are intended to ensure LEA uses of funds are well planned for and used in a coordinated fashion likely to lead to improved classroom instruction and student achievement.

This last focus for review, and the questions under it, is largely derived from statutory provisions and requirements that a State must meet, but is not required to include in its application. Focus 4 has been developed to assist reviewers in offering comments and technical assistance if a State does choose to address these statutory provisions in its application.

Focus 4: The plan demonstrates that the LEA grants to be supported will be of sufficient size, scope, duration, and quality to be effective in carrying out the purposes of the statute.

In addressing this focus, States and reviewers might want to consider such questions as:

What competitive process will the State use in selecting LEA applications for funding?

How will the State determine that the planned LEA uses of funds will meet the requirements in the statute? (See attachment A)

How will the State carry out the LEA application requirements in the statute? (See attachment B)

How will the State determine that the size and scope of LEA projects to be funded are sufficient?

How will the State determine that the duration of LEA projects to be funded is sufficient?

How will the State determine that the quality of LEA projects to be funded is sufficient?

How will the State ensure that LEAs consult with private school officials in a timely and meaningful way, and offer program benefits to private school students, teachers, and other educational personnel on an equitable basis?

How will States encourage LEAs to support parent and community involvement?

How, and to what extent, does the State encourage the use of educational technology to support classroom and school reform?

How does the State encourage coordination of funds from various sources in LEA applications?

Are the performance goals for LEAs likely to lead to achievement of the national goals for educational technology?

To what extent does LEA performance determine continued funding by the State?

How will the State use LEA evaluation information concerning student achievement, progress towards meeting the National Education Goals, and State and local academic content standards and performance standards?

To what extent will the software purchased be universally designed so as to ensure access by students with disabilities?

Attachment A
Local Uses of Funds
(Section 3134, ESEA)

Each local educational agency, to the extent possible, shall use the funds made available for:

- (1) Developing, adapting, or expanding existing and new applications of technology to support the school reform effort;
- (2) Funding projects of sufficient size and scope to improve student learning and, as appropriate, support professional development and provide administrative support;
- (3) Acquiring connectivity linkages, resources, and services, including the acquisition of hardware and software, for use by teachers, students and school library media personnel in the classroom or in school library media centers, in order to improve student learning by supporting the instructional program offered by such agency to ensure that students in schools will have meaningful access on a regular basis to such linkages, resources and services.;
- (4) Providing ongoing professional development in the integration of quality educational technologies into school curriculum and long-term planning for implementing educational technologies;
- (5) Acquiring connectivity with wide area networks for purposes of accessing information and educational programming sources, particularly with institutions of higher education and public libraries; and
- (6) Providing educational services for adults and families.

Attachment B
Local Applications
(Section 3135, ESEA)

Such application, at a minimum, shall --

- (1) include a strategic, long-range (three- to five-year) plan that includes:
 - (A) A description of the type of technologies to be acquired, including specific provisions for interoperability among components of such technologies and, to the extent practicable, with existing technologies;
 - (B) An explanation of how the acquired technologies will be integrated into the curriculum to help the local educational agency enhance teaching, training, and student achievement;
 - (C) An explanation of how programs will be developed in collaboration with existing adult literacy service providers to maximize the use of such technologies;
 - (D)(i) A description of how the local educational agency will ensure ongoing, sustained professional development for teachers, administrators, and school library media personnel served by the local educational agency to further the use of technology in the classroom or school library media center; and
 - (ii) A list of the source or sources of ongoing training and technical assistance available to schools teachers and administrators served by the local educational agency, such as State technology offices, intermediate educational support units, regional educational laboratories or institutions of higher education
 - (E) A description of the supporting resources, such as services, software and print resources, which will be acquired to ensure successful and effective use of technologies acquired under this section
 - (F) The projected timetable for implementing such plan in schools;
 - (G) The projected cost of technologies to be acquired and related expenses needed to implement such a plan
 - (H) A description of how the local educational agency will coordinate the technology provided pursuant to this subpart with other grant funds available from State and local sources;
- (2) Describe how the local educational agency will involve parents, public libraries, business leaders and community leaders in the development of such plan;
- (3) Describe how the instructionally based technologies will help the local educational agency
 - (A) promote equity in order to support State content standards and State student performance standards
 - (B) provide access for teachers, parents and students to the best teaching practices and curriculum resources through technology;
- (4) Describe a process for the ongoing evaluation of how technologies acquired under this section
 - (A) will be integrated into the school curriculum; and
 - (B) will affect student achievement and progress toward meeting the National Education Goals and any challenging State content standards and State student performance standards that may be developed.

