

21st Century Classroom Project Program Description



The 21st Century Classroom Project will serve as an important strand of the overall District initiative this year to promote the integration of technology within the instructional program of schools, an important goal within the District Strategic Plan. The Project was designed after a considerable effort of research and study by a fully representative task force of teachers and administrators that clarified the purposes for the use of instructional technology in District schools.

The Project will engage a cohort of teacher-pioneers to train, plan and experiment with various technologies within technologically enriched classroom environments, creating models for subsequent expansion throughout the District. With the financial support of the Menlo Park-Atherton Education Foundation for training and the purchase of necessary equipment, software and materials, the 21st Century Project possesses the necessary resources to achieve its intended purpose as a cornerstone for future development and implementation of instructional technology.

PURPOSES OF THE PROJECT

The following are identified purposes of the Project:

1. Provide opportunity for highly-motivated teachers with the necessary resources of training, time for planning, collegial support, and equipment and materials, to explore and experiment with strategies to maximize learning of students within highly-enriched technological learning environments.
2. Assist the District in defining and standardizing appropriate and relevant instructional strategies and uses of technology to address the following generalized purposes as defined by the District Instructional Technology Task Force:
 - Assist in differentiating instruction to ensure maximum growth and learning for all students
 - Apply strategies to develop the ability of students to problem solve and think critically
 - Assess student achievement and learning for instructional decision making, monitoring student academic progress and evaluating the effectiveness of educational programs and services.
3. Develop a cadre of teachers, who after a year of participation, have the necessary expertise and passion to demonstrate new models for learning, assist in the launching of another cohort of pioneers, and provide other consultative services for colleagues.

RATIONALE FOR THE PROJECT

The following are statements of rationale that contributed to the design of the Project:

1. Visitations and observations of successful programs throughout the state by members of the Instructional Technology Task Force demonstrated that such programs grew incrementally through the passion and commitment of individuals or small groups of teachers.
2. A focus by a district for the expansion of instructional technology requires a huge commitment of financial support of which incremental growth is necessary.
3. The level of interest and expertise among teachers in the use of instructional technology varies greatly of which the 21st Century Classroom Project will promote and support the highly motivated, demonstrate potential to the general faculty and encourage the reluctant teacher.
4. The participants within the Project will be responsible through experimentation and piloting to begin to define the strategies for instructional technology that will thereafter serve as field-tested components of a more comprehensive training program for the entire faculty.
5. 21st Century Classrooms will provide models for students, parents and faculty of the potential of instructional technology for maximizing learning that can be replicated over time.

PROGRAM FOR TRAINING AND PLANNING

The Pioneers of the 21st Century Classroom Project will participate in up to seven release days of training and planning and have additional opportunities to attend prominent national conferences and workshops. The following are identified components of the District training program that will be followed with both collegial and individual planning time:

1. Design of classroom web site to serve as a template for all District classrooms in the future for parent and student communications
2. Use of various technologies including smart boards, computer laptop labs, digital cameras and video, LCD projectors, and other equipment as identified by participants that are relevant to their instructional assignment
3. Curriculum designs and instructional strategies for incorporating instructional technology

THE TECHNOLOGICALLY ENRICHED ENVIRONMENT

The 21st Century Classrooms will be allocated a variety of equipment, software, materials and resources. The following are identified equipment:

- Smart board for each classroom
- Priority and substantial access to computer laptop labs
- Identified digital camera and video hardware and software
- Commercial on-line services as identified
- LCD projector for each classroom
- Other specialized equipment as identified through the Project for instructional assignments