

By Davis H. Brock



Show

Planning and Preparation

We know there is a disconnect between students' technology experience outside of school and what they use in the classroom. At home many students play and learn with an array of tools that are restricted, banned, or, in many cases, just not available at school. We also know that effectively infusing technology into the classroom does make a difference with students by motivating them, increasing their achievement, and engaging them in powerful ways.

With the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), we have an opportunity to make significant strides in bringing technology into the classroom in meaningful ways and ending the digital disconnect. As we think about how to use these once-in-a-lifetime funds, we must consider how the goals of the ARRA can help pay for technology purchases and professional development, and how that can affect our students and transform learning environments for our 21st-century learners.

The economic stimulus funds should:

- Be transformational, not simply maintain the status quo
- Be used on efforts to improve instructional opportunities for *all* students
- Be used over a two-year period for one-time resources

Us the Money!

Can Help You Get Ed Tech Stimulus Funding

In seeking federal grant money, educators have a chance to develop plans and relationships that will include technology at all levels in our districts. However, many preliminary steps are necessary to ensure success. So before you ask for the money, make sure you have all your ducks in a row by following these steps:



Create a plan. Developing a plan to support your ideas is the single most important tool for selling your ideas. To quote

Lester R. Bittel, an author and expert on management and supervision, “Good plans shape good decisions. That’s why good planning helps to make elusive dreams come true.”

Carve out time from your busy schedule to familiarize yourself with your system or school’s strategic plan, your district’s technology plan, and your school’s continuous improvement plan, and find goals in those plans that include the infusion of technology and technology-related professional development into the classroom. Align the ARRA goals to the goals set forth in your local plans and begin to formulate ideas about how the ARRA funds can help meet some of these goals.

Research results. Ideas alone will not sell the plan. Although planning is essential, it must

be supported by research and data that show the need for technology-related expenses. Research how the use of technology improves achievement for students. Additionally, seek resources that support the need for updated technology for teaching 21st-century learners. (See Preparing Your Case for Stimulus Dollars on page 24.) We know that we have to prepare students for the world in which they live, and the big question is, how can we do that with these additional funds?



Find success stories. Seek

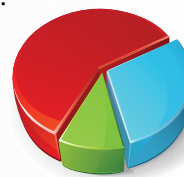
out local teachers who can share their success stories with technology and learning. For example, while conducting a focus group with school administrators in my district on how technology was being used in their schools, one of the principals said to me, “In my 40 years of education, I have not seen anything that has been so transformational in teaching.” She was referring to having a digital projector connected to a document camera and computer in every classroom in her school. This was just what I needed to help me in a meeting I was having the next week with school board members on the importance of technology. I asked her to write up what she said and to ask her teachers to write about the impact the technology was having in their classrooms. I keep these in my “arsenal”

and use the examples from time to time as I prepare documents to show how local teachers are using technology to transform their classrooms.

Find out what’s available. Once your ideas are on paper and aligned with your district goals, find out how much money your district



is expected to get from categorical programs such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Title I. Remember that, although the Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) program is also getting a boost in funding, these funds are only a fraction of what most districts will receive from other categorical programs. Therefore, it is important to include in your plans how the EETT funds can help supplement funding, resources, and support for projects funded from the other categorical programs.



Create a spreadsheet.

It’s important to show what it will cost to implement the items in your plan. Prioritize your list in order of importance, making sure that you allocate money for equipment and training. Be specific in showing how spending these funds on technology can be instrumental in transforming instruction and changing the dynamic of the classroom.



Include professional development.

Changing the classroom environment, the teaching climate, and ultimately the teachers themselves will have a great impact on student motivation and performance. Teachers need not only to learn how to use the technology but also how to infuse these new tools into teaching effectively within the curriculum. Professional development, modeling, and coaching must be a major part of your plan. Research indicates that sustained professional development on the infusion of technology into the classroom environment greatly affects student achievement, attendance, and discipline. Consider adding pay for substitutes in your plan to allow teachers to visit classrooms where their peers are using technology effectively. This modeling approach allows teachers to develop concrete ideas about how they, too, can engage students using technology.

Make it look good. Type up your plan, design it, and make it easy to understand. Making this plan look professional is extremely important because it will become your tool for marketing to key stakeholders in your district. Essentially you are advertising your ideas and plan with the purpose of “selling” what you think is important. The next step is “getting to the table” to explain your plan.



Develop relationships.

Although developing a plan is essential, remember that selling it is where the rubber meets the road. Make an appointment to talk to your superintendent and explain how using these funds can transform teaching and learning and will be a smart investment for the district. Also meet with the chief financial officer, federal programs director, and special education



Preparing Your Case for Stimulus Dollars

These websites contain a wealth of information on the effective use of technology in the classroom and the importance of 21st-century skills:

Apple Learning Interchange | <http://edcommunity.apple.com/ali>
Examples of exemplary instructional use of a variety of technologies (free registration required)

CARET | <http://caret.iste.org>
Links to multiple studies related to technology in education

CoSN | www.cosn.org
Resources and information on technology and learning

Education Statistics Quarterly | <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/quarterly>
Publication put out by the National Center for Education Statistics

George Lucas Educational Foundation | www.edutopia.org
Videos and sample lessons of technology-supported instructional activities

INaccess | www.doe.in.gov/olr/InACCESS/index.html
Indiana’s sustainable technology classroom model for secondary classrooms

Journal of Computing in Teacher Education | www.iste.org/jcte
Computer and technology research for teacher educators

Journal of Research on Technology and Education | www.iste.org/jrte
Ed tech research from around the globe

The Learning Return on Our Educational Technology Investment
| www.wested.org/online_pubs/learning_return.pdf
Report conducted by WestEd, a national education nonprofit research, development, and service agency

NETS | www.iste.org/NETS
Information related to ISTE’s educational technology standards for students, teachers, and administrators

Partnership for 21st Century Skills | www.21stcenturyskills.org
Includes the 21st-century skills framework and several relevant publications

PEW Internet | www.pewinternet.org
Research regarding the impact of the Internet and technology on life in the United States

Standards for Staff Development | www.nsd.org/standards
National Staff Development Council standards for staff development

Sustainable Classroom Model | www.esd112.org/edtech/sustainableclass.cfm
Washington state model for effective technology integration in the classroom

Workforce Readiness from 21st-Century Skills group | www.21stcenturyskills.org/documents/FINAL_REPORT_PDF09-29-06.pdf
Report on importance of 21st-century skills



Success Stories

During reading, there is a lot of writing to put on the board. Now, with the document camera and projector, I use these new elements in my classroom and project them for the class. It saves a tremendous amount of time and makes me much more productive and successful with our reading program. It makes me wonder how I've gotten by all these years without these tools!

—Lisa McMichael,
second grade teacher

When I am teaching a lesson, I no longer have to hold up my example of what I am doing or make a transparency. I can put it right on the document camera for everyone to see at the same time. For example, when we were working on measurement today, I was able to project a ruler onto my whiteboard using the projector and document camera and point to each centimeter where each child could see. I use these new tools daily, in everything I teach. It saves time and really helps when trying to model for students.

—Brittney Blerich,
third grade teacher

These resources really enhance my history and science lessons. Now I can go to the Internet and use mini-video segments to enhance what I am teaching. This technology makes my lessons come to life for my students, and I am very thankful to have these teaching tools as part of my curriculum and classroom.

—Brenda Wiggins,
fourth grade teacher

A+

Research indicates that sustained professional development on the infusion of technology into the classroom environment greatly affects student achievement, attendance, and discipline.

director to make your case. Take them to lunch to get them away from the phone, the calendar, and other distractions. This will put you in a more relaxed environment to hear what they are thinking. Seek input about things in your plan that will work and things that won't.

Collaboration, negotiation, compromise, and consensus are the buzz words to remember when selling your ideas.

Do not be so rigid that you cannot see beyond what you would like to accomplish. These people have ideas, too, so make sure that you listen carefully to what they say and be prepared to revise your plan based on their suggestions.



Keep knocking on the door.

Communicate often with the key people in your district who are making decisions about these funds. Keep sending them articles on current research about how technology is transforming teaching and learning and include stories

from your own district. This is a process that will change often, so never give up.

Even though the ARRA funds provide much needed funding for school districts, this may not be the “technology opportunity” you were hoping for. By developing a plan and relationships with key people in your district, however, you will more than likely be asked for input when other funding opportunities open up.

Resources

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act website: www.recovery.gov
Hilary Goldmann's blog: www.iste.org/goldmann
ISTE webinar, So the Stimulus Passed ... Now What?: https://admin.acrobat.com/_a729309453/p67423522



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Keep ISTE posted on how your school and district are using the ARRA dollars.

Complete a short survey at www.iste.org/arra-survey.