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Technology Applications Readiness Grants for Empowering Texas (TARGET) Cycle 1, Year 3

Schedule #4B-Program Description: Narrative

Part 1: Program Description for Year 3

Strategies for improving academic achievement and teacher effectiveness

The following quote is from a survey of teachers involved in the Panhandle Academic Advancement in Literacy and Math project: "We studied WWII and I put vocabulary and important dates and people in Vocab. I have never had students retain so much info as I did when they were able to study through the Palms. Also, the kids still go back sometimes to previously covered vocabulary; thus, retention is so much better."

This TARGET partnership grant, the Panhandle Academic Advancement in Literacy and Math (PAALM) project, is enabling students of Region 16 to succeed by:

- improving student academic achievement through the use of technology in elementary schools
- assisting students in crossing the digital divide by improving the technological literacy of each participating student
- encouraging the effective integration of technology into the curricula

Year 3 of the PAALM project will continue with teachers attending professional development on methodologies to integrate handheld computers in their classrooms. The teachers will continue to write and implement TEKS-based lessons for handheld integration. For Year 3 there will be one lesson plan written by each teacher each semester in addition to the lesson plan written by the collaboration group. These lessons will continue to be TEKS-based and posted on the WebBoard for all teachers in the project and throughout the state of Texas to use. Teachers will continue to join forces with one another, the PAALM Instructional Team, and community members. This collaboration will occur through e-mail, the WebBoard, web pages and PAALM collaboration teams, building a community of knowledge for technology integration with handhelds. All training during the first two years has been via videoconference sessions. In the third year of this project, all training will be conducted online, which can be considered a new, emerging technology for the participants. This is a change from previous years driven by several factors. Among them, other than a decrease in funding, is an effort to lead the participating teachers toward more self-reliance and stronger collaboration with their peers, while at the same time making them less dependent on the PAALM Instructional Team for support. This is intended to prepare them for continuing the integration of handheld computers after the grant period is completed.

Goals

The 1999 Student Success Initiative "mandates new passing requirements beginning in school year 2002-2003 for the reading test at Grade 3 and beginning in school year 2004-2005 for the reading and mathematics tests at Grade 5." The Region 16 partnership TARGET PAALM project goals will focus on reading in grades 3, 4 and 5 and on math in grade 5.
Goal #1: All participating students in grades 3 through 5 will pass the TAKS reading test. This goal will continue into Year 3.
Goal #2: All participating students in grade 5 will pass the TAKS math test. This goal will continue into Year 3.

Steps to increase accessibility

The needs assessment for Year 3 was achieved through a variety of means. The primary means of determining the needs to be addressed in Year 3 was through the on-going formative evaluations the teachers submitted. These were completed during the videoconference trainings and through on-line surveys. To continue to affect student learning, teachers needed more assistance in reading and math instruction, which was supplied through software and lesson plan books for integrating handhelds into the reading and math curriculum. For Year 3, this will be supplied through additional software, instructional resources, and continued training. In Year 1, classroom sets of handhelds were distributed to 3rd, 4th and 5th grade reading classes. Each 3rd, 4th and 5th grade reading teacher was furnished a handheld, a carrying case, a collapsible keyboard and a projection adaptor device. Software programs for reading instruction and TEKS assessment were purchased for use with the handhelds. For Year 2, similar equipment was provided for 5th grade math classes and math teachers. All teachers participating in the project received new handhelds and additional equipment which have enabled them to keep current with the emerging technologies and to allow for more diversification in the implementation of the handhelds into the curriculum. The handhelds they had used the previous year were redistributed to classrooms to increase the student-to-Palm ratio.

As in Year 1, to leverage existing resources, each PAALM campus has committed some of their Title II, Part D technology "formula technology funds", or an equivalent amount, to resources to be used for the PAALM grant. For Year 2, the district will supply to each teacher's classroom a desktop version of the program Inspiration[®] for teacher and student use. In Year 3, this money is to be used for parts, maintenance, repair, and replacement of existing handhelds as necessary. This use of locally allotted monies from state and federal sources will continue. (see Appendix 4)

To further leverage existing resources, the teacher handhelds from Year 1 were collected and re-distributed as classroom sets for students. This reduced the number of student handhelds that were to be purchased in Year 2, thus allowing more access to other instructional materials.

Each PAALM campus has supplied computer access to teachers for the professional development trainings which are a part of the TARGET PAALM grant. Many of these computers were purchased from either previous TIF or TIE grant funds. PAALM campuses have committed to support the PAALM project's goals and objectives with their "formula technology funds" and with state technology allotment monies (see forms of commitment from original grant application).

Region 16 Education Service Center is purchasing a server and licensing for Blackboard during the summer of 2005 for online professional development. The online training for the PAALM grant will be developed using this server and software, which means that there will be no expenditure from the PAALM budget for this purpose.

a. In Year 1, all high-need campuses received a classroom set of handhelds. This allowed 100% on-demand access to the new technology for the students and teachers. In Year 2, the redistribution of teacher handhelds plus the purchase of new student handhelds allowed a student-to-handheld ratio of one-to-one. Teachers in high-need campuses received additional instructional materials, such as the TAKS Coach workbook, that can be utilized with the software and hardware of the project. In Year 3, there will be professional development opportunities available to PAALM grant participants on a voluntary basis, with the high-need campus participants' fees and substitute pay being funded with PAALM grant funds.

b. All teachers will participate in professional development on how to use and integrate the handheld computers. The professional development trainings are designed to meet requirements for "sustained, high-quality, on-going professional development." In Year 3, teachers new to the project will attend four days of face-to-face professional development during the fall at Region 16 ESC. The curriculum for the professional development includes:

- Day 1 – an introduction to the handheld, use of the Operating System (OS), use of built-in software, synchronization with the computer and other handhelds, use of the WebBoard collaboration tool and the writing and posting of a TEKS-based integration lesson plan
- Day 2 – the integration of subject-specific software and use of the palmOne Educational Solutions CD to install and review trial versions of educational software the handheld
- Day 3 – continue with subject-specific software and learn how to find, download, and install other educational software for the handheld
- Day 4 – the use of TEKS-based assessment software (TANGO)

In Years 1 and 2, teachers attended a total of four half-day professional development sessions during the school year via videoconference. In Year 3, teachers will participate in online professional development sessions equivalent to a total of six hours (3 hours per semester) of seat time. During these sessions, the PAALM teachers will:

- ✓ self-evaluate the effectiveness of the lesson(s) they taught utilizing the handheld computer
- ✓ submit these evaluations to the PAALM Instructional Team
- ✓ share and collaborate about the effectiveness of student learning with the handheld computer
- ✓ learn new software and hardware
- ✓ create and submit a new TEKS-based lesson plan that integrates the handheld computer
- ✓ evaluate the current effectiveness and progress of the PAALM project's goals and objectives

Promotion of curricula and teaching strategies that integrate technology

As stated in the goals, the curricula focus for Year 1 was reading TAKS in grades 3, 4 and 5. For Year 2, a focus on the math TAKS was added in grade 5 for all campuses. **To fully meet the needs of the high-need campuses and because math is a subject that "builds" on previous knowledge, the 3rd and 4th grade math teachers and students from the high-need campuses were also included in Year 2 and will continue this participation in Year 3.** This decision was based upon the math TAKS test results and its passing standards for students. The 2004 math TAKS test for 5th grade was the "benchmark" year for evaluation purposes.

Professional development

The professional development plan for the PAALM project has been structured to place the main emphasis on technology integration into the curriculum and to allow the teacher to be responsible for planning and implementing the project. This strengthens the competencies teachers need to provide for successful student learning by supplying the teacher with on-going professional development opportunities, teaching strategies, and the hardware and software to provide for student learning. The design leaves the actual implementation of strategies (lesson plans) to the teacher. Each teacher is the expert in his or her own classroom and can best decide which lessons and strategies are most appropriate for their particular students' learning styles.

Continuing in Year 3, teachers will not miss instructional time to participate in the PAALM project, with the exception of teachers new to the project, who will have four days of professional development during the fall to be held on-site at Region 16 ESC. This scheduling is to accommodate late hires who will participate in the project. All teachers in the project will participate in an additional two ½ day each trainings outside the school day during the year. These training sessions will be conducted online over a four-to-six week period. The teachers will be active participants, responsible for their own learning. They will complete requirements of the online component as well as post lesson plans implemented during the school year on the WebBoard. After implementing a lesson, they will be responsible for assessing it through online surveys. For on-going communication, discussion and collaboration, all PAALM teachers are subscribed to a listserv, registered to a bulletin board program with a chat component and grouped into "PAALM collaboration teams."

PAALM teacher input is very important. In Year 3, teachers will continue to have the opportunity to learn from and share with fellow teachers of the same grade level and subject area. During Year 1, teachers learned how to download and install freeware and shareware programs. Their lessons and experiences with students were shared with all the project participants. Teachers made recommendations on software for reading and math for Year 2 implementation. An example of teacher input was the decision to purchase Palm Reader Pro and a dictionary/thesaurus program for Year 2. The teachers have continued to make recommendations, which will be considered for Year 3.

As in Years 1 and 2, each PAALM collaboration team will write a lesson plan that focuses upon a specific need of a high-need campus. After the collaborative lesson plan is created, it will be posted on the WebBoard. Teachers are encouraged to utilize it in the classroom, implement the lesson and share the outcomes with the rest of the PAALM teachers. The PAALM Instructional Team will include Instructional Technology Specialists, Information Technology Specialists and Instructional Services Education Specialists employed by Region 16 ESC. The Region 16 Instructional Services Education Specialists for reading and math will have access to the Blackboard online lessons, will be members of the listserv, and will have access to the WebBoard. The ESC Education Specialists' involvement will focus upon the integration of technology in the curriculum.

Technology type and costs

To meet the Campus Texas STaR Chart needs of the schools, to enable the reading and math students to continue to improve retention of knowledge and skills and to address the need to supply new and emerging technologies into today's classrooms, the hardware selected for the TARGET PAALM project is the Palm OS handheld. Each teacher new to the project in Year 3 will receive a handheld and equipment valued at approximately \$325 and a class set of student handhelds valued at approximately \$150 each.

Additional math and reading software will be purchased in Year 3. In Year 1, each PAALM campus committed their Title II, Part D technology "formula technology funds" to provide access to an infrared capable printer. In Years 1 and 2, a small amount of project funds were provided to acquire a projector or computer, based upon campus need. Districts have spent additional funds to acquire handhelds, storage solutions, training and additional software. Administrators and technology support staff have acquired the necessary hardware and software to support the teachers and students, and have attended the trainings. To implement this PAALM project, the total cost per student would be \$209. None of the high-need PAALM campuses could have spent this amount per student due to insufficient Title II, Part D Formula Technology Funds. In Year 2, each campus committed to furnish each reading teacher's classroom with the desktop version of the program Inspiration[®] and each campus was to provide access to an infrared capable printer or infrared adapter to PAALM teachers and students.

Coordination with other resources

As in Years 1 and 2, the PAALM campuses will support the PAALM project in a variety of ways. The PAALM campuses will continue to provide the PAALM teacher access to a computer with a USB port for the online training sessions and for classroom use. These computers were acquired from previous TIF or TIE grant funds or local funds. Existing T1 lines will be utilized for the professional development during the school year. All districts supply teacher computer workstations that are Internet accessible which enables communication through email and access to the Internet. All districts have committed to continuing project support with staff, equipment and training as needed in 2005-2006. (see Appendix 4)

Integration of technology with curricula and instruction

All districts have submitted their technology plans online through ePlan (see Appendix 1). All plans address the need of increased access to technology and increased use of technology in the curriculum. This grant allows the districts to accomplish those objectives. Integration of technology into the curriculum is the focus of all PAALM teacher professional development. Lesson plans from Years 1 and 2 are posted on the PAALM WebBoard. See: <http://www.esc16.net/dept/techserv/paalm>

In Year 3 professional development and collaboration will continue. New software will be acquired and the teachers will be trained on its integration into the reading or math curriculum. Teachers will continue to post lesson plans on the WebBoard. Again in Year 3, each PAALM collaboration team will be responsible for creating, posting and implementing a lesson plan that focuses upon the instructional need of a high-need campus. Website resources and software available will be posted on the WebBoard. There were 120 reading teachers participating in Year 1 and each posted two lesson plans and collaborated on a third plan. For Year 2, each teacher was expected to create one lesson plan in their curriculum area for each software program presented during trainings. In Year 3, each teacher will be expected to create one lesson plan in their curriculum area each semester along with the lesson created by their collaboration team. These posted lesson plans are a valuable resource to any other Texas campus that wishes to replicate this endeavor.

Innovative delivery strategies

There are two aspects of delivery strategies for this program. One aspect is to deliver professional development to the PAALM teachers and the other aspect is to deliver instruction to the students by the PAALM teacher.

In Year 3, PAALM teachers will receive professional development via the new Region 16 Blackboard server. While online professional development is not new in many areas, it will be the first time many of these teachers have received training in this manner because it has not been available at Region 16 ESC before. Because of the existence of this system, evening professional development for geographically distant teachers is possible. Another delivery strategy for professional development of the PAALM teachers is communication via email and WebBoard postings. In Year 1, a bulletin board software program, WebBoard, was purchased that is hosted on a server at Region 16. The WebBoard enables PAALM teachers and the PAALM Instructional Team to communicate and collaborate in a new and unique way. In Year 3 the use of the WebBoard will be emphasized to provide for additional, expanded collaboration.

The second aspect of delivery strategy focuses upon the student use of the handhelds (see survey results in Evaluation Report #2). Here are a few student success stories:

- ✓ "Students are motivated in subject areas that are usually of little or no interest to them, such as spelling. They are eager to practice and take tests on the handhelds. Our spelling grades have increased, especially for two struggling spellers. It is also a good incentive for the students to work on listening skills as well as following directions. They do a great job helping their neighbor's complete tasks, and can use the Palms with no problem. We love them!"
- ✓ "Teaching vocabulary words has always been a difficult task for me. My students are eager to learn new words using their Palms and Vocabulary Buddy. The Palms make learning fun for the students as well as me. I enjoy finding new and free programs on the internet that make learning fun for my students. Palms are a great tool!"
- ✓ "I watched a special ed student who is ADD work so intensely! He was so excited about his work he got up in front of the class for the first time."
- ✓ "My special ed student that had been failing all spelling tests began to pass once he began entering his words into his Palm."
- ✓ "Vocabulary Study Buddy on the Palms has been my saving grace this year. It really helped to improve student skills in word meaning and was very motivational!"
- ✓ "I was able to integrate much of my language arts curriculum. The students used the Palms to take spelling tests, write reports, drill and practice in spelling, game based learning, and many other activities. These activities were very supportive in the implementation of TAKS objectives."
- ✓ "I had 13 of 17 students make 100 on the weekly spelling test. I have been teaching for 20 years and that has never happened before!"

Parental involvement

Each PAALM campus will share with parents and community members how the handhelds are being used in the classroom. Communication between the campus and parents can be achieved through a variety of ways: parent-teacher meetings, newsletters, school websites, phone calls, teacher notes and/or newspaper articles. This communication with parents and the community will continue in Year 3, with each campus having some type of parent technology night where the PAALM teachers and students will demonstrate to the parents and other community members how the handhelds are being integrated into the curriculum. For Year 3, all PAALM project campuses will be expected to continue to maintain and update the PAALM project website which was created in Year 2. This website will be another means of parent and community involvement and information and will be linked the Region 16 PAALM grant website. Parental and community involvement will be documented through agendas and reports from campus administrators and the existence of district and campus PAALM websites.

Collaboration with adult literacy service providers – Not Applicable.

Accountability measures

PAALM teachers will have a variety of accountability measures.

After the online professional development, each PAALM teacher will submit a lesson plan which integrates the handhelds into their curriculum area to be implemented before the end of the semester. At the end of each semester, PAALM teachers will have an evaluation form to complete to self-assess the lesson they taught. In Year 3, the Levels of Technology Integration (LoTI), an on-line assessment tool of technology skills and integration will be continued. These results will become cumulative over the life of the project. Teachers new to the project will take the assessment during their fall training to establish a baseline. All teachers will then take the assessment again in Spring 2005. Yearly results will be part of the evaluation plan, as well as cumulative results from Year 1 to Year 3.

The students will be assessed throughout the year through the use of TEKS-based assessment software. Instead of requiring a pre-

and post-assessment using a TAKS release test, the use of the program will be teacher and district driven. This modification of student assessment was done to address the concerns and needs of the districts. All of the districts had pre-determined time frames and established strategies for use of the TAKS release tests. The teachers will continue to use the TANGO program, but will determine themselves when it is most appropriate and not be required to give the release test at a set time for project purposes.

As in Years 1 and 2, the PAALM teachers will complete online surveys to evaluate the project. The evaluation will cover all aspects from professional development, student achievement, management, and parent and community involvement. The questions as well as the structure of the questions and information of this survey have been taken and adapted from evaluations from previous technology and handheld grants (TIE and PEP). This web-based feedback form will be revised as recommended by the independent evaluator.

Supporting resources

As In Years 1 and 2, the PAALM teachers will have support though a listserv for communication between teachers and the PAALM Instructional Team. The teachers will continue to have WebBoard access for posting of questions, lesson ideas, lesson plans and outcomes. Training on new software for reading and math instruction will be presented and used in the integration lesson plans. Printed and on-line materials will be posted on the WebBoard and Blackboard servers for easy, up-to-date and on-demand access. Supplemental resources on technology integration, the use of handhelds in the classroom and curriculum resources will continue to be posted for the teachers' access. The PAALM Instructional Team will continue to be available for support through phone, online postings, email and on-site visits.

All campuses involved have at least one T1 line for Internet and videoconference connectivity, which are discounted through E-rate. All classrooms have teacher and student computers with Internet connectivity. At least one computer in each classroom will have a USB port, which is needed for the synchronization of the handheld computer. Each PAALM teacher classroom will also have access to an infrared printer or an adapter on a current printer to allow "beaming" of information to the printer from the handheld.

No external trainers were utilized in Year 1. For Year 2, Region 16 ESC will bring in Tony Vincent, a palmOne Education Training Coordinator and author of the Learning in Hand website (<http://www.learninginhand.com>), to provide staff development to the PAALM teachers. In Year 3, the PAALM Instructional Team will explore options for additional trainings for the PAALM teachers through the use of outside consultant(s).

The PAALM Instructional Team will continue to research, study and acquire printed, on-line and media resources to support the PAALM teachers and their students. The Region 16 ESC Instructional Services Education Specialists will be available for advice regarding the specific TEKS, recommendations on the appropriateness of software, and for general instructional methodology. Region 16 ESC is committed to the PAALM project, with staff support of the PAALM Instructional Team and other support staff members.

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Technology Applications Readiness Grants for Empowering Texas (TARGET) Cycle 1, Year 3

Schedule #4B-Program Description: Year 3 activities

Part 2: Activity Timeline

#	Major Program Activities	Proposed begin dates of program activities	Proposed end dates of program activities
1	Purchase and distribute handhelds, software licenses and other equipment to teachers who are new to the project.	August, 2005	September, 2005
2	New teachers to the project will attend four days of training.	September, 2005	September, 2005
3	Purchase and distribute classroom sets of handhelds for each teacher new to the project.	August, 2005	September, 2005
4	Collaborate with non-high need campuses by posting a specific reading and math TAKS need on the WebBoard.	September, 2005	October, 2005
5	Purchase and distribute additional instructional materials and equipment for reading and math.	August, 2005	May, 2006
6	PAALM Instructional Team will develop, post, and implement online professional development via Blackboard.	August, 2005	May, 2006
7	All teachers will complete six hours of on-going online professional development outside the school day.	August, 2005	May, 2006
8	All teachers will assess students' reading and math skills for TAKS.	August, 2005	May, 2006
9	All teachers will create, implement, post and evaluate handheld integration lessons.	August, 2005	May, 2006
10	All teachers will participate in discussions of integration of handhelds via email, WebBoard, face-to-face session, and online training.	August, 2005	May, 2006
11	All campuses will communicate with parents and the community how handhelds are used to impact student learning.	August, 2005	May, 2006
12	PAALM Instructional Team members will travel to each campus for on-site visits with PAALM teachers.	August, 2005	May, 2006
13	All stakeholders will evaluate the project.	August, 2005	May, 2006
14	PAALM Instructional Team will present the project and outcomes at computer conferences and conventions, as appropriate and available.	August, 2005	May, 2006

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Technology Applications Readiness Grants for Empowering Texas (TARGET) Cycle 1, Year 3

Schedule #4B-Program Description: Year 3 activities

Part 2: Activity Timeline

#	Major Program Activities	Proposed begin dates of program activities	Proposed end dates of program activities
15	PAALM Instructional Team will explore options of supplying outside consultants for training project teachers and offer such trainings.	August, 2005	May, 2006
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