

EETT Project Summary

San Marcos Unified School District is requesting funds to leverage a well-established and successful partnership with CSU San Marcos that provides Dr. Laurie Stowell to lead the San Marcos Writing Project, a part of the National Writing Project. Rolling carts will place technology in the hands of classroom teachers. Sixteen days of professional development and materials development will result in 33 middle school language arts teachers who are well-trained in technology and prepared to integrate technology into their curriculum.

Needs. Currently language arts classes at the district's three middle schools lack access to technology. There are few classroom computers and labs are reserved for other classes. We are failing to use the power of technologies to impact academic outcomes in language arts classes plus we are failing to engage the interests of our "Digital Natives," exactly the opposite of what we want to do. One of our middle schools has especially big academic needs, but while collaboration with other middle school students, college students, and community writers would benefit them, we lack the appropriate technology for collaboration and community building.

Participants and Focus. The focus of this project is on teachers and students in grades 6, 7 and 8. The academic area is writing, which research suggests is the foundation of success in high school, university, and beyond. In addition, by training language arts teachers in the district's three middle schools, ALL 6th, 7th and 8th grade students will be impacted by this project. The technology emphases are basic computer skills, advanced word processing, advanced internet searches, advanced presentation skills, social networking, discussion boards, podcasting, blogging, wikis, and idea maps. These skills were chosen based on teacher needs assessments and because they are Web 2.0 skills related to writing. Local private schools were invited to participate; none expressed interest.

Project Activities and Results. Significant partnerships with CSU San Marcos, Anodyne Professional Development Systems, Inc., and Vantage Learning will ensure quality in project activities each year. Dr. Stowell from CSU San Marcos will give four days of PD on writing skills, pedagogy, and integration of technology into writing lessons. Anodyne will provide four days of PD to the 33 language arts teachers on the featured technologies, described above. In addition, three Teachers on Special Assignment will be hired. Anodyne will offer the TOSA in-depth technology training during an additional four days, as the TOSAs will be expected to provide daily classroom support to teachers and students at each of the middle schools. In addition, Vantage will offer training on its My Access system during regular PD times. San Marcos teachers developed the "Middle School Writing Program," a 4-inch binder filled with writing lessons and resources. The TOSAs will work with Anodyne's expert in curriculum development to develop materials that integrate the focus technologies into middle school language arts classes. The results of this project will be that all middle school students will use technology on a daily basis, resulting in proficiency by the end of eighth grade; middle school language arts teachers will integrate modern technologies in their classrooms; and the "Middle School Writing Program" will demonstrate how to integrate technology into writing classes – and will be placed on the district's website for all teachers anywhere to access and use. A special form of sustainability will occur when the 3 TOSAs return to their language arts classrooms at the end of the project; each middle school will then have their own on-site deeply trained expert in the target technologies, writing strategies, and the effective integration of technology into the language arts curriculum. In addition, the communication and collaboration with parents will be greatly enhanced through the target technologies, the skills to be gained by participating teachers, and the activities planned that will involve parents and the community.