



SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS

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NEWS RELEASE

March 22, 2006

SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY RECEIVES \$2.24 MILLION GRANT

Funds will provide technology for science education to more than 12,300 students at 12 middle schools

SAN DIEGO – San Diego City Schools (SDCS) will use the new state grant to implement Phase 3 of the district developed Enhancing Science Education Through Technology (E^SETT) program that will continue to integrate technology into middle school science curriculum while expanding student engagement and learning opportunities in inquiry-based science education.

Funding will come from the California Department of Education (CDE), made possible by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) competitive program.

The district's E^SETT program, "which has been a model of collaboration between the Educational Technology and Science Departments," according to Dan Wolfson, Program Manager for the Education Technology Department, began Phase One in 2004 with two middle schools (Standley Middle and Roosevelt Junior High) and Phase Two added two more in 2005 (Pershing Middle and Correia Junior High schools). The new grant will enable the program to expand to eight additional middle schools, and will serve more than 8,670 students. Schools, in Phase 3, were selected based on the poverty level of students and current access to educational technology. The eight schools that will participate over the next two years include: Bell Junior High, Challenger, Farb, Kroc, Mann, Montgomery, Pacific Beach and Wilson middle schools. These students will receive the benefit of the district adopted standards-based science curriculum enhanced with 21st century technology tools.

"This grant will support our teachers who are committed to ensure technology is used as a viable tool for learning in their science classes, as well as to support students to have a variety of ways to build and deepen their understanding of science concepts," said Debbie Beldock, Executive Director of Instruction and Curriculum.

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"The mission of San Diego City Schools is to improve student achievement by supporting teaching and learning in the classroom."

The E^SETT research-based program is designed to augment the district's curriculum based on scientific inquiry, with educational activities that incorporate the use of technology in much the same way that a scientist would in his/her work.

The E^SETT research-based program includes three components:

1. Integrating technology into inquiry-based activities, which will address state and national science content standards
2. Research-based professional development program
3. Providing the technology to allow students to create and present inquiry-based science activities based on state science standards

The program will provide technology to allow students to create and present inquiry-based science activities that address the state and national science content standards. E^SETT will also provide students with access to online learning resources and appropriate software for collecting and analyzing data, organizing their thoughts, writing reports of their research findings, and presenting their findings to their classmates, teachers, and other adults in the community.

“The use of technology in the classroom helps to create a very student-centered learning environment in which students can take charge of their own learning. It also helps students to produce professional quality work that engages them and others around them not only in the classroom but also in the community,” said Michael Senise, E^SETT Project Lead Resource Teacher.

The professional development program contains four components:

1. Workshops and teacher training seminars
2. Independent research and learning
3. Onsite training support
4. Professional learning communities

“Through the E^SETT Program, we have created a professional learning community that evolves through shared expertise in both science teaching principles and strategies and knowledge of technology,” said Senise. “The community has been created in such a way that teachers are its strength.”

Technology will also be used to communicate and collaborate with parents and the community through teacher email and a project portal which will allow family and community members to access information and post messages. Family members who do not have access to a computer will have access to technology at the school site after-hours and through community based computer labs.

“We are extremely pleased to be able to provide the opportunity with much needed resources to these additional middle schools. It is our hope that over the next few years, we can attract additional funding opportunities to expand this opportunity to the remaining middle school science classrooms so that all students are using 21st century tools to learn and collaborate,” said Dan Wolfson.

The expansion of the E^SETT program this year will bring 40 additional teachers into the program and the total students served to more than 12,300.

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