

**Yonkers City School District – Project: Yonkers
2015-2018 Learning Technology Grants Three Year Application**

Proposal Abstract

Project: Yonkers is a unique initiative demonstrating the potential of instructional technology to support student achievement through use of innovative techniques which engage students incorporating rich content and project based learning opportunities. **Project: Yonkers** supports student centered active learning through thematic instruction via new digital tools, in this case Geocaching. Staff and students will receive training in the development of Geocache digital markers reflecting City of Yonkers educational, cultural, and historical sites. Professional learning opportunities will support discreet product creation which serves community stakeholders including Big Data potential as a public service tool. Students engage in logistical and literacy marker design, acting as digital ‘docents’ through active inquiry and project based design in a blended learning environment. Research verifies the potential of virtual tools to support student achievement. A 2009 study, *U.S. Department of Education Study Finds that Good Teaching Can be Enhanced with New Technology*, indicates “digitally rich educational strategies, such as blended learning experiences, are more effective than conventional face-to-face instruction.” A 1997 Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory study, *Inquiry strategies for science and mathematics learning: It’s Just Good Teaching*, illuminates the value of inquiry to support achievement.

Project design develops student content knowledge, skill, and achievement, through active student engagement in the development of digital Geocache, or markers, reflecting research and documentation of sites across the City of Yonkers. Efforts support teachers, administrators, students, and families, from **Museum 25**, a Priority school, **Thomas Cornell Academy**, a Focus School and district Open Educational Resource leadership school, and **Stein Yeshiva of Lincoln Park** a Nonpublic School partner, of **grades 3 through 8**. Activities include implementation of rigorous and highly engaging blended resource development to create digital docent opportunities via Geocache markers as participant’s research, study, explore, and develop concrete elements through a three year progression of escalating levels of complexity. Year 1 reflects *Digital Researchers*, moving in year 2 to *Digital Historians*, with year 3 leveraging capacity and focused design through *Digital Ambassadors*. Project objectives include a) high quality professional development provided by district staff members, project partners New York Institute of Technology and the Hudson River Museum, and b) engaging student centered innovative learning experiences through Geocaching. Efforts will foster student engagement, leadership development, while providing community service opportunities.

Project: Yonkers supports the **New York State Regents Reform Agenda Goals #1, #2, and #3** through high quality sustained professional development supporting Development of Highly Effective School Leaders and Teachers, and Development of Student College and Career Readiness. Efforts align with New York State Learning Standards, including **Common Core**, and support development of lessons, units, and resources. **Project: Yonkers** supports the objectives of the New York State Learning Technology Plan, Standards of the International Society for Technology in Education (*ISTE*), and District Technology Plans as students and staff place value evidence and use technology capably to read, write, speak and listen for information and understanding (*ELA.1*). College and Career Readiness will be supported as students respond to varying demands of task while using technology and digital media strategically (*CCR*). Common Core Standards include gathering relevant information from multiple sources (*W.3-8.8*); present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically (*SL.3-8.4*); enhance understanding through strategic use of media in presentations (*SL.3-8.5*) through blended learning student centered learning experiences.