

Proposal Abstract

X369 Young Leaders Elementary School is a **Priority** elementary school with 273 students from pre-kindergarten through grade five. The school population comprises 14% Black, 85% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 47% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. We are partnering with St. Maria Catholic school, a school that shares a similar population and academic goals for our students. Our scholars need support to strengthen their basic and higher-level skills in both literacy and math and because skills related to these subjects impact performance across subject matter. Our program, *Active Learning Through Tech (ALTT)*, will take a blended learning approach with an emphasis on enhancing students' ELA and math skills and secondarily science and social studies.

Hayes Jacobs (2011) describes how the Common Core Standards can be used by educators as a springboard to new pedagogies for learners. Through *Active Learning Through Tech (ALTT)*, our teachers will align standards to a common theme such as "machines that work" to cross-curricular activities that build not only students' content knowledge, but also 21st century skills that are critical in global knowledge economies. For example, in third grade science, students study simple machines (such as levers and pulleys) and in ELA they study cultures "then and now." Students will research on the internet how pulleys and levers were used to create machines in history (such as water wells and catapults) and how can they be used in now (such as to build robots). Students will build machines and create written instructions for and "how to" videos on making their machines. The "how-to" videos will be shared across classrooms and schools and archived in digital portfolios that can be formatively assessed by both students and teachers alike. Students will engage in peer-to-peer interaction in "collaborative knowledge cultures" (University of Illinois, 2011) that are the hallmark of 21st Century Learning in a global society. Peer-to-peer collaboration and the academic discussions surrounding the collaboration are especially helpful for our English Language Learners who are building their vocabulary and literacy competencies.

At their school sites, teachers will receive regular visits from professional developers who will provide in-school and in-class support including lesson and unit planning, materials management and implementation. Each school will identify a team of teachers made up of third through fifth grade general education, ELA, math and technology/library specialists and, in X369 Young Leaders school, ELL and SPED specialists. Through immersing students in hands-on activities and technology-rich instruction, the teachers will improve their own technical skills and refine both the curriculum and methodology through *Active Learning Through Tech (ALTT)*. Developing informational pieces, video casts, blogs and other communication and information sharing tools support both teachers and students to engage in 21st century literacy practices. Goals for the program include improved student achievement in grades six through eight in ELA and math (including in Common Core standards) through increased teacher use of technology and blended learning approaches in instruction and collaborative projects across classrooms.