

Proposal Abstract

Nassau BOCES, in collaboration with two public school districts and one non-public school, will implement a Learning Technology initiative focused on strengthening English Language Arts skills for all students, with particular emphasis on special education students and English Language Learners enrolled in the targeted districts. The project will directly impact 15 teachers annually (five teams of three teachers each which include one Library Media specialist, one English as a New Language teacher and one general education/ELA teacher) and potentially impact approximately 2,000 students in three schools. Hempstead UFSD is considered a Priority district in which all schools are either Priority or Focus Schools. Freeport UFSD, while not on the Priority or Focus lists, is similar to Hempstead UFSD in economic and demographic composition. Both districts have a significant population of English Language Learners. Freeport UFSD has similar needs to Hempstead UFSD. Woodward Children's Center, located in Freeport, provides services to children with special needs. In both districts, the English Language Arts performance is well below the statewide average.

Through the initiative, participating teachers will learn to utilize technology in order to develop digital student portfolios and a portfolio rubric. This will be used to improve student instruction based on information provided by the students' performance on specific benchmark assessments in each portfolio. The project will be aligned with ELA Common Core Standards and will provide teachers with additional technology-based assessment tools that can evaluate the impact of creative instructional practices on student learning.

A previous Learning Technology grant brought sound enhancement systems and document cameras to these districts to improve student engagement and strengthen teachers' capacity to deliver technology based instruction. In this initiative, Nassau BOCES will build upon that foundation, using notebook computer technology to develop digital student portfolios and rubrics that will assess student growth as teachers continue to expand the use of technology in the classroom and library.