



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Building Blocks Grant?

- The Building Blocks Project is a comprehensive study measuring the effect of a technology infused, data driven process to improve student performance in reading language arts.
- The target for the study is grades 1-8 English Language Arts with priority to School Improvement 1 campuses.

2. Who wrote the grant?

- 3 Elementary Teachers and 3 Middle School teachers plus administrators
- Melinda Jackson Shellae Montoya Lesa Dodd
Lalo Torres Sylvia Reyes Denise King
Kenda Grimm Maria Lucero Diana Brown
Amy Deutsch

3. Where does the money come from?

- Enhanced Education Through Technology (EETT) ARRA Federal funding
- PED Research Project

4. Who will participate in the project?

- Dexter Language Arts teachers and students in Grades 5 through 8

5. Why are only 5th through 8th grade Language Arts teachers and classes involved?

- RFP limited participation - Designated 1st through 8th grades
- 1st through 4th grade students and teachers participating in Zune Project, leaving the 5th grade students and teachers available to participate in order to provide cross school dialogue. (Elementary to Middle School)

6. Will others be able to participate in future?

- Yes, students and teachers in grades 1 through 8 will be participating in the short cycle assessment (YPP) introduced to us in the Building Blocks Project.
- Plans are being made to continue using YPP and hopefully expand with a short cycle assessment (when available) for high school students and teachers in the future.
- NETS will be implemented gradually throughout the grade levels.



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- MIMIOs and projectors are being deployed district wide.
- New district wide Library Management software is being implemented to help improve student research skills.

7. What is NETS?

- NETS stands for National Education Technology Standards
 - There are Standards for Teachers and Administrators
 - There are Standards for Students

8. What kind of professional development will we receive?

- Each teacher and administrator is entitled to 10 coaching sessions. Each session with the teacher is 1 hour in length and each session with the administrator will be 30 minutes in length. The Coach visits will be setup to span 2-3 consecutive days so that all of educators will receive 1 visit during 1 trip. The time between visits must be at least two weeks but can be longer if needed.

9. Will we be required to participate in this grant?

- All 5th grade teachers are required to participate
- Each Language Arts teacher in 6, 7, and 8th grades are required to participate.
- The Elementary and Middle School Principals are required to participate.

10. Will classroom performance be evaluated?

- Part of the evaluation process will involve collecting data provided by YPP assessments to determine if instruction by means of 21st Century Skills improves student performance. This will be done with classroom data.

11. What are the goals of the grant?



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- By 2012, the Dexter Comprehensive Building Block Project's primary goal is to have our targeted student cohort group attain 80% proficiency in New Mexico Language Arts standards measured by YPP short cycle assessments which integrate technology tools and employ differentiated instructional strategies.

12. How will progress be measured?

- YPP will be administered to our targeted group once every one to two weeks throughout the year to measure student progress.

13. What is the duration of this grant?

- The coaching will be concluded by Marc, 2011 just prior to the summative testing window.
- April 2011 through June 2011
 - Schedule and conduct focus groups
 - Conduct classroom observations and summarize findings
 - Administer post surveys to parents, teachers, students and principals and summarize finding
 - Review teacher portfolios
 - Collect 2011 test scores; analyze 2010 and 2011 test scores
 - Prepare final report

14. What value is this project to me?

- Technology devices are tools only; the teacher as facilitator is still the number one factor in student learning. A key component in the Dexter Building Blocks Research Project is professional development.

15. Where will the professional development take place?

- Professional development, in the form of coaching and modeling by professionals from CTB/McGraw Hill, will take place in the classroom.

16. Will we be pulled from the classroom?



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- All professional development is centered in the classroom.

17. What is the roll of the coaches?

- The coach roll is to assist our professional, highly qualified teachers by helping use district technology tools in classroom instruction.

18. How often will a coach be in my classroom?

- Each teacher and administrator is entitled to 10 coaching sessions. Each session with the teacher is 1 hour in length and each session with the administrator will be 30 minutes in length. The Coach visits will be setup to span 2-3 consecutive days so that all of educators will receive 1 visit during 1 trip. The time between visits must be at least two weeks but can be longer if needed.

19. What is 21st Century Skills Assessment?

- Assesses the implementation of technology-enhanced teaching methods in alignment with standards [NM Content Standards and Benchmarks and National Educational Technology Standards for students (NETS)], which support 21st century learning and prepare students to meet NCLB technology literacy requirements.

20. When will the professional development take place?

- The coaching visits will start in September, after teachers have accumulated 4 weeks of YPP data from students and teachers have completed the Teacher Self-Appraisals.

21. What is the duration of this project?

- One School Year, to be completed by May of 2011.

22. Why are we being required to use MIMIOs?

- These interactive tools accommodate different learning styles and provide students with limited motor skills an accessible, creative outlet. ELL students with limited language skills can distinguish and respond to key points more easily. For teachers and students, research indicates the use of color captures participants'



Frequently Asked Questions

attention more effectively, can emphasize major learning points, and enables multimedia resources and internet to be displayed to an entire class.

23. Why should we be concerned about National Technology Standards?

- The Federal Department of Education requires that all students be technologically proficient in eighth grade by 2012.

24. Why can't we have a laptop cart for each classroom?

- The Building Blocks budget limited the number of laptops that could be purchased.

25. How does this fit in with district goals?

The District Technology Plan for 2010-2013

- Technology Literacy Goal: Student engagement in the learning process increases with technology.
 - Learning is differentiated and active.
 - Learning is constructed and inquiry based.
 - Learning is collaborative and communicative.
 - Learning is available 24/7, and students are active contributors to the learning environment.
- Technology Integration Goal: Teachers engage technology in the teaching and learning cycle.
 - Instruction is collaborative and differentiated.
 - Instruction is driven by data.
 - Instruction is supported by relevant professional development.
 - Digital learning resources support instruction.
- Technology Integration Goal: The Community is connected with learning.
 - District, school, and student data is shared.
 - Procedures, policies and information are shared.



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- The Community is involved in technology planning.