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Education Technology Programs, Title II, Part D of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

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Summary

The Enhancing Education Through Technology Act of 2001 (Title II, Part D of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA]) establishes the EdTech grant program. The purpose of EdTech is to improve student academic achievement by utilizing technology in schools. This report describes the EdTech program, including the allocation of grant funds to state and local education agencies; provides annual appropriations data for the program; and discusses the applicability of child Internet protection to EdTech grantees. In addition, Title II, Part D includes the Ready-to-Learn Television program, which is also described in this report. This report will be updated as warranted.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA) of 2001 (P.L. 107-110) reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. Title II, Part D of the reauthorized ESEA consists of the following four subparts: State and Local Technology Grants; National Technology Activities; Ready-to-Learn Television; and Child Internet Safety. In this report, all of the subparts except Ready-to-Learn Television (RTLTV) are referenced as “EdTech.”

EdTech resulted from the consolidation of two previous technology programs — the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund and the Technology Innovation Challenge Grant. Both of the aforementioned programs were previously authorized as components of Title III, Part A of the ESEA. Similar to its predecessors, the primary goal of EdTech is to improve student academic achievement by utilizing technology in schools.

This report provides an overview of Title II, Part D of the ESEA. It also includes a description of the EdTech program, including program guidelines, appropriations, and child Internet safety information. In addition to EdTech, the report examines the RTLTL program currently administered by the Public Broadcasting Service.

EdTech

The EdTech program is intended to assist elementary and secondary schools with improving student academic achievement by utilizing technology. EdTech encourages state and local education agencies to establish partnerships with private and public agencies that focus on technology, to develop adequate infrastructure to support technology usage in the classroom, and also to utilize technology to encourage parental participation. By utilizing research-based instructional methods, EdTech also aims to have every child become technologically literate by the time they finish the 8th grade.

EdTech State Grants

EdTech provides formula grants to state education agencies (SEAs) that in turn distribute them to local education agencies (LEAs) and other eligible entities. The ESEA, Title II, Part D mandates that 98% of the appropriated amount for a given year be made available to the states. The remaining 2% is allotted for the Secretary of Education to conduct various national technology activities (described separately below). The 98% is to be distributed as follows:

- three-fourths of 1% for the Secretary of Interior to be distributed among schools overseen or funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs;
- one-half of 1% to the outlying areas;¹
- any additional funds necessary for continuing technology grant awards made prior to the enactment of the NCLBA; and
- remaining amounts to SEAs by formula.

Each eligible SEA receives an amount proportional to the amount it receives for Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act² for such year. For example, if state “X” received 4% of the total allotment available for all states for Title I, Part A of the ESEA, state “X” would receive 4% of the amount being distributed by formula for the EdTech grant for the same year. To ensure that all states receive adequate funding to carry out a technology plan, no state will receive less than one-half of 1% of the total amount allocated by formula to all states. Additionally, if a state does not apply for an EdTech grant or does not utilize its entire grant, the Secretary can redistribute the monies among other applicants.

¹ Department of Education program guidelines for EdTech define the outlying areas as the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

² Title I, Part A of the ESEA provides formula grants through SEAs to LEAs for use in elementary and secondary schools that serve relatively high numbers or percentages of poor children to enable the LEAs to prepare the students to meet the state’s academic standards.

Application. To receive an EdTech grant, SEAs can submit a program-specific application or a consolidated state plan covering multiple state-administered formula grant programs under the ESEA, including Title II, Part D. Either way the application must include a statewide, long-range education technology plan that addresses the technology needs of the LEAs in the state. In addition, the state technology plan must also include items such as proposed strategies for increasing technology literacy among students and teachers; a description of how the state will encourage technologically literate teachers to remain in urban and rural LEAs; how the state will increase access to technology in high-need LEAs;³ the accountability process; and measures that the state intends to use to measure the efficacy of the projects funded by the subgrant.

Activities. The state may not use more than 5% of the EdTech grant to carry out specific authorized activities. Authorized programmatic activities include, but are not limited to:

- developing performance measurement systems to measure the efficacy of the programs funded under the subgrant;
- assisting recipients with developing and sustaining professional development; and
- collaborating with other SEAs to provide distance-learning opportunities.

SEAs are also required to provide technical assistance to high-need LEAs that demonstrate to the SEA the greatest need for assistance in completing an application for the EdTech grant.

EdTech Local Subgrants

Formula and Competitive Grants. SEAs award 50% of the grants in the form of formula subgrants to all eligible LEAs⁴ that submit an application for authorized activities. Each LEA shall receive the same proportion from the 50% that it received under Title I, Part A for the same year. The remaining amounts of the EdTech money are to be awarded competitively to high-need districts or local partnerships⁵ through a state-determined, competitive process.

³ A “high-need” local education agency is defined as: (1) an LEA with the highest numbers or percentages of children from families with incomes below the poverty line, and that (2) operates one or more schools identified under Section 1116 of the ESEA — schools in need of academic improvement — or has a substantial need for assistance in acquiring and using technology.

⁴ An “eligible” LEA is a high-need LEA that is a current recipient of funds under Title I, Part A of the ESEA. Over 90% of all LEAs receive Title I-A grants.

⁵ A local partnership includes at least one high-need LEA, and at least one of the following: an LEA that can demonstrate that teachers in schools served by the LEA are effectively integrating technology and proven teaching practices into classroom instruction; an institution of higher education that is not identified by the state as low-performing and that is in compliance with the reporting requirements for its teacher education program as mandated by Section 207(f) of the Higher Education Act of 1965; a for-profit business or organization that develops, designs, or manufactures technology products or services, or that has substantial expertise in the application of technology in instruction; or a public or private nonprofit organization with demonstrated experience in the application of technology in instruction.

Prior to distributing competitive grants, the SEA must establish the minimum amount of each grant to ensure that the grant amount will be effective to administer the proposed technology plan. Second, the SEA must determine which LEAs would have received a **formula** grant that was not of sufficient size to be effective, and give them priority in the competition. Finally, the SEA must ensure an equitable distribution of the **competitive** subgrants between rural and urban areas according to the need demonstrated by the schools within the LEA.

Application. Eligible LEAs and local partnerships are eligible to apply for subgrants from their SEA to fund technology programs that assist in improving students' academic performance and that help all students attain technological literacy. The technology application must include the entities' goals for using advanced technology for both students and teachers, and it must clearly state how the EdTech funds will be used to improve student academic achievement. Among other things, the application should also include a description of how the funds will be used to ensure:

- increased access for students in general, and specifically for students in high-need and high-poverty schools;
- teachers are prepared to integrate technology into the curriculum; and
- teachers receive ongoing and sustained professional development.

Activities. All recipients — formula and competitive grant — must use at least 25% of the funds received for continual and effective professional development. However, if a recipient can demonstrate to the SEA that it provides adequate professional development, the 25% requirement can be waived. The following is a select list of other authorized activities:

- establishment and maintenance of public-private partnerships that increase technology access for schools and students, especially those in high-need areas;
- acquisition of proven and effective technology courses that are designed to help students meet state academic standards;
- development or expansion of Internet and other technology efforts to connect schools and teachers with parents and students; and
- utilization of technology for data gathering and measurement.

National Technology Activities

The Secretary of Education is required to conduct a long-term, independent study, using scientifically based research, to ascertain the conditions and practices under which technology is effective in increasing student academic achievement. Additionally, the study should include the conditions and practices that increase teachers' ability to integrate technology into the classroom and curriculum. The independent study is one of the authorized activities that can be funded by the 2% of the EdTech grant reserved by the Secretary of Education to carry out national technology activities. A final report with results from the study is to be submitted to Congress no later than April 6, 2006.

The Secretary is also required to publish a long-range technology plan that, among other things, discusses how he or she intends to promote:

- technology usage to increase academic achievement;
- use of technology to assist with systemic state reform; and
- increased access to technology for teaching and learning.

The Secretary must also work with other federal agencies to coordinate joint activities and promote technology use in schools.

Internet Safety

Title II, Part D extends legal requirements enacted for most schools under the Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA) of 2001 (P.L. 106-554) to schools receiving EdTech grants. CIPA requires that schools must use technology protection measures on computers that can access the Internet to filter or block access to material that is considered unsuitable. Specifically, for children under 17 years of age, the technology protection measures must protect against access to visual depictions that are obscene, contain child pornography, or are harmful to minors. For adults, the measures must protect against access to visual depictions that are obscene or contain child pornography. The technology protection measure may be disabled by authorized persons to enable access for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.⁶

Appropriations

EdTech received \$272 million in FY2006. For FY2006, the Administration requested no funding for the EdTech program. According to the Department of Education's FY2006 budget request, the Administration seeks to eliminate certain categorical programs that have a narrow or limited effect. Furthermore, they maintain that Internet access in schools has increased and that the ratio of students per instructional computer with Internet access has declined.⁷

As shown in **Table 1**, the annual appropriations for the program have decreased over the past five years.

Table 1. EdTech State Grants: Appropriations, FY2002-FY2006

Fiscal year	Appropriation (\$000s)
2002	\$700

⁶ For a discussion of federal legislation regarding child Internet protection see CRS Report RS20036, *Internet-Protecting Children from Unsuitable Material and Sexual Predators: Overview and Pending Legislation*, by (name redacted).

⁷ U.S. Department of Education. *Fiscal Year 2006 Justifications of Appropriation Estimates to the Congress* (Washington: GPO, 2005), vol. 1, p. C-37.

Fiscal year	Appropriation (\$000s)
2003	\$696
2004	\$692
2005*	\$496
2006	\$272

Source: U.S. Department of Education, *FY2006 Justifications of Appropriation Estimates to the Congress*, vol. 1, p. C-36.

* The reduced appropriation is partially attributed to the completion of continuation grants for one of EdTech's predecessors — the Technology Innovation Challenge Fund.

Ready-to-Learn Television

Under the Ready-to-Learn Television (RTLTV) program, a grant is awarded exclusively to public telecommunications entities, to develop and distribute educational video for preschool- and elementary school-aged children and their parents, in an effort to increase student academic achievement. To be eligible to receive the grant, the telecommunications provider, among other things, must have a demonstrated ability to develop instructional programming that addresses the needs of disadvantaged preschool- and elementary school-aged children, and the ability to develop programs that address the needs of the local audience.

The current recipients of the RTLTV grant are the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), with the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) and WTTW-Channel 11 in Chicago. CPB and PBS jointly and WTTW each received a programming grant, and CPB and PBS also received a grant for outreach services. Both grants are for five years and will expire in 2010. In the last five years RTLTV funding has grown from \$22 million in FY2002 to \$24.2 million in 2006.⁸

In previous years the RTLTV grant has been used to develop numerous television programs to promote academic achievement among younger school-aged children. One of the shows created with the RTLTV grant, *Dragon Tales*, is a daily animated preschool show that teaches children ages 2-5 necessary life skills such as problem solving and cooperation with others. *Postcards from Buster* uses both live action and animation to show the many cultures in America and to support language learning in children. PBS continues to support traditional programs such as *Sesame Street* with RTLTV grant funds.⁹

⁸ Department of Education, *Fiscal Year 2006 Justifications of Appropriation Estimates to the Congress*, vol. 1, p. E-76.

⁹ For additional information about the Ready-to-Learn Television program, see [<http://www.pbskids.org/readytolearn/>].

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