

the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, that is, interventions to help students meet challenging State academic content standards and student academic achievement standards and to close the achievement gap between low-income and minority students and their peers. To identify and select an intervention for evaluation applicants might consider, for example:

(a) Innovative distance learning strategies that deliver, particularly to high-need student populations, specialized or rigorous academic courses and curricula through the use of advanced technologies, including video conferencing and virtual instruction strategies.

(b) Professional development programs to enable teachers to integrate advanced technologies, including emerging technologies, into curricula and instruction in order to prepare students to meet challenging State academic content and academic achievement standards.

(c) Programs that use technology to connect schools and teachers with parents and students in order to promote meaningful parental involvement; foster increased communication (about curricula, assignments, and assessments) between students, parents, and teachers; and assist parents to understand the technology being applied in their child's education, so that parents are able to reinforce at home the instruction that their child receives at school.

(d) Classroom-based courses and curricula that include integration of technology and are designed to help students meet challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards.

(e) Programs that use technology to help teachers meet the high standards of teacher quality defined in ESEA.

(f) Programs that use technology to meet the educational needs of students in rural areas.

Examples of evaluation activities that may be funded include, but are not limited to:

(a) Studies that compare the achievement of students who take high school virtual courses with the achievement of students who take the same courses in regular classrooms in order to determine whether the virtual courses result in the same or different levels of student achievement as courses taught in the regular classroom;

(b) Studies to determine the relative effectiveness of various locally adopted, technology-enhanced instructional programs in increasing student achievement. These studies might compare the academic achievement of

students in classrooms or schools where one instructional program or approach is being used with the academic achievement of students in classrooms or schools where another technology-enhanced instructional program or approach is being used; or

(c) Studies to determine the impact on student achievement of technology-enhanced instruction in specific academic content areas versus academic content area instruction without the use of technology.

Applicants, in developing their proposals, should detail:

1. The evaluation approach they propose to take, including the methods, practices, and analyses for: (a) Selecting the intervention, population, and problem for study; (b) choosing the sample; and (c) collecting and analyzing data.

2. Provisions for assessing the efficacy of the evaluation approach and making refinements as warranted.

3. Plans for documenting project activities and disseminating to other States and school districts the knowledge gained over the course of the grant about how and under what conditions similar evaluations can be replicated. Proposed strategies should include, but not be limited to, the use of the Internet and other emerging technologies and venues. At a minimum, dissemination strategies should include the establishment and maintenance of a project Website that will host continually updated information about: (a) The technology intervention being evaluated; (b) the evaluation methods, practices, and analyses carried out, including the data collection plans and instruments used; (c) any modifications that occurred during the implementation of the project along with the rationale for those modifications; (d) the processes and conditions necessary for other States and school districts to replicate the approach; and (e) the evaluation results and other project findings.

Priority

This competition focuses on projects designed to meet the following priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), applications will receive up to 20 additional points depending on how well they meet the priority. These points are in addition to any points the application earns under the selection criteria.

Competitive Preference Priority

The project is designed to determine whether the program implemented produces meaningful effects on student achievement or teacher performance

through a rigorous evaluation.

Evaluations using an experimental design are the strongest for determining program effectiveness. Thus, the project preferably uses an experimental design. An evaluation using an experimental design is one where subjects (students, teachers, classrooms, or schools) are randomly assigned to receive the program being evaluated or to be in a control group that does not receive the program. Evaluations using an experimental design will receive up to 20 points.

If random assignment is not feasible, the project may employ a quasi-experimental design with carefully matched comparison conditions. This alternative design attempts to approximate a randomly assigned control group by matching program participants (students, teachers, classrooms or schools) with non-participants possessing similar pre-program characteristics. Evaluations of this type will receive up to 10 points.

Proposed evaluations that use neither experimental designs with random assignment or quasi-experimental designs using a matched comparison group will receive 0 points under the competitive preference priority.

Data from reliable and valid measures of the intervention that the program intends to implement and of the outcomes that the program intends to effect should be collected before and after participation in the program or the comparison condition.

Points awarded under this priority will be determined by the quality of the proposed evaluation. In determining the quality of the evaluation, we will consider the extent to which the applicant presents a feasible, credible plan that includes: The type of design to be used (random assignment or matched comparison); outcomes to be measured; a discussion of how students, teachers, classrooms, or schools will be assigned to the program or matched for comparison with other students, teachers, classrooms, or schools; and a proposed evaluator, preferably independent, with the necessary background and technical expertise to carry out the proposed evaluation.

Selection Criteria

We will use the following selection criteria to evaluate applications for new grants under this program.

The maximum score for all of these criteria is 100 points.

The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses.

(a) *Significance* (20 points). In determining the significance of the