The Elimination of EETT: Enhancing Education Through Technology

Mark Szymanski
Pacific University

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The Elimination of EETT: Enhancing Education Through Technology

By Mark Szymanski <marks@pacificu.edu>

When President Bush submitted his 2006 budget (1), educators who pay attention to federal funding programs noticed something missing—the Enhancing Education Through Technology Program (EETT). What followed was a public denunciation of EETT’s elimination and predictions of educational technology failure from educational technology leaders. In contrast, Todd Jones, a senior Department of Education advisor, announced that states would have to fill the funding gap, and predicted they would be able to do so. Some people disagree.

What is The Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) Program?

The EETT falls under Title II-D of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). EETT is a program designed to fund school’s ability to address core teaching and learning needs through technology tools, including:

• access to courses online otherwise not available to rural and urban students,
• equipping teachers to take advantage of new and emerging technology tools,
• providing students with the tools to compete in a highly competitive global employment market,
• continual assessment of student progress through computer-based testing, and
• desegregation and reporting of student adequate yearly progress (AYP) data.

States distribute funds to districts with 50% allocated by poverty-weighted formula and 50% by competition. EETT gives schools broad discretion to spend their money on a wide range of technology acquisition, enrichment and integration purposes with at least 25% required for professional development (2).

This characterization of EETT makes it sound irreplaceable. Educational technology leaders seem...
to think so.

As a result of EETT’s proposed elimination, Bob Moore, Chairman of the Board of the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) a non-profit organization whose mission is to support educational technology initiatives and leadership stated. “Last month, the Department of Education concluded in its National Education Technology Plan that: ‘Technology ignites opportunities for learning, engages today’s students as active learners and participants in decision-making on their own educational futures, and prepares our nation for the demands of a global society in the 21st Century.’ Today, the Administration has moved to zero-out the central source of education technology funding. This plainly shows that the Administration is unwilling to put their money where the policy is.” (3)

Anita Givens, Chair of the Board of the State Educational Technology Directors Association (STEDA) spoke out and stated that “This is not a technology issue, this is an education issue. In most states, EETT is the only source of federal funding to develop the infrastructure and data systems needed to implement NCLB accountability goals and report on AYP requirements. For 25 percent of states, the federal EETT Grant is the sole source of funding to support technology in schools. These funds allow schools to build a productive workforce to compete in the global economy and offer an opportunity to improve Teacher Quality through distance learning programs. These cuts will affect all of our nation’s schools and students,” (4)

Consequently, how will these core teaching and learning needs be met if EETT is eliminated? And, will schools suffer as much as educational technology leaders predict? These are difficult questions to answer right now.

First, it’s important to understand that the 2006 budget is a proposed budget that must be approved by Congress. It represents the priorities of one branch of the federal government and is in essence a starting point for negotiations between factions within Congress. From the Bush Administration it reflects a position to shift funding burdens to states for some programs to states. It’s unclear whether states will be able to fill in the funding gaps, and therefore it’s impossible to predict the effects on children.

Thus, it’s imperative for educational leaders to speak out and inform their congressional representatives of the specific effects that the elimination of EETT will have on their states and at the end of the line, their children.

Because 50% of EETT funds are allocated using a poverty weighted formula, schools with a disproportionately high percentage of children living in poverty will suffer unless they can fill the gap with Title I money. This is the position of the Bush Administration.

It’s a dangerous position to take, hoping that states will somehow find money to fund the programs that are slated to be eliminated. Educational technology leaders consider a risk they are unwilling to take.
2 THOUGHTS ON “THE ELIMINATION OF EETT: ENHANCING EDUCATION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY”

Grisel Cuadros
on January 30, 2014 at 6:15 PM said:

I’m very happy to read this. This is the kind of manual that needs to be given and not the accidental misinformation that is at the other blogs. Appreciate your sharing this best doc.

Cork board ideas
on February 5, 2014 at 2:35 PM said:

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