

Chapter 18

How Do We Close the Gap between Technology Innovation and Available Funding?

Christian McGlory
School Teacher, USA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Roosevelt School District, a small urban elementary school district, is trying to find a way to purchase new digital technology for campuses. The bases of this case study are to develop a plan for how the district can pay for new technology.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Today, in the United States approximately \$520.2 billion dollars of federal money is filtered directly to the states. That may seem like a huge amount of money but when all states and districts are competing for the same pot of money, it really is not.

Where does all the money go? The cost of educating children in America has become very expensive. Costly government programs initiated by the federal government make it difficult for school districts to provide what students and teachers require. Some government sponsored programs include: “No Child Left Behind”, Title I programs, standardized testing, bilingual education, nutrition programs, early childhood programs, school vouchers, dropout prevention, and teen pregnancy

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programs. When all the bills are paid, there is just not enough money to go around. Therefore a huge majority of the burden of the cost of educating students has now fallen on the states. The school district receives revenue from three different sources: federal, state and local taxes.

THE CASE

Roosevelt School District is a small urban elementary school district facing a problem. The district is trying to find a way to purchase new digital technology for its campuses. Over the past two years the teachers in the district have been attending workshops, reading articles, and receiving information in the news about how the latest software innovations and digital media can have a direct impact on students' academic success.

And here is where the journey begins. The school district needs to purchase laptops for teachers, acquire smart boards, color printers, scanners, document cameras, and computer workstations for classrooms. As a result, teachers created a "technology wish list" and submitted it to school district administrators for review.

The teachers are excited about the possibility of purchasing these technology tools. Teachers understand that in order for students to be successful in the real world, learning how to use new technology is required. Today however, financial problems and the need to reduce spending in school districts has narrowed teacher concerns to purchasing the bare essentials. What is the best way for a relatively small urban school district to fund the purchase of new digital technology? Let's investigate this issue.

According to the 2010-2011 state report, 34.9% of Roosevelt School District's population is economically disadvantaged. Twenty-four percent of the population is Hispanic, and 15.8% of the population is labeled as Limited English Proficient students. As the economy continues to be uncertain, a number of houses have been foreclosed in the area serviced by the district. As a result, the district anticipates the number of economically disadvantage, Hispanic, and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students to continue to grow in the year 2012-2013 school year.

The bases of this case study are to develop a plan for how the district can pay for new technology. The teachers first decide to put an action plan committee together to look for sources of money to pay for the needed technology. The committee will meet bi-weekly and will be made up of administrators, teachers, parents, and high school students.

The committee's first order of business will be to look at all possible grants and monies for which the district could be eligible. The committee will also consider any award programs that local companies or corporations may be sponsoring.

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