

Proposal Abstract

Temple Hill Academy is a school under Superintendent Receivership. 61% of our students are of Hispanic or Latino background. Over 29% of our students are English Language Learners (ELLs) and need support developing not only basic literacy skills, but also higher level critical thinking and analysis skills, which are key to reading and expository writing and a hallmark of science. We are partnering with Sacred Heart School, Nora Cronin Presentation Academy, San Miguel Academy and Bishop Dunn Memorial School, all non-public schools located in our District that share our student population and our challenges. Our proposed program, Building Environmental Sustainability Together (BEST) will focus on enhancing cross-disciplinary instruction in ELA, Science and Mathematics through the integration of technology and teacher professional development.

BEST will engage students in deep and meaningful explorations into the science of environmental sustainability. Temple Hill Academy has a greenhouse inside the school building. The greenhouse includes a garden as an instructional space where students will be able to learn and explore everything related to sustainable gardening. This resource will provide a data center and laboratory setting for technology enhanced scientific inquiry for both partnering schools where nonpublic schools may periodically bring students, both during and after school, to engage in research, data collection, and collaborative work. Nonpublic schools will also identify sites on or near its own school grounds or during field trips for data collection.

Using a project-based and student centered approach, the program will provide models of effective technology integration at professional development training sessions conducted at the NECSD Central Office, at Temple Hill Academy or at one of the nonpublic schools. Each school will identify a team of teachers made up of third, fourth and fifth grade teachers, literacy and math teachers or support specialists and science and technology specialists. Participants will experience lessons and activities as if they were students in the classroom during targeted professional development sessions. Using digital technologies, teachers of literacy, math and science will improve their own technical skills and refine both curriculum and methodology. At their school sites, teachers will receive regular visits from Central Office, Professional Learning providers and other technology professional developers who will provide in-class support including lesson and unit planning, hardware management, software management, instructional delivery and implementation. The program will also include training in Web 2.0 technologies. Students in the two participating schools will share their projects using these online collaboration tools. The Library or Media Centers at each partnering school will provide program support through the use of Internet based research.

Goals for the project include improved student achievement in grades three through five in ELA, mathematics and science as well as increased teacher use of technology in the classroom and enhanced use of collaboration among classrooms.