

The Colorado Technology Literacy Challenge Fund request for proposals provided detailed requirements for each section. The final grant proposal was over forty pages long. As a sample of my writing, this is the project narrative, the justification for need.

### **Project Narrative: Basic Skills Remediation Project**

#### **Problem Statement/Needs Assessment:**

Craig Intermediate School (CIS) needs software that will enable us to individualize remediation of basic skills more effectively, and the hardware to support it. We need software and training that will increase teacher use of technology. We need to increase community involvement by sharing this technology with adult learners.

According to district statistics from 12/17/98 (appendix F), the current CIS enrollment of 374 students is due to an unusually small fifth grade class and enrollment can be expected to return to its norm of about 400 in the coming years. There are four elementary schools whose students funnel into Craig Intermediate School for grades five and six. These elementary schools have unique teaching programs, which leads to some variation in basis of knowledge in the general student population. CSAP results on the Fourth Grade Reading and Writing Tests in 1997 and 1998, the tests taken by our current fifth and sixth graders, are reported in Appendix G. Considering an Unsatisfactory or Partially Proficient score to indicate need for remediation, our sixth graders entered CIS with 35% needing remediation in reading and 75% needing remediation in writing. Our fifth graders entered CIS with 40% needing remediation in reading and 63% needing remediation in writing. These students are coming into our building 15-55% below the goal of 80% Proficiency or better.

We also have students who move into the district from other districts, many of whom have been in multiple schools, with subsequent gaps in knowledge. Twenty-seven such students began the 98-99 school year at CIS, and twelve more have started mid-year as of January 5, 1999. That's almost a fifth of our student body. We also have a steadily increasing population of ESL students. In the last five years, district numbers have increased from five or six students to about forty-five. These students tend to migrate back and forth from Mexico, which leads to gaps in learning in addition to language issues. We have fifteen ESL students in fifth and sixth grade this year. We currently have forty-eight students who are classified as needing Special Education and forty-five receiving Title One services. All of these special needs students, 24% of the student body, have deficits in one or more areas of basic skills.

Currently, general classroom teachers try to provide remediation, but the time involved in diagnosis of specific problems and individualizing work is prohibitive, so often only the most obvious problems can be addressed. There is a tutorial room for general education students who need extra help, but that is set up primarily to help them with current work, not to do remediation. We have one

part-time teacher's aide working with ESL students from various backgrounds, some of whom also have IEP's due to processing problems. We currently have two Special Education teachers who are responsible for the needs of all levels of IEP students. Since severe needs must be given priority, time available to assist students with milder problems is limited. We have one Title One teacher.

Our special needs students need more individualized, intensive instruction than can be effectively provided with the current staff and facilities. Our general education students need to be screened effectively for gaps in their basic skills and remediation provided as needed. Software that provides pre- and post tests of various strands of learning in each of the basic skills areas, as well as providing students with work that is designed to fulfill their specific needs, would fill this need. Interviews with personnel at schools that have been using this type of software indicate it is extremely effective, with students gaining as much as three grade levels per year in basic math skills in one school and Iowa Basics test scores jumping 20 points the first year this programming was used in another school (Appendix H).

We need the hardware to support this software. As shown in our *School Technology and Readiness Self-Diagnostic Tool* (Appendix A), we currently have a student-to multi-media computer ratio of between 50:1 and 17:1. The exact ratio is difficult to assess, because, while the computers in each classroom are supposed to be available for student as well as teacher use, teacher use has been mandated for attendance, grades, and communication purposes. This, in addition to other teacher uses, in classrooms of 25-30 students, severely limits actual student use. The hardware requested in this proposal will bring this ratio into a more favorable, though not yet ideal, balance. Also, in order to support much of this software effectively, we need more advanced computers. We are requesting enough computers to set up a second computer lab devoted primarily to screening and remediation, plus additional computers for Special Education, ESL, and the tutorial room. Per our director of maintenance, our building is currently "maxed out" electrically, and installation of these computers will necessitate additional electrical service installation, as well as the cost of wiring the computers themselves. It will also require the purchase of additional tables and chairs.

We also need to increase our teachers' use of technology. As shown in our *School Technology and Readiness Self-Diagnostic Tool* (Appendix A), we are low-tech in the areas of Content and Professional Development. While each of our classrooms is equipped with one Power Mac, these are used for attendance, grades, IEP's, and other teacher uses. This limits time available for individual students, as does the extent of the particular teacher's familiarity with technology. We also have a computer lab with twenty-six computers for students and one for teachers. Teachers sign up for time in the lab each month. The first quarter is largely consumed by keyboarding classes. Thereafter, use varies according to the individual teacher's familiarity with the technology. A few use it effectively for multimedia and/or internet projects; some use it primarily for *Oregon* and *Amazon Trail* projects, *Number Muncher* and similar drills, or as a reward day; some do not use it

beyond the required keyboarding. The room is consistently in use, with little availability for a remediation program, but it should be noted that it is used by the same handful of the teachers the majority of that time.

Those teachers who are still computer shy need software that is teacher-friendly, with training on how to use it and support readily available in the building. The type of software at which we are looking for this project is easy to use, it will decrease the time teachers spend on diagnosis of individual needs and individualization of work, it will provide them with various teaching aides to make their teaching time more effective, and it will provide them with various reports for record-keeping and accountability with minimal time required. It will make teaching easier and more rewarding, as students experience less frustration and greater gains.

Our district has two computer specialists on salary district-wide. One of them deals primarily with hardware and installation and the other deals primarily with applications. They are in high demand across the district. While they will participate in the initial phases of instruction, this proposal includes hiring a Project Director to support new users for the first two years of this program. This person should be a teacher with a background in remedial or special education who is comfortable with computers, so that this software will be utilized to its maximum potential. The Project Director also needs to have the skills required to organize this project and document its effectiveness, as well as the ability to work with other teachers and guide them in learning how to use the software and the ability to work well with the Technicians who will also provide support. The Project Director will organize and assist in the initial training for the teachers (with the software specialist), will organize and supervise lab use as per the time line, will be responsible for adherence to the time line and implementation of this project, and will be responsible for documentation of progress and reports to CDE. By having one person hired as Project Director throughout the first two years of this project, no one will be over-burdened by additional responsibilities and support will be consistently available for teachers when they need it.

This will, we hope, increase the comfort level of those teachers who are currently making minimal use of technology and increase their interest in furthering their use of technology in the classroom. If their interest does increase, they should have more time to devote to learning new skills and implementing them in the classroom, because the program is designed to increase effective teaching time and decrease record-keeping time. As part of *The Moffat County School District Long Range Technology Plan* (Appendix E), our computer specialists and others are providing various trainings throughout the year, we are developing a wide range of applications available to teachers, and we have computers with internet access in each classroom, as well as our existing lab. So, if this project is successful in building teachers' confidence and interest in technology, they will have a variety of choices.

The software at which we have been looking for our remediation project comes in bundles that

are far more cost-efficient than purchasing parts of it separately. The full package includes programs designed to work on reading, language arts, and mathematics skills at levels K-as; ESL and Bilingual programs; and School-to-Work Programs that include GED preparation. We need the ESL programs to support the work of our ESL Aide; we need K-6 levels to work with IEP students and students at risk due to gaps in their learning. That accounts for about two-thirds of the full package. The other third could be effectively opened to community use, which would be a gesture of goodwill in response to the community's support of the school district's mill levy request in 1997. We have made initial contacts with the Adult Learning Assistance Program (ALAP) at the local community college, CNCC, and they have expressed interest in making use of this facility for Adult Literacy and/or GED classes. They currently have adult ESL classes in our building. The School to Work Alliance Program has also expressed interest in having access to this resource. The County Commissioners office and the Chamber of Commerce want to have this resource open for adults in the community. See Appendix C for supporting letters.

Note:

This was my first grant writing experience. Since then I've worked on some smaller grants and taken more coursework in how to prepare them. My expertise is in clarifying what the grantors want to support, aligning that with an organization's needs, and preparing the application per requirements set forth in the request for proposals.