

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Enhancing Education through Technology (EETT) Grant

Q: What is the Enhancing Education through Technology (EETT) Grant Initiative?

The Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) Grant is a two-year competitive grant funded through Title IID. Erie 1 BOCES is one of 28 consortia throughout New York State awarded grant monies to fund theme-based education technology projects focused on promoting technology integration into curriculum and instruction.

Q: What is the focus of the EETT Grant?

The focus chosen by Erie 1 is centered on leadership & systemic change.

Q: What are the goals of the EETT Grant?

- Goal 1: To develop leaders in technology integration who will be able to adopt & regularly use 21st Century strategies and skills.
- Goal 2: To develop leaders in technology who will be able to collaborate in a sustained professional learning network using a blended approach of online communities, Web 2.0 tools, and school-based collaboration.
- Goal 3: To build capacity for district leaders to turnkey the learning opportunities within each leading team's school and district, including how to support staff in this new learning environment.
- Goal 4: To create and disseminate high quality, inquiry-based lessons aligned with 21st Century Learning.

Q: What is 21st Century Learning?

Erie 1 BOCES acknowledges the definition of the term "21st Century Learning" as put forth by the following:

- The Partnership for 21st Century Skills ([www.http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/](http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/))
- enGuage 21st Century Skills (www.metiri.com/features.html)

Q: How long will the project run?

The grant is a two-year initiative that runs from January 2008 to December 2009.

Q: What will the project look like?

Technology Leadership Teams (TLTs) will be chosen by districts and participating non-public schools to attend/be involved in a series of face-to-face workshops and a virtual learning community (VLC), the goal of which will be to develop leaders in 21st Century technology integration who will then be able to turnkey learned strategies and skills in their districts/schools. The project will be led by nationally-respected consultant Sheryl Nussbaum-Beach, and will be supported by two BOCES coordinators.

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Q: What will the project look like? (Continued)

District teams will consist of an administrator, a technology resource person, and two teachers (optional for Year 1). Non-public school teams will consist of an administrator and one teacher.

In Year One:

Teams will attend a series of 4 face-to-face workshops, beginning July 14, 2008 and ending December 8, 2008. During these sessions, participants will explore and use a variety of web-based tools to engage in critical discussion about challenging issues facing 21st Century school leaders.

Following each workshop, participants will join online discussions in an effort to deepen their understanding of the concepts covered in the face-to-face sessions. These discussions will be facilitated by the workshop presenter and two Erie 1 BOCES coordinators who will be supporting the grant activities.

Each TLT will work with the two coordinators to identify follow up activities/staff development in their district and schools (each district and non-public school is allotted 2 days of follow up/staff development as part of this project).

In YearTwo:

Teams will begin the year by attending a kickoff face-to-face workshop in February of 2009. Additionally, there will be two (one in the spring and one in the fall) full day workshops with the TLT BOCES coordinators for each of the four primary content areas (a total of 6-8 workshops). Participants will attend the workshops that interest them the most. Just prior to each content area workshop, teams will attend two virtual Webinars in Elluminate (one in the spring and one in the fall) featuring national presenters who will discuss strategies for embedding 21st Century skills and pedagogy into content area, standards-driven curriculum.

Each TLT will continue their work with the two BOCES coordinators to identify goals and implement developed action plans through activities/staff development in their district and schools.

Students will join the teams in year two and will attend three, one hour Elluminate sessions of their own (accompanied by an adult team member) and then participate in follow-up discussions and activities on the EETT wiki.

At the end of both year one and year two, Technology Leadership Teams (TLTs) will present at a Learning Showcase. Year One's showcase will focus on learned 21st century skills and strategies. In year two, TLTs will work closely with faculty and student team members to develop and implement a high quality, inquiry-based lessons/units aligned with national technology standards and New York state curriculum. TLTs will present lessons/units at the Year 2 Learning Showcase, which will also serve as the project's culminating activity.

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Q: How are Technology Leadership Teams selected for the program?

Participating districts and non-public schools will select a team under the following criteria:

- District teams will consist of an administrator, a technology resource person, and two teachers. One member should be designated as team leader.
- Non-public school teams will consist of an administrator and a technology resource person/teacher leader. One member should be designated as team leader.
- In year two, all teams will also have student members.
- Team members must be able to commit to
 - Attending the face-to-face workshops
 - Participating in live, online sessions scheduled for after school
 - Actively participate in the online learning community established to support this work
 - Working closely with BOCES coordinators to develop follow-up activities or staff development at each team's district/school
 - Developing presentations for the two Learning Showcases (Dec. 2008 and 2009)

We recommend that individuals chosen as team members have basic computer and Internet skills. Our program is not aimed at the entry-level computer/technology user but at administrators and educators who have sufficient experience and expertise to capitalize on the latest Web technologies we introduce. We anticipate that team members will be able to use the knowledge and skills they gain in this program to foster 21st Century reform in their schools and begin to change classroom practice through the embedding of 21st C. skills into core content instruction.

Team members can include classroom teachers, media specialists, technology specialists, or content area coaches. One team member should be a district or school administrator. (Research shows that having an administrator as a member of school-based technology teams encourages the development and implementation of a technology-rich school improvement plan.)

Q: Why is every team member required to have an up-to-date computer, a microphone, and headphones to participate in the live online collaborations?

We have learned several things from our previous experience with this model:

- Team members are most likely to be active participants if they are sitting alone at a computer, hands on the keyboard and mouse, with a perfect view of the screen.
- Out-of-date computers with inadequate speed/memory and/or old software prevent team members from fully participating in the live online workshops.
- A microphone is necessary to participate in the voice features of Elluminate. A microphone of reasonable quality can be obtained at Radio Shack and similar stores.
- Relying on headphones, rather than built-in or external computer speakers, assures that sound from the speakers does not reach the microphone and cause echoes or reverberation. Some participants opt for "earbuds" in lieu of headphones that fit completely over the head. Some use a headset that combines the microphone and headphones.

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Q: What are the characteristics of a good 21st century team member?

Characteristics of a good team member include: basic technical aptitude, a willingness to learn new things, adaptability, interest in using new technologies in instruction, a student-centered philosophy of education, teacher leadership, enthusiasm for teacher collaboration, knowledge of subject matter and teaching methodologies in their discipline, and an interest in project- and problem-based learning.

Q: Do you allow substitutions of team members in the event someone can't attend a workshop?

Our project relies on a building-block approach, so it is important to have the same team members participate throughout the professional development experience. Team members should be selected who expect to be generally available for the scheduled workshops and online collaborations.

We understand that unforeseen circumstances may force someone to miss a session. Our online sessions are recorded and archived, however, and our general expectation is that anyone who misses a session will find time to view the archive prior to the next curriculum event.

Q: What is the role of the team leader?

Participating schools are required to designate one member of their Technology Leadership Team as the team leader. In addition to regular participation as a team member, the team leader will serve as a facilitator and “encourager” during the professional development experience. The team leader will be the day-to-day liaison between his or her district/school and the Erie 1 BOCES coordinators, assuring good communication between the project leadership, the school, and other team members.

An effective team leader will have good technology skills, a good understanding of the Internet, and be motivated to enhance the team's ability to work together in a collaborative way—both online and in the school environment. The team leader should be proficient enough to help develop the team's knowledge of the virtual tools they will be using.

Q: What is the role of the BOCES Coordinators?

The district/school Technology Leadership Teams will be supported by two Erie 1 BOCES coordinators: Jenny Conklin and Shannon Logan. Both coordinators have experience in integrating technology into the curriculum, curriculum mapping and design, and professional staff development. They will serve as facilitators of online professional development activities, work hand-in-hand with Technology Leadership Teams to develop follow-up activities/staff development trainings at school sites, and create model high quality, inquiry-based lessons aligned with 21st Century Learning.

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Q: You mentioned that a student can participate?

In Year 2, as a next step forward, we'd like to engage students more directly in our joint work. We will ask each participating team to select an able student (Gr. 4-11) to serve on a 21st Century Learners student advisory group. The students will take part in several live virtual meetings to discuss factors they believe are impacting their learning and their future. The selected student should be enrolled in one or more team members' classes and show some interest in and aptitude for web-based tools and learning activities. This will be a great opportunity for a mature "leadership" student to experience live conferencing and collaborate with peers across grade levels.

Students will attend three, one hour sessions in Elluminate and follow-up with online discussions and activities via the project wiki. They should also play an integral role in developing the inquiry-based lesson/unit aligned with 21st Century Learning. At the end of the project, TLT members will be surveyed on the extent to which student voice impacted the development of the lesson, and ways in which student input was effective.

Q: Where and when will the learning take place?

- **Erie 1 BOCES Education Campus** -- Technology Leadership Team members will attend face-to-face workshops at the Erie 1 BOCES Education campus, located at 355 Harlem Road in West Seneca, New York. Workshops will be held periodically throughout the two year grant. The following are the dates and titles for the Year One workshops:
 - July 14, 2008: Leadership Kickoff
 - The Dimensions of Change within Schools in the 21st Century
 - Effective School Leadership through Technology
 - Digital Citizenship
 - October 6, 2008: Building 21st Century Schools
 - Top Web 2.0 Tools for Leadership
 - Engaging Staff & Students: Using Web 2.0 Tools for Global Collaboration
 - November 13, 2008
 - Guiding Learning in the 21st Cent
 - Creating Environments that Support Learning
 - December 8, 2008: Year One Learning Showcase
 - Implementing 21st Century Skills
 - Where Do We Go from Here?
- **Virtual Space**
 - **Elluminate Live!** is a real-time virtual classroom environment designed for distance collaboration. We use it to meet for sessions where we explore concepts around 21st Century teaching and learning. Each participant logs on from their own computer using a link that is emailed to the participant in the form of an invitation. Using a microphone and earphones, participants can comment and ask questions while viewing presentations, video clips, and other instructional materials around the topic being discussed. Elluminate also includes a component that allows participants to ask questions and make comments while others are speaking. You do not need to install specific software to use Elluminate.

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- **Virtual Space, Continued**

- **Ning Site** – Ning is a collaborative online professional learning platform. Our 21st Century schools will participate in a virtual space created for our work. Building a collaborative community online is an important part of this learning framework. Our goal is to help participants explore and develop ideas in the Virtual Learning Community (VLC) and then try them out in their own classrooms. Active involvement is an expectation of the school teams participating in the program, and training and support will be provided to make this possible.
- **School Site** -- Technology Leadership Team members will work with BOCES Coordinators to develop follow-up activities/staff development trainings at school sites. Activities and trainings can be geared specifically to TLT members or can involve other school faculty, and can be facilitated by TLT members or BOCES coordinators.

Q: You used the expression "Web 2.0." What does that mean?

Web 2.0 and "the Read/Write Web" are expressions used to describe the evolution of the World Wide Web from a medium used primarily to find or post information, to a medium where those with shared interests can communicate, collaborate, and form temporary or long-term social networks. In school settings the "shared interests" may be class or school projects carried out by a "social network" of students. Web tools like blogs, wikis, podcasts, social bookmarking software, etc. support Web 2.0 activities.

Q: How important are district Internet policies and operations to this work?

Very important.

Effective participation in our curriculum depends upon a school team's ability to access the Illuminate and VLC web platforms and to visit and experiment with a variety of websites that offer tools that can be adapted for classroom use. We work to support an ongoing conversation among educators and school technology leaders across the state about the important need to balance Internet safety and Internet access for legitimate educational purposes.

Q: Will there be an evaluative component to this project?

Yes. Technology Leadership Teams will be asked to participate in the evaluation process by completing the following:

1. A needs assessment, which will take place during the initial face-to-face meeting with the Coordinators
2. Informal pre and post surveys, to be taken at the first and last face-to-face workshops
3. Loti surveys, also to be answered at the beginning and end of the initiative. "LoTi is a term referring to Dr. Moersch's Level of Technology Implementation Framework designed to accurately measure authentic classroom technology use." For more information, see <http://www.loticonnection.com/>.