

MEMORANDUM



Date: October 14, 2019
To: Portland Public Schools Board of Education
From: TechSmart Leadership Team
Kevin Crotchett, Director of Learning Technologies
Jennifer Hopkins, TechSmart TOSA
Andy Wheeler, Program Manager
Subject: TechSmart Grant Amendment
Mt.Hood Cable Regulatory Commission

It is my pleasure to be able to provide the Portland Public Schools Board of Education with an informational update on the progress of the 2015 TechSmart Grant as well as an introduction to the TechSmart+ Grant Amendment, recently presented to and accepted by the Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory Commission (MHCRC).

Background: TechSmart 2015 to date

The original TechSmart Grant provided by the MHCRC was a five-million-dollar, five-year matching grant focused on 3 goals;

GOAL 1: By 2020, 3rd-grade students in pilot classrooms will demonstrate grade-level proficiency in reading and eliminate the achievement gap between white students and students of color as well as those identified for ELL and SPED.

GOAL 2: Understand and implement instructional strategies and practices in pilot schools that leverage technology to provide culturally and linguistically relevant personalized learning.

GOAL 3: Validate and disseminate effective instructional strategies and practices that use technology to provide culturally and linguistically relevant personalized learning that improve K-3 literacy outcomes for each student.

The project leverages digital tools and applications in K-3 classrooms, integrating technology-based blended learning in literacy and the EBBL curriculum to provide students with engaging, enhanced, and differentiated instruction. Five schools joined the TechSmart program each year for the past four years. These schools are supported with embedded professional development such as a fall PD, TechSmart Labs, and school-based coaching (.5 coach per school). The entire project is supported by a TOSA working under the Director of Humanities.

As the TechSmart project has grown, so has its sphere of influence on schools and departments beyond the scope of 20 TechSmart sites. This has led to district-wide advancement in

recommended digital tools, device choices, and the use of digital applications for both the consumption and creation of knowledge, in English-only classrooms, as well as Spanish and Chinese dual language classrooms.

Evaluation

The evaluation of TechSmart has been conducted both by PPS evaluators and externally by Pacific Research & Evaluation (PRE). In addition to student achievement data, the evaluation includes teacher and administrator surveys and interviews with classroom observations added in the 2018-2019 school year. Preliminary evaluations have been completed up to the end of the 2017/18 school year (the second year of implementation). Evaluation is an ongoing requirement of the grant.

Teacher professional development has shown to have had increasing effectiveness over the grants timespan. This corresponds with the self-report of teachers and students becoming more familiar with the technology and enthusiastically adopting new instructional strategies for blended learning. Teacher feedback has also indicated that classroom technology has positively impacted student engagement, particularly for struggling students. Teachers have reported an increase in their use of data from digital applications. This use has reportedly improved differentiation with an emphasis on instruction for historically underserved students. At this time, student achievement data, while demonstrating small isolated improved growth, does not yet provide sufficient evidence of improved student outcomes system-wide. The small sample size of the available data may attribute to this.

The TechSmart+ Grant Amendment

In mid-September, 2019, Superintendent Guerrero and an expanded TechSmart team were provided the opportunity to present to the MHCRC Board an amendment to the original grant requesting 2.9 million in additional match funding for 2020 - 2022 school years. The MHCRC Board approved.

TechSmart+ continues to focus on the use of digital tools and blended learning instruction in the development of student literacy and will expand its scope to include support and resources for K-5 classrooms.

In fall 2020, the 11 Title I schools not already part of TechSmart will join the TechSmart+ cohort. Improvements to school buildings' infrastructure and devices will be provided to support these new TechSmart+ schools. Our .5 school-based coaches will become approximately 8 full time centrally based TOSAs and work to support all 31 TechSmart Schools, providing greater support to the newest schools and classrooms. Support and leadership of the program will be leveraged through the TechSmart TOSAs and the Director of Learning Technologies. Deep collaboration and coordination with the Humanities, STEAM, and CTE Departments will ensure that our K-12 work to further enhance student learning through technology draws upon, learns from, and informs the TechSmart+ program. Literacy will remain the primary focus looking to leverage digital applications for increased differentiation and tiered student supports while

bringing additional focus to creation tools that allow students to demonstrate and develop their knowledge in the digital space.

TechSmart+ aligns with the Graduate Portrait, introducing our youngest PPS students (K-5) to digital learning tools that develop authentic world experiences in critical thinking, communication, and collaboration.

TechSmart and TechSmart+ Implementation Plan

	Year 5 2019-2020 (TS3R project)	Year 6 2020-2021 TechSmart+	Year 7 2021-2022 TechSmart+
Cohort 1	Evaluate & Refine	Evaluate & Deboard	Evaluate
Cohort 2	Evaluate & Refine	Evaluate & Deboard	Evaluate
Cohort 3	Evaluate & Refine	Evaluate & Refine	Evaluate & Deboard
Cohort 4	Implement	Evaluate & Refine	Evaluate & Refine
Cohort 5	Onboard	Implement	Evaluate & Refine
			Recommendations to scale & sustain

TechSmart and TechSmart+ Budget Overview

	Original TechSmart Budget	TechSmart+ Budget	TechSmart Total Budget
Grant			
Personnel	1,886,023	49,920	1,935,943
Training	25,460		25,460
Travel	106,000		106,000
Contractual	1,273,000		1,273,000
Equipment*	1,578,750	2,732,000	4,310,750
Overhead	231,957	153,006	384,963
Contingency			
Grant total	5,101,190	2,934,926	8,036,116

Match			
Personnel	3,335,995	2,655,494	5,991,489
Training	93,818	126,640	220,458
Travel			0

Contractual			0
Equipment*	1,451,250		1,451,250
Overhead	314,829	153,017	467,846
Contingency			
Match Total	5,195,892	2,935,151	8,131,043