

Star Schools Program (CFDA No. 84.203)

I. Legislation

The Star Schools Program, Title III, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act), as amended (20 U.S.C. 6891-6900) (expires September 30, 1999).

II. Funding History

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>
1988	\$19,148,000	1993	\$22,777,000
1989	14,399,000	1994	25,944,000
1990	14,813,000	1995	25,000,000
1991	14,416,000	1996	23,000,000
1992	18,417,000		

III. Analysis of Program Performance

A. Goals and Objectives

The purposes of the Star Schools Program are (1) to encourage better instruction in mathematics, science, foreign languages, and other subjects such as literacy skills and vocational education, and (2) to serve previously underserved populations including persons who are disadvantaged, are illiterate or have limited English proficiency, and individuals with disabilities through the use of distance learning technologies. Grants allow telecommunications partnerships to acquire telecommunications facilities and equipment, produce and distribute educational programming, and obtain technical assistance.

B. Strategies to Achieve the Goals

Services Supported

Since 1988 the program has provided services -- including equipment, staff development, and instructional programming -- to more than 6,000 schools in 48 states, the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands. In addition, the dissemination projects provide technical assistance and training, or disseminate information about distance education opportunities to states and school districts not using distance education.

Strategic Initiatives

The current legislation targets students in urban as well as rural areas who have not traditionally benefited from these technologies. The program is also authorized to make awards for (1) special statewide networks, (2) local network, and (3) continuing education and leadership activities.

C. Program Performance—Indicators of Impact and Effectiveness

Performance Indicators are under development.

IV. Planned Studies

The first formal evaluation of Star Schools was conducted in 1994. The evaluation provided demographic and descriptive information about the projects funded between 1988 and 1994 based on information obtained through project records, interviews with project staff, and site visits to approximately 30 schools participating in Star Schools activities. According to the evaluators, teachers reported increased use of cooperative learning strategies, curriculum experts rated the instructional methods used in the mathematics and science curriculum highly. The evaluators also reported the need to incorporate multiple technologies such as computer networks; link the technology applications to school reform and standards activities at the state and local levels, and to provide continuous teacher training programs. The second formal evaluation, scheduled to begin in the fall of 1997, is intended (1) to determine the extent to which the program has addressed the concerns raised by the first evaluation and (2) to collect benchmark data as a preliminary phase of meeting the program's performance indicators.

All projects include a third party evaluation. A summary of the results of the evaluation reports completed in 1996 and 1997 will be made available to the public. It will include examples of successful implementation strategies, recommendations for future efforts, an analysis of pitfalls to be avoided, and suggestions for incorporating effective data collection strategies for subsequent evaluations.

All projects include a third-party evaluation. The evaluations were to be completed in the spring and fall of 1997. A program evaluation is also planned for 1997.

V. Sources of Information

1. Program files.
2. Evaluation of the Star Schools Program, Final Report, (Los Alamitos, CA: Southwest Regional Laboratory) (December 1994).

VI. Contacts for Further Information

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