



Funding Professional Development During Economically Challenged Times

A VSTE Advocacy White Paper

The mission of the Virginia Society for Technology in Education is to promote excellence in education through professional development endeavors supporting the integration of existing and emerging technologies. We do this through a variety of means, including face-to-face activities and online courses. When funding gets tight, professional development can be one of the first things to be cut. The long term implications of this are clear, and creativity may be required to identify legitimate means for continuing your professional development efforts.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) was signed into law in February 2009 and includes more than \$100 billion for education. It is important that we use these funds wisely, and one way to do that is through investing in professional development for educators, especially as it relates to using technology effectively to support content-based learning.

The federal government is providing these funds through existing federal programs such as the Enhancing Education Through Technology program (EETT, Title II Part D of NCLB). The ARRA also provides funding via the State Stabilization Fund, Title I and IDEA. The money can be used for professional development; in fact, 25% of EETT funds, including the additional stimulus funds attached to it, must be used for professional development.

VSTE's Annual Technology in Education Conference has always focused on the effective use of technology for teaching and learning. At the 2009-10 Conference (November 30 – December 2, 2009 in Roanoke), that focus will continue and be strengthened through the applications of technology within content-focused strands. We encourage you to consider using your funds to send teams of instructional technology resource teachers and content-based teachers to the conference this year so they can learn together. Our continued evolution to technology as part of every content area is very compatible with ARRA funding guidelines.

Your ITRTs will also be interested in the specialized focus offered through the ITRT Mini-Conference. And don't forget about your school's leadership. The second annual Educational Technology Leadership Institute will reach out to school leaders, especially building level administrators. All of these activities can be funded through the use of economic stimulus funds. Learn more about these events at <http://www.vste.org>.

If going to a conference is not in the plan, how about providing online professional development for faculty and staff. Visit Virginia's Community of Anytime Knowledge at <http://anytimeknowledge.org> to find a variety of courses related to the use of educational technology or contact vste@vste.org about possibly customizing a professional development need at your location within your schedule.

Are you confused by ARRA? The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) recently presented a webinar, "So the Stimulus Passed, Now What?" and the archive can be access online at <https://admin.acrobat.com/a729309453/p67423522/>.