

# Project WRITE ON!

Online instructional program increases writing scores, technology proficiency and motivation



## Saddleback Valley Unified School District (SVUSD)

“Preparing today’s students to succeed in tomorrow’s world” is the mission of Saddleback Valley Unified School District (SVUSD). And, the way the District envisions doing this is through what they call their guiding principal—improvement of student learning through technology.

The focus at SVUSD is on teaching and learning strategies which are put into daily practice to translate into stronger student performance.

After STAR test results indicated that 56% of District students scored below proficient in writing, a decision was made to initiate the Write On! project to address and remedy the situation. A key component of the project is My Access!, an internet-based instructional writing program that scores



student essays through artificial technologies.

Students participating in the Write On! program wrote frequently to the state academic content writing standards on mobile-lab classroom computers, editing their work multiple times. Catering to today’s youth’s expectations of instant information (essays are scored in less than 10 seconds), the program gives feedback on scoring for each of the five traits of effective writing, teaches students to use rubrics for self-guided instruction, and provides an electronic portfolio for students, teachers, and parents.

Funded by an EETT Competitive Grant, the model also included a strong professional development program to ensure continuous

### FAST FACTS

**NAME OF DISTRICT**  
Saddleback Valley Unified School district

**ABOUT SVUSD**

- Located in south Orange County,
- 35,000
- 95 square mile area

**CURRICULAR FOCUS AREA**  
Written language

**GRADE LEVEL**  
7th and 8th Grades  
Intermediate School

**NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING STUDENTS**  
Year One: 2600  
Year Two: 5600

**NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING TEACHERS**  
Year One: 30  
Year Two: 55

**NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS**  
4

**RESOURCES**  
4 computer labs for each site  
3 or more LCD projectors at each site  
1 laptop for every teacher

**PRIMARY SOURCE OF FUNDING**  
EETT Competitive Grant

**CONTACT PERSON**  
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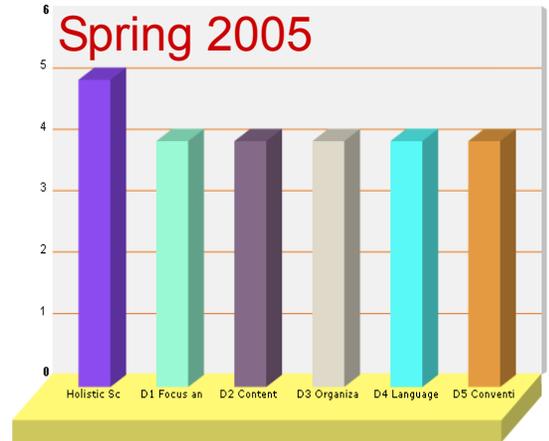
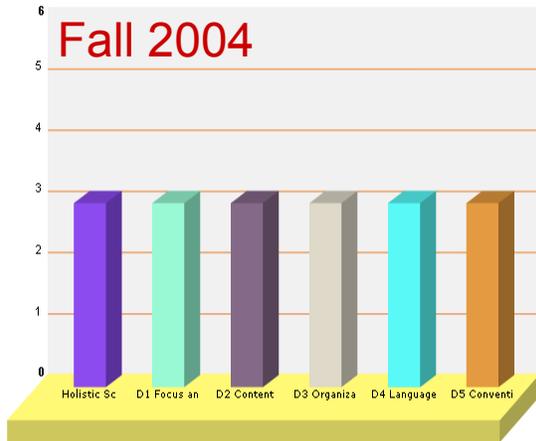
The California Department of Education (CDE), Education Technology Office administers the EETT Competitive and Formula Grant Program under Title II, Part D, of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Funds from this grant are used to assist districts to utilize technology to enhance teaching and promote learning. Funds are distributed equally to the EETT Competitive and Formula Programs. The CDE distributed \$62 million dollars in 2005-06 to local educational agencies (LEAs) and will distribute \$33 million dollars in 2006-2007.

EETT Competitive Grants (EETT-C) provide funding for grades four through eight to assist eligible local educational agencies in using technology to enhance teaching and learning. It is a competitive grant process for which LEAs must complete an application which is scored and ranked against other competitors. The top scoring applications are funded.

EETT Formula Grants (EETT-F) provide funding for grades kindergarten through twelve to assist eligible local educational agencies in using technology to enhance teaching and learning. Funding amounts are based on the LEA's proportion of their eligible Title I, Part A amount applied against the Title II, Part D total available amount of money to be distributed.

## District-Wide Data Showing Overall Performance on All Writing Assignments



support and feedback, as well as site-based support for teachers.

During the first year of the project, seventh graders in the District's four middle schools and their teachers participated. Participation was expanded in the second year of the grant to include eight graders and their teachers as well.

The project has yielded substantial increases in students' writing performance and scores as well enhanced technology proficiency. The achievement has met with a positive response from students and teachers alike who indicate that the program has increased the enthusiasm for

writing across many student populations.

Not without its challenges--beginning with finding resources to handle a large-scale equipment set-up (12 computer labs with over 45 computers to configure)--the project also had to address and overcome laptop security, wireless and network speed issues, software upgrade concerns and working with dual platforms (two PC schools and two Mac schools) to ensure the project's success.

District Results for the My Access! "Soda Machines" Diagnostic Essay			
DATE	Number of 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Students Tested	Percentage of Students Scoring 4-6 on a 6 Point Scale	Percentage of Students Scoring 3-6 on a 6 Point Scale
Fall 2004	2370	4%	28%
Spring 2005	2450	41%	77%



For additional information, visit <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/et/ft/eett.asp>