

THE TEXAS RURAL TECHNOLOGY (R-TECH) PILOT PROGRAM

CYCLE 1 FINAL EVALUATION REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NOVEMBER 2010

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**Prepared for
Texas Education Agency**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The evaluation of the Texas Rural Technology (Tech) Pilot sought to understand how districts implemented RTechgrants, the effects of implementation on student and teacher outcomes, as well as

xMost districts (87%)

xAbout 30%of Cycle 1 districts offered dual credit coursework using R

Research Question 3: What Is the Effect of R -Tech on Teachers?

In grant applications, all Cycle 1 districts indicated that R resources would be used to expand

CONCLUSION

The overarching finding of the evaluation is that rural districts struggled to implement supplementary R-Tech programs in which instruction was offered outside of the regular school day. Many rural students travel great distances to school and depend on buses for transportation. In many districts, bus schedules did not permit students to arrive early or remain at school in order to receive supplementary instruction. Conflicts with extracurricular activities, student work schedules, and family responsibilities also limited some students' ability to participate in R-Tech programs, and some students simply refused to participate in instruction offered outside of the school day.

Findings from the evaluation's second interim report indicated that many districts revised their implementation plans in order to overcome these challenges. As a means to ensure greater student participation in R-Tech, many districts included services as part of the school day and encouraged teachers to use resources as part of classroom instruction. Findings from the evaluation indicate that districts that incorporated R-Tech as part of regular instruction (i.e., not supplementary programs) experienced benefits relative to districts that adhered to the grant's intent and implemented supplementary programs. The evaluation's results indicate that districts implementing supplementary programs:

- x Served more students using R-Tech resources,
- x Experienced lower average per student implementation costs,
- x Had better student outcomes in reading and mathematics,
- x Improved attendance outcomes, and



