IT Academy

H.B. 514 (2012)
Utah Code Section 53A-13-111

Report of FY14

Prepared by the

Utah State Office of Education
Career and Technical Education

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IT ACADEMY REPORT

PURPOSE

Utah Code Section 53A-13-111

"Provide for an educational program on the use of information technology at Utah high schools. The program shall be made available to high school students, faculty and staff. The program shall provide instruction on skills and competencies essential for the workplace and those requested by employers."

"Program components include curriculum, online access to curriculum, instructional software for classroom and student use, certification for skills and competencies most frequently requested by employers, professional development for teachers, and deployment and program support; including integration with existing curriculum and standards."

Amount allocated for FY13: $300,000

IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY

1) Utah State Office of Education (USOE) continued with the Microsoft IT Academy program that was piloted in FY13 which includes components of the code.
2) A deployment plan for the Microsoft IT Academy in Utah was developed with program support from Microsoft and Certiport.
3) USOE purchased Microsoft IT Academy (MS ITA) licenses for 207 secondary schools and 99 Certiport Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certification licenses. $299,880.23
4) Career and Technical Education Business and Information Technology programs expanded the integration of curriculum and standards with the MS ITA program.
5) All high schools and a large portion of junior high schools received a MS ITA license. The license provides access to resources to all teachers and students in the school.
6) Teachers applied for the 99 available Certiport MOS Certification licenses. To participate in the applicants had to provide a plan for implementation and preference was given to teacher teams.
7) Face-to-face professional development training has reached 174 teachers and more trainings are scheduled for FY14.
8) Additional webinar training on the MS ITA tool and Certiport testing have been and are available to all faculty and staff. Webinars are in place provided through the support of Microsoft and Certiport, Corp.
9) Certification exams were and are continuing to be administered in the high school classrooms to students with the support of Certiport, Corp.

10) Feedback on the program results has and will be continuously solicited from the teachers, administrators and students to provide recommendations for improvement.

The Microsoft IT Academy and Microsoft Office Specialists (MOS) certifications are resources that were purchased as a sole source license to fulfill the purposes of the code. USOE was able to use the appropriated funds to provide the information technology program resource to 131 Utah high schools. To meet all of the requirements of the code USOE partnered with Certiport to provide industry certifications which were administered to teachers and students.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The table below provides a success metrics that identifies goals for program deployment. The metrics was developed in partnership with Microsoft and Certiport.

Deployment Success Metrics				
Utah IT Academy and Certification Metrics	2012-2013 Goals	2012-2013 Actuals	2013-2014 Goals	2013-2013 Actuals (January 2014)
Teachers Trained	400	464	200	174
Teachers Certified (MOS)	140	351	200	81
Teachers Certified (MTA)	30	8	30	0
Students Certified (MOS)	TBD	1,685	2,500	1,040
Students Certified (MTA)	TBD	63	80	2
Schools successfully deployed as a testing center	n/a	n/a	65	55

Table 1: Deployment Metrics

FINDINGS

The integration of the Information Technology Program supported from current code has provided progressive opportunities for secondary public education. Feedback from teachers and students has been encouraging as USOE continues on in a second year through FY14. For a second year in a row participants in the program and LEA's identify two components as the most valuable. These two components are industry certifications for both teachers and student and professional development that have helped teachers "raise the bar".

Findings by Program Component Derived From LEA and Teacher Feedback

Curriculum/Lessons (including online) - All curriculum was provided online both to students and teachers. The online curriculum provided by the MS IT Academy was used to complement Business and Information Technology current curriculum. The additional resources that some LEA's elected to purchase last year was included this year with the license. Teachers have reported that the eLearning portfolio was

of much higher quality this year and aligned more closely to the industry certifications. Teachers were very positive and have seen results with students.

Software for classroom – The MS ITA site licenses provided 50 Microsoft Office licenses per site. Only some of the licenses have been utilized by LEA's. LEA's report reasons for this are that some had already purchased licenses and other are not ready to upgrade. LEA's continue to report that the licenses are needed at the middle and junior high school level. In addition, many LEA's need the current software for the entire school not just enough for one lab but find the 50 licenses helpful.

Industry Certifications – Many students earned industry certifications and it is anticipated there will be a large increase in certifications when compared to FY13. The teachers that participated in the program "raised the bar" by providing knowledge and skills to students that positively impact their career and college readiness. Teacher feedback indicates that students are engaged and excited about the rigor of the classroom along with the prospect of earning an industry certification.

Integration of program into existing curriculum and standards – The information technology program was integrated into Business and Information Technology courses that are currently taught in Utah. The Microsoft team supported USOE in this process and enhanced standards were deployed for courses. The alignment was a good fit for these two program areas.

Professional development – Teachers in the program were encouraged to attend the face-to-face training held in the 2013 summer and regional trainings held throughout the winter. The professional development was supported by the Microsoft, Certiport and USOE teams. Teachers were trained to utilize the MS ITA resources and to prepare them to pass the industry certifications as well. Webinars were also frequently provided as a form of professional development to all Utah faculty and staff. The webinars continue to be recorded and posted to a shared website. In FY13 Teachers provided feedback that they would have liked to see more variety in the topics of the webinars. FY14 accommodated a large variety of topics. These webinars were designed from USOE and LEA requests to the Microsoft and Certiport teams.

Program support – Throughout the process USOE, Microsoft and Certiport teams have been available to help LEA's with the rollout of the program. Weekly conference calls are in place to ensure a smooth and supportive experience for teachers and LEA's. Both Microsoft and Certiport have made themselves available directly to teachers and LEA's to answer questions and help with technical issues.

In an effort to improve support to USOE and alleviate some administrative oversight of the program two additional services were provided. Certiport provided a liaison assigned specifically to Utah that has provided weekly data reports and supported districts with technical issues for testing. The second service was provided by Software House International (SHI) provided support to LEA's with accessing their 50 Microsoft Office Licenses. The increased support from all team members was instrumental in sustaining the MS ITA program. USOE is well supported by their partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Additional Sites – Due to the Microsoft IT Academy licensing agreement students and teachers at junior high schools do not have access to the same resources as those in a 9th-12th grade school. USOE was able to license 207 schools for FY14. This number does not include all schools with 9th grade students or all charter schools. Each year additional schools open and as a result the number of licenses needed will increase. The cost of each license is just under $1500 per school.

When integrating curriculum from a state level, any students who are at junior highs would not have the same curriculum and opportunities as those 9th grade students who are at high schools. This is an equity problem that USOE has identified could hinder the program to continue in its current form.

Industry Certifications – The program provided some opportunities for students to earn industry certifications. An improvement on the program would also be to provide a larger variety of certifications for students, i.e. Adobe, Autodesk and IC^3. Increased funding would be necessary to provide certifications to all students. Student and teacher feedback continued to listed industry certifications with the highest value to the program.

Oversight and administration for the information technology program – The program implemented required a large amount of oversight from USOE staff. Current staff working on this initiative already have heavy assignments and workloads. In order to provide the necessary management oversight and deployment of this initiative long term administrative funding will be needed.

Software – To improve the information technology initiative it would be beneficial to consider a statewide enterprise software licensing option for LEA's. The cost savings to LEA's would be considerable due to the pricing model that is used when purchasing in high volume. The common software availability throughout the state at all schools would make integration of information technology with course standards more attainable.