



NEW FROM THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH • DECEMBER

2015

The West Virginia Special Education Technology Integration Specialist (SETIS) Program 2012-2014 Evaluation Report

The Special Education Technology Integration Specialist (SETIS) program provides professional development for special education teachers to assist them in achieving proficiency with 21st Century Technology Tools. The program completed its eighth and ninth rounds during the 2012–2013 and 2013–2014 school years, training over 30 special educators as models, coaches, and mentors of technology integration at schools and within classrooms. This study examines SETIS program implementation, use, and impact across three key stakeholder groups: SETIS candidates, teacher colleagues, and school administrators.

Method of study. SETIS candidates were surveyed once, using a retrospective pre-post survey conducted at the conclusion of the school year. Teacher colleagues and school administrators participated in pre- and postprogram surveys administered at the beginning and ending of the school year; each participant's preprogram survey responses were matched to their postprogram survey responses.

Findings. In general, survey data from all three SETIS stakeholder groups suggest the 2012–2014 SETIS programs were mostly successful. The greatest impact was observed in capacity building among the SETIS candidates. The four indices of capacity building—human, material, organizational, and structural—all yielded statistically significant and practically important increases from pre-to-post survey scores. Among teacher colleagues, statistically significant increases in technology use for the model and design indices were observed. While statistical testing indicated significant differences between the school administrator pre- and postprogram surveys, the results uncovered a disparity between school administrators' higher preprogram intention to use SETIS candidates and lower postprogram actual use of the SETIS candidates. Other survey data indicated school administrators observed positive outcomes from the SETIS program.

Limitations of study. This study relies upon two types of self-reported surveys: a retrospective pre-post survey and two traditional pre-post surveys. There are benefits and drawbacks to each type of survey. Retrospective pre-post surveys are convenient because they occur once and the pre-post data are matched at the individual participant level. Some research suggests that response-shift bias is alleviated through using retrospective pre-post surveys. Other research argues traditional pre-post types of surveys result in less biased program effectiveness estimates; surveys with before-and-after items presented side by side may introduce types of bias including theories of change, self-presentation, and/or effort justification.

Recommendations. Study results suggest that previous evaluation study recommendations have been adopted by the SETIS program. These changes are: methodology adjustments to allow pre-post survey matching among the teacher colleague and school administrator stakeholders; and improved awareness among SETIS candidates and school administrators. Even with these promising program adjustments, there are several recommendations that may further improve the implementation, use, and impact of the SETIS program. These include holding more face-to-face meetings, promoting scheduling that allows teachers and SETIS candidates time to cocreate technology-integrated lesson plans, and encouraging further collaboration between SETIS candidates and their school administrators to better leverage the SETIS and their resources.

For more information, contact Amber D. Stohr, Office of Research, Accountability, and Data Governance (astohr@k12.wv.us), or download the full report at <http://wvde.state.wv.us/research/reports2015.html>.

The four indices of capacity building—human, material, organizational, and structural—all yielded statistically significant and practically important increases for SETIS candidates.

The results uncovered a disparity between school administrators' higher preprogram intention to use SETIS candidates and lower postprogram actual use of the SETIS candidates. Other survey data, however, indicated school administrators observed positive outcomes from the SETIS program.