ID # 12-S-30-WV

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: West Virginia

Assign Program Category: Education

Program Name: Learn21

Administering Agency: West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE)

Contact (Name and Title): Dr. Jorea M. Marple, Superintendent of Schools

Address: 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Building 6, Room 358, Charleston, WV 25305

Telephone Number: 304.558.2681

E-mail Address: dvermill@access.k12.wv.us

Web Address: www.learn21wv.gov; Also, see this website for a video about Learn21:
http://wvde.state.wv.us/player.php?m=f&vid=learn21_videos/2012%20Learn21%20Overview

1. How long has this program operated? (month and year)?

What began as a student-created prototype being piloted at Horace Mann Middle School in Charleston, W.Va., from September 2009 through June 2010, Learn21 officially launched as a West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) initiative in June 2010.
2. Describe the program:

Why was it created?

West Virginia Superintendent Jorea Marple’s believes that “all children should be able to learn 24/7 wherever they are.” Learn21 puts that philosophy into action.

Faced with inclement weather and traditional school calendars, West Virginia students are subjected to being out of school on multiple days throughout the academic year, including during scheduled spring, summer and winter breaks. To combat lost instructional time, the WVDE sought to provide engaging educational activities for students that could be easily accessed via Internet-ready devices regardless of where a student was located. The intent was to design a one-stop shop for students in grades pre-kindergarten through Grade 12 to access engaging, interactive web resources that are directly correlated and aligned to the West Virginia Content Standards and Objectives.

Embracing the anytime, anywhere, personalized learning concept, Learn21 is a tool for West Virginia students to use while they are at home, at school, in afterschool programs, and during extended breaks from school. Learn21 is yet another step along a journey to transform public education so that it is not only school-based, but also accessible from any location at any time.

Why is it a new and creative approach or method?

In reality, students access video games and interactive activities on a daily basis. The WVDE considered this reality and took actions to provide students with online opportunities that were both engaging and educational. Learn21 is more than simply a compilation of interactive games; rather it is a plethora of educationally sound resources that enhance learning outside of the classroom.

The WVDE established a process by which all resources identified for inclusion on Learn21 are added. Each resource is peer reviewed and evaluated for its level of engagement. Additionally, the team considers the degree to which the resource teaches, reinforces, or provides review for subject matter. Resources are identified at various grade levels in the following content areas: mathematics, science, social studies, English/language arts, health and wellness, STEM, music, theatre, dance, visual art, agriculture, finance and engineering. This unique approach to engaging students beyond the instructional day, or in the absence of an instructional day, is enabling personalized student learning to occur anywhere and anytime. While Learn21 offers lessons, the site is much more than a rote study guide; it both reinforces the concepts that students learn in class or might have difficulty understanding, as well as engages students in extended learning opportunities.

Although learning through play may not be something that immediately attracts older students, learning is about personal responsibility, not just what students do in school. Learn21 includes a feature that allows feedback from users. The Learn21 review team uses feedback to make changes that result in more engaging activities and resources for this population. The constructs of each age-appropriate site are substantially different. For example, the pre-kindergarten student site includes more animation and games. One such example is the game called “Measuring Up,” which teaches preschool students that
measuring can be fun. However, for the secondary students, tutorials explaining multi-step processes might be more helpful than animation. The WVDE is considering the addition of college resources in the future through collaboration with the West Virginia Higher Educational Policy Commission.

What are the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order?

The West Virginia Department of Education officially unveiled Learn21 using a comprehensive communication plan in June 2010. Since its inception, Learn21 has expanded from approximately 40 interactive content resources in mathematics and English/language arts to include a wealth of educational resources for a much broader pre-K-12 audience. The WVDE continues to review, jury, and add educational resources to ensure the site remains current and relevant to meet the needs of students in West Virginia. The following timeline details the program’s rapid growth and demonstrates expansion feasibility.

- **September 2009 – June 2010**
  - Learn21 prototype was created and piloted by Horace Mann Middle School students in Donna Landin’s project-based learning mathematics course. (Note: Donna Landin, a WVDE employee, voluntarily taught one class per year as part of an agreement with the WVDE and Kanawha County Schools.)
- **June 2010**
  - Learn21, with approximately 40 interactive resources for mathematics and English/language arts, officially launched as a WVDE initiative.
- **August 2010**
  - The WVDE established an official resource-review process to ensure alignment to the WV Content Standards and Objectives and created Learn21 resource-review teams. Team members included pre-K-12 teachers, technology integration specialists, and West Virginia Department of Education curriculum coordinators.
- **September 2010- May 2011**
  - About 1,000 pre-K-12 resources were added in the content areas of mathematics, English Language Arts, science, social studies, health and wellness, visual arts, music, dance, theatre, agriculture, finance and engineering.
- **June 2011 – August 2011**
  - Learn21 was redesigned to align with the newly formed resource grade bands including pre-K-K, Grades 1-2, Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8 and Grades 9-12. Additionally, audio was added to the pre-K-K landing page.
  - The Learn21 resource identification, review and submissions process evolved to an online hand-off process. While this process was tested in Grades 1-2, more than 70 resources were approved and added to Learn21.
- **October 2011 – May 2012**
  - The Learn21 resource identification, review and submissions online hand-off process was fully implemented. Resources for STEM content areas were added.
  - Additional resources for pre-K-K, mathematics, English/language arts, social studies, music, visual arts and science are submitted via a seven-week, online course.

*Is it effective? Provide tangible results and examples.*
While the WVDE has a research plan to evaluate the effectiveness of Learn21, with regard to student achievement, the following examples are included to provide an anecdotal picture of the impact Learn21 has been observed to have thus far:

- Middle school students accessed Learn21 and were introduced to math resources such as Lure of the Labyrinth. After using these resources, these middle school students then provided professional development to teachers regarding the mathematical content of this game.
- Middle school students conducted summer math enrichment sessions for students in Grades 1-6 using math and English/Language Arts content they accessed via Learn21.
- A West Virginia team of middle schools students will be competing in a national competition conducted by Michigan Institute of Technology (MIT) during the spring of 2012. These students will be navigating through Learn21 (Lure of the Labyrinth) as part of MIT’s Education Arcade Next Generation Learning Challenge Grant competition.
- The September 2010-March 2012 statistics indicate there have been
  - 317,963 site visits from 75 countries/territories;
  - 132,628 unique visitors;
  - 1,658,544 page views;
  - 5.22 pages/visit.
- More than 90 West Virginia educators and technology specialists have increased their understanding of the digital resources available to students via the Internet. Through the review process, they have internalized the reality that not all resources are educationally sound, nor are they aligned to the West Virginia Content Standards and Objectives. As a result, teachers involved with this process encourage students to use Learn21 for interactive games, virtual field trips and video lessons in the core subjects of math, science and social studies.
- Students having difficulty learning educational concepts, such as understanding how to do multiple step equations in Algebra I, can go the Learn21 website and hear a master level teacher explain the concept again, see a problem worked, then try to solve some equations on their own.
- The number of resources available to students via Learn21 has significantly increased from 40 to more than 1,500 in less than two years.

3. Did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator’s name, present address, telephone number, and e-mail address.

   Yes, Learn21 is a culmination of work completed by the West Virginia Department of Education and a team of more than 60 educators and technology specialists. The WVDE liaison for Learn21 is Donna Landin. Her contact information is provided:

   Donna Landin, Coordinator for e-Learning
   West Virginia Department of Education
   1900 Kanawha Blvd. East
   Bldg. 6, Room 346
   Charleston, WV 25305
   dlandin@access.k12.wv.us
   304-558-7880

4. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?
While there are other portals that may appear to be similar to Learn21, we are unaware of any programs or websites that are as educationally scrutinized via such a detailed and thorough evaluation and review process. Learn21 is a new concept in that it was a prototype developed by West Virginia teachers, created for West Virginia students, and is aligned to the West Virginia Content Standards and Objectives. This free educational resource is easily accessible to all students in grades pre-K through Grade 12.

5. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter when attempting to adopt this program?

Learn21 is a free online resource for West Virginia students, educators and parents, and is accessible on all Internet-ready devices. Therefore, there are no anticipated obstacles in adopting or utilizing Learn21. However, for states wanting to develop their own version of Learn21, there are many factors to consider. West Virginia used internal personnel for the initial website development and contracted with West Virginia educators to serve as review team members. Other states might not have the personnel to develop such a site in-house.

Additionally, consideration will need to be given to the following:

- Determining what constitutes as a quality educational resource
- Establishing a digital (online) process for reviewing potential resources
- Maintaining and updating student resources to ensure appropriateness and timeliness
- Ensuring alignment to the state’s Content Standards and Objectives

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Phone: 859.244.8105
Fax: 859.244.8001 – Attn: Innovations Awards Program
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