

Two LCPS teachers receive grants to bring technology into classroom

LAS CRUCES >> East Picacho Elementary School first-grade teacher Mindy Tapia and Desert Hills Elementary School kindergarten teacher Michelle Estrada received grants from CenturyLink to incorporate technology in their classrooms.

Tapia received a \$4,910 grant to purchase 15 Kindle Fire HD tablets to read digital books, take virtual field trips, link up with regional and global ePals (an internet-based pen-pals, research authors and ePals' countries of origin, Tapia said Tapia.

"Students will create a dramatic presentation of their book in the form of a short play or poster," Tapia said in her grant proposal. "The plays and posters will be shared with their ePals through Skype. We will also view the plays and posters that the ePals create. Families will be invited to class for presentation day to view their child's and their ePal's presentation."

Estrada received a \$5,000 grant for a project called "Lights, Camera, Action! Making Movie Scripts Come To Life."

She aims for her students to become proficient in the use of iPad apps and features.

"Students will create pictures that correlate to vocabulary words, use iPads to film one another acting out the definitions and movie scripts (using Nancy Fetzner's "Word Masters to Movie Scripts," part of the LCPS writing curriculum), and create slideshows utilizing

student-created images on the iPads to illustrate their scripts," she said in her application.

The slideshows and videos will be on her class Web page to facilitate connec-

tions between home and school.

Estrada and Tapia were the only teachers in Las Cruces to receive the grants, from the CenturyLink Foundation's Teachers and Technology grant program, administered in New Mexico by Santa Fe-based Innovate+Educate.

The grant aims to "help teachers innovatively implement technology in their classrooms and increase student achievement," CenturyLink said in a news release.

The grant program "focuses on improving the access that K-12 students have to technology in their schools, which is why we chose to partner with Innovate+Educate to administer this grant program," said Valerie Dodd, CenturyLink's vice president and general manager for New Mexico. "Our goal to support enhanced student learning by encouraging teachers to be innovative in their classrooms aligns well with the goals of Innovate+Educate. We're proud to partner with an organization that is doing so much to positively impact students in New Mexico."

More than 80 New Mexico teachers applied for the annual grants.

Award checks were presented at a luncheon hosted by CenturyLink in Albuquerque July 17.

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