PUERTO RICO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TRAINS EDUCATORS ON DIGITAL LITERACY EXAM TO COMPLY WITH NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

"Puerto Rico is committed to meeting national education technology goals, and we are utilizing standards-based assessments to close the achievement gap in our schools. The IC³ exam is essential to making sure all of our students and teachers possess basic digital literacy skills."

**- Dr. Jesús M. Rivera Sánchez,
Puerto Rico Secretary of Education**

Partner: Certiport
Program: Certiport IC³
Market Sector: K-12 Education

BACKGROUND:

In the fall of 1999, the United States Department of Education undertook a strategic review and revision of the national educational technology plan, which resulted in five new national goals for technology in education. The new goals focus on using technology to transform teaching and learning, and giving every child access to information technology in their classrooms, communities and homes.

Soon after, Congress passed the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, defined as "an act to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind."

Puerto Rico has been in non-compliance with three of the NCLB technology imperatives since 2006, including:

- All students will be technologically literate by the end of 8th grade
- All teachers will be capable of using technology to improve student learning
- Technology will be integrated across all curriculum to ensure students achieve rigorous state standards

A key objective of NCLB legislation is to bridge the digital divide by ensuring every student is digitally literate "regardless of the student's race, ethnicity, gender, family income, geographic location, or disability." The Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) chose Certiport's Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC³®) as the ideal tool to meet the technology requirements of NCLB in multiple areas.

TOOLS FOR SUCCESS:

- Ability to position IC³ as the global standard for digital literacy
- IC³ Benchmark Tool to assess the skill level of students, teachers and administrators
- Train-the-trainers seminar to prepare educators for digital literacy initiatives
- IC³ certification pathway maps to the National Education Standards for Teachers
- Mentor IC³ to create tailored reports and allow users to assess their skills

STEPS TO SUCCESS

1. Problem Assessment: Puerto Rico has been non-compliant with the NCLB Act since 2006. Many students and teachers were not using technology to improve learning, and the PRDE was not measuring digital literacy among students or educators.

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2. Planning: The PRDE proposed a two-phase plan called "Assessment, Development and Validation of the Digital Literacy Skills of Students, Teachers and School Administrators of the Puerto Rico Department of Education through the IC³ Certification."

3. Approval: Phase I of the IC³ Certification Project was approved by the PRDE in May 2009. Phase I included:

    a. Assessment of technology literacy based on technology global standards

    b. IC³ digital literacy skills curriculum and instructional materials

    c. Validation of digital literacy skills through IC³ Certification

    d. Introduction to the National Education Technology Standards

4. Execution: In June 2009, the PRDE certified 113 train-the-trainers technology specialists and school librarians in collaboration with Certiport, the International Society of Technology in Education and the Department of Continuing Education of the Inter American University of Puerto Rico at Metropolitan Campus. All participants completed a four day seminar on the Introduction of the National Technology Education Standards (NETS) and Technology School Leadership.

5. Phase I Results: The PRDE trained 152 participants, with 19 participating online and 133 attending the seminar in a classroom setting. They achieved the following results:

    a. 85% of participants passed all certification exams to obtain the IC³ Certification

    b. 99% of participants felt prepared to effectively use technology in their classroom

    c. 98% of participants indicated they will be capable of providing support to other teachers, students and school administrators working towards IC³ certification

6. Recognition: In June 2010, Certiport presented the PRDE with the Certiport Technology 2010 Leadership Award, honoring their visionary leadership in promoting the foundational knowledge needed to succeed in environments that require the IC³ Certification Project use of computers and the Internet.

NEXT STEPS:

IC³ training and certification provides professional development "through electronic means" for teachers, administrators, and staff as required by the NCLB Act. In addition, IC³ training and certification works to meet the NCLB requirement to ensure every student is technologically literate by the time the student finishes the eighth grade.

With Phase I, the PRDE has already made a sweeping impact in utilizing the IC³ exam to assess, develop and validate the digital literacy skills of Puerto Rican teachers and school administrators.

The proposed Phase II of the IC³ Certification Project includes the assessment, development and validation of the digital literacy skills of all eighth grade students and all teachers in the PRDE.

"As we trained our educators as part of the IC³ Certification Project, we found the exam to be very effective in testing computing knowledge and skills to ensure digital literacy," said Dr. Jesús M. Rivera Sánchez, Puerto Rico Secretary of Education. "We began by training and preparing teachers and staff specialists to facilitate the project, and we look forward to working to certify all of our eighth grade students to achieve full compliance with the NCLB Act."