

Computer Tech Talk

Cumberland County
School District Technology
By Dennis Henson

What costs more than \$275,000* retail, uses more than 150 miles of wire and glass fiber, and can move all the information (text and pictures) found in six complete sets of Encyclopedia Britannica between buildings in less than one minute? -- Your Cumberland County School District computer network. This investment along with 500 user computers and support staff are focused on enhancing the learning for our county students.

Student Resources. Students in our school district have access to 350 computers (about 1 PC per 3 students). The state legislature has just appropriated funds to replace some aging computers ensuring students equal access to the best. Each computer is configured for word processing, presentations, spreadsheets, and access to the internet for classroom research. Students communicate with each other and their instructors via electronic web-mail. Each school maintains a dedicated computer lab for instruction and research. School libraries have between 15 and 45 computers, networked for research. High speed black and white networked printers are used to print homework and research. CCHS has specialized computer instruction including: programming, networking, computer aided drafting, and electronic office. Business classes have a dedicated lab with 20 modern computers to learn touch typing, advanced word processing, and business applications. Electronic versions of some text books are in use. Specialized database searches, online electronic card catalogs, and library automation are in use at each school. Distance learning for advanced courses is supported by the Kentucky Virtual High School (www.kvhs.org). The Kentucky Virtual Library (www.kyvl.org) is Kentucky's free information web source for students and state citizens. Use the KYVL to search databases, statistics, resources as Kentucky's digital library. See your county librarian for the user name and password to access KYVL databases. Kentucky Educational Television (4 digital KET channels) are received and distributed throughout each school and the Family Resource and Youth Services Center

(FRYSC). Each school has a "digital darkroom" to process, print, and present images taken with district digital still cameras. Digital video processing allows mixing and editing of video from a variety of video sources. broadcast live television "newsbreaks" at each school. Wireless computer networks (and internet access) are throughout each school including FRYSC and the district office. Each school is progressing toward wireless portable computer classrooms using movable carts full of wireless laptop computers. CCMS has a 30 laptop computer cart with 10 more laptops ordered for fall. CCES and CCHS have wireless laptops too.

Teacher Resources. Teachers have 80 desktop computers designed to make communication, management, and preparation for daily classroom activities easier. An electronic attendance and grading program is standard operating procedure, with centralized links to administration and Department of Education offices. Each computer has word processing, presentation, spreadsheets, and e-mail software. Networked black and white printers are used. Teachers can participate in distant learning with affiliated universities via the internet. An on-line service called "KET and Microsoft Word II" class is EncycloMedia" allows each teacher to present instructional videos to students. This is a free service of KET. Teachers and students use a site-wide computer program called Accelerated Reader to promote and document student reading progress. Each teacher has laptop computers, projectors, and electronic Smartboard™ systems available for interactive classroom activities. Touch-sensitive Smartboard™ displays connect to a computer and digital projector to show computer images. Teachers then control computer applications directly from the display, write notes in digital ink, and save work to share later, or browse the internet in the classroom.

Safety and Security. Student safety and security are an integral part of district technology. Each district site has a video surveillance system with digital recording for 24/7 monitoring of district activity. The district uses an internet screening service to weed out objectionable or obscene materials from student access.

Parent Resources. The Cumberland County Schools website: www.cland.k12.ky.us has been completely redesigned for your use. Much that you want to know about district, school, sports, clubs, and activities is just a click away. Effort is made to ensure the information is timely, relevant and useful. Once on the website, click the "Parents" tab on the interactive menu for your first stop. You will find links to the district academic plans, CATS based assessment reports, select district activities in the news, the annual academic calendar, bus routes, other transportation information, student supply lists, upcoming events, and what's for lunch. You can email faculty and staff even if you do not know the email address of the contact. Did you know that the CCES library card catalog and keyword search are on the internet? Just, click on the CCES library menu. Other parent resources include the MediaCom cable access channel maintained by school staff.

Community Computer Department of Education offices. Adult education courses are offered by the Cumberland County School District. FRYSC offers two six-week evening community education classes on computer topics during the school year. The first course is "Introduction to Computers", typically taught in the fall. A "Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word II" class is taught in the spring. Contact FRYSC at 864-1262 for more information. This fall, our senior librarian and media specialist at CCHS Lucille Garner will teach a public course titled "Introduction to the Internet". This is an excellent opportunity for those who are timid about looking up things on the internet. Watch the *Cumberland County News* for class scheduling.

Summary. The Cumberland County School District technology investment exists so that the students will use and be introduced to the latest technologies to become life long learners in the 21st century. Take full advantage of the investment in your child's education today. Questions and comments about this article may be emailed to: hcs@mchsi.com

* *Costs do not include the 500 computers and software used by students, teachers, and staff nor the operating and maintenance cost of any of the technology.*