

# COMMUNITY

Issue No. 87

U P D A T E

May 2001



*“Learning with technology is a priority, because it is what society expects of our children.”*

*Dan Leslie, superintendent of the Sabine Parish School System*

FULL STORY ON PAGE 4

## Education Gets Major Boost in Funding

*Department Receives Largest Increase of Any Domestic Agency in President’s Budget Request*

President Bush’s first budget request delivered to Congress last month calls for an 11.5 percent increase in federal funding for the Department of Education, which would inject an additional \$4.6 billion into the Department for fiscal year 2002.

“Since his first day in office, President Bush has demonstrated his commitment to providing every child in America with access to a quality education at all levels,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige. “He has made ‘No Child Left Behind’ his number one legislative priority and his number one domestic budget priority.”

Combined with a rigorous accountability system and increased flexibility, the president’s increased funding for public education will provide much-needed assistance for disadvantaged students and includes major increases in several programs:

- \$1 billion more for special education grants to states to provide assistance to students with disabilities;
- \$1 billion more for Pell Grants to provide disadvantaged students with financial assistance for higher education;
- \$614 million more for Reading First state grants to ensure that every U.S. child can read;
- \$459 million more for Title I grants to Local Education Agencies to assist low-performing schools and disadvantaged students;
- \$375 million more for state grants for improving teacher quality;
- \$320 million to help states develop and implement annual state reading and math assessments to measure the performance of all students every year in grades 3–8;

## COMMENTS

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*Community Update* is published by the Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs, U.S. Department of Education.

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## Parents Encouraging Information Literacy

With the increasing use of the Internet by students of all ages, the following tips adapted from the recommendations of Educational Resources Information Center are useful to parents for teaching their children how to effectively use information from the Web:

**Encourage and guide your children in exploring their interests.**

Point them to various resources—such as printed materials, videos, and computers—that they can use to find out about the things that interest them.

**Use “The Big Six” to help your children with their homework.**

Help them (1) determine what is expected from their homework assignments, (2) identify the necessary resources for the tasks, (3) locate the needed resources, (4) read or use the information, (5) apply the information to the tasks, and (6) evaluate the quality of their final product.

**Show your children how to evaluate information.** Teach them to ask the following questions: Who or

what is the authority? How current is the information? How might different people perceive this message? What is omitted?

**Teach your children about authors.** Point out the authors of the books they read. Explain to them that they must acknowledge other people's ideas, and show them how to document their sources.

**Instruct your children to consider the reliability of information from the Internet.** Explain to them that anyone can put information on the Internet. Teach them to look for the author's qualifications and sources. Ask them to consider whether the information on a Web site is being used to sell a product.

**Discuss information literacy with your children's teachers.** Ask them how they encourage information literacy and what you can do to help.

For more information about teaching information literacy, visit [www.accesseric.org/resources/parent/infoltrcy.html](http://www.accesseric.org/resources/parent/infoltrcy.html). To order print copies of the most recent titles, call 1-800-LET-ERIC (1-800-538-3742).

## New Reading Program

Next month, the U.S. Department of Education kicks off “Summer Book Links,” a program with fun reading and writing activities to encourage students to read over the summer. Students who read every day for six weeks with the help of families and volunteers receive a free Pizza Hut® coupon. Starting June 15, download Summer Book Links from [www.ed.gov/pubs/compactforreading](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/compactforreading), or order one copy and a coupon from 1-877-4ED-PUBS (1-877-433-7827), while supplies last.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

- \$175 million for a new Charter School Homestead Fund to expand parental options; and
- \$137 million more for public school buildings on military bases and Native American lands.

In addition to these increases in Department of Education funding, the president will provide other federal agencies with a \$490 million increase to support their initiatives related to his education reform

agenda. The president's budget also supports education through innovative tax exemptions and other non-discretionary investments in education. Both houses of Congress have passed budget resolutions that closely reflect the president's budget priorities.

For the latest news of Department of Education funding and a state-by-state analysis of proposed allocations, visit [www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/budget.html](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/budget.html), or call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327).

# Tips for Technology Success

By Bruce Whitehead, *Missoula, Montana*



I remember vividly my days as an elementary school principal trying to get my technology program off the ground. I also remember trying desperately to get

reluctant staff members to accept and use networked computers in their classrooms, as well as find the dollars to fund the program.

Through trial and error—actually more error than trial—I learned hard and fast lessons that I call “The Seven Golden Nuggets.” These are tips I developed during planning and implementation of a program that helped my school, Hellgate Elementary in Missoula, Montana, become a National Blue Ribbon School and a national demonstration site for the effective use of classroom technology.

The first lesson is that technology should not drive curriculum but just the opposite—curriculum should drive technology. We work to make technology transparent and fit our existing curriculum, in which teachers use computers, LCD projectors, scanners, and other technology, much like they would an overhead or VCR.

Second, I came to realize that the key to using technology successfully is the teacher. Only teachers can make technology happen effectively in the classroom.

Third, I find that money follows success. Our district makes technology a major funding priority and has technology as a line item in our budget, which represents at least 5 percent of the general fund. This provides a stable source of revenue for technology each year and helps to ensure success.

Fourth, I decided to put at least five high-speed networked computers with a printer in each classroom, and more if necessary to achieve a stu-

dent-computer ratio of 5-to-1. This enhances a cooperative learning environment for each classroom, where students and teachers have access to computers and the Internet all day.

Fifth, I formulate strategies on how to reach the “reluctants”—those teachers having difficulty fully integrating technology into their classrooms. I now use a mentor program, whereby I pair a teacher having difficulty in using technology with a master technology teacher. I send both, as a team, to conferences and schedule their prep periods together in order for them to practice computer applications. I believe in providing staff development via “teachers teaching teachers” and in using a combination of student early outs, rotation of substitute teachers, and extended teacher contracts to build in time for professional development.

Sixth, I find that it is easy to measure and evaluate success with technology by monitoring the amount and quality of student writing; enhancement of cooperative learning; awareness of student learning styles; application of student technical tutoring; and the level of e-mail communication among teachers, parents and administrators.

Finally, I have found that an effective public relations program develops community awareness. When parents and community leaders understand why classroom technology is so important to the future of their children, they are more willing to support it.

If these golden nuggets can work for a rural school in Montana like ours, they can work for just about any school across the country.

*Bruce Whitehead is the principal of Hellgate Intermediate School and an associate professor at the University of Montana. He designed and implemented a model for classroom technology centers that earned him the National Distinguished Principals Award from the National Association of Elementary School Principals.*

## Satellite Town Meeting



Tuesday, May 15  
8:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m. E.T.

School and community leaders agree that today’s education technologies have great potential to improve academic achievement. A broad range of technologies, including the World Wide Web, e-mail, and distance learning, can be especially powerful tools for helping disadvantaged and under-served students connect with new learning resources.

Secretary Paige’s May 15 *Satellite Town Meeting* will be entitled “Enhancing Education Through Technology: New Tools to Close the Achievement Gap.” A panel of school and community leaders will explore questions such as:

- How can today’s educational technologies help all students, including disadvantaged students, meet high academic standards?
- How can teachers be well prepared to learn and use new educational technologies?
- How can schools and communities create comprehensive technology plans to improve student achievement?
- What resources are available to schools and communities to support their educational technology needs?

To join the Satellite Town Meeting, call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327), or visit [www.ed.gov/satelliteevent](http://www.ed.gov/satelliteevent). Also, view live or archived Webcasts of the meeting by visiting Apple Computer’s Apple Learning Interchange at <http://ali.apple.com/events/aliqtv/>.

The Satellite Town Meeting is produced by the U.S. Department of Education in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Alliance of Business, with support from the Bayer Foundation, the Procter and Gamble Fund and Target Stores.

# Just a Click Away



*Technology Connects  
a Rural Louisiana  
School District to the  
Rest of the World*

BY NICOLE ASHBY

In the rural parish of Sabine, Louisiana—where the timber mill is the largest employer and the nearest major city, Houston, Texas, is three and a half hours away—technology is enabling the school system to do more with less.

Although the district has no Latin teacher, for instance, high school students are studying Latin online through a distance learning program. Elementary school children are discovering fun facts and figures about the weather on Web pages located by their teachers, comparing temperatures in their region to those of other schools across the country through an electronic pen-pal program.

“The computer is just one of the tools we use to turn the kids on to learning,” says Ross Williams, head of the technology effort for the Sabine Parish School System. “And now with instructional software, the Internet and teacher training, it is an expected part of the instruction.”

In 1996, Sabine (pronounced Sa-been) began wiring its 12 schools thanks to several federal grants that allowed the district to install local area networks at each school and dedicated telephone lines for Internet service. Through a number of additional pub-

lic and private resources, Sabine provides every six students access to at least one computer, a supply it is hoping to increase until the ratio is one to one.

Unlike a larger or urban district, which would have more opportunities to build community partnerships, Sabine does not have many business contributions for its technology initiative. Also, timber and tourism, not technology, are the area’s primary industries. Yet Superintendent Dan Leslie has not settled for this excuse. “Once you set your priorities, you’ll find the money,” he counters. “And learning with technology is a priority, because it is what society expects of our children.”

Approximately 63 percent of Sabine’s 4,200 students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, but only half of them have access to a home computer. Closing the digital divide between those students plugged into the Internet at home and those who are not, Williams says, is the responsibility of the education system. He says providing adequate computer access should run along side other school services such as health and nutritional care.

So far, Sabine has connected 85 percent of its classrooms to the

Internet and boasts one of the most extensive Web sites in the state, with over 3,000 educational links. “The Internet has shrunk our world considerably by boosting access to information,” says Williams, “allowing students to further explore subjects that a textbook cannot.”

However, the impact technology has on student progress, Williams points out, can only be rightly measured when there is “continuity from class to class, grade to grade, school to school, when everyone has truly come on board.” Test scores and student attendance recently improved at Zwolle, an elementary school in the American Indian community, “because the teachers, administrators and parents got together and really worked towards that





*Cathy Rankin assists one of the students in her online computer science course.*

success, and technology was certainly a part of that effort,” Williams adds.

### **Technology Licenses**

Equally critical to supplying every classroom with Internet-connected computers is ensuring that every teacher is trained to use them well.

Through a 56-hour training program called “InTech,” Sabine’s teachers learn how to integrate technology into their lessons as well as how to use basic computer applications. The school district was one of the first sites to implement the state’s professional development program, which is centered on Louisiana’s content standards. At least three teachers from the same school are required to sign up together to help build a support system of trained staff. At some schools, more than 70 percent of the teachers have gone through the training. Bell South’s “Power to Teach” grant will help train an additional 50 of the 330 teachers in the district.

Teachers receive a “technology license” after passing a proficiency assessment that entitles them to a new classroom computer equipped with a printer and several software packages.

They are given a network account and an e-mail address along with a dial-up connection that enables them to access their files from home.

Sabine’s Technology Learning Center, a 12-station lab located at the district’s headquarters, also serves as a host site for InTech training. Equipped with scanners and projection devices, the lab is open to the community and provides free classes every Wednesday.

Williams says bringing everybody on board also includes leadership training. With funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, “LEADTech” is a two-year program that teaches principals to support their school improvement efforts through the use of instructional technology. Four of Sabine’s 12 principals are now in the program.

This summer, Sabine will begin camps for students interested in learning about computers, who will then support their school’s technology coordinator during the school year.

### **A New Style of Teaching**

Williams admits that it will take some time for teachers to feel comfortable with technology in the classroom because they are learning not only a new medium but a new style of teaching, which he equates with being the “guide on the side versus the sage on the stage.”

Cathy Rankin, who teaches an online computer science course, says this brand of teaching gives students, particularly in the distance learning program, greater ownership of their learning. “Many of the students who would not excel in a classroom do very well here,” she says. “They can do more because they don’t have to worry about appearing to be foolish in front of someone else.”

Alicia Holland, a senior at Many High taking an online art history course, agrees. “I like the different way of learning, being out of a classroom and doing it on my own.” Holland says another benefit of online learning is the flexibility that allows her to work at her own pace.

Approximately 35 students in Sabine are involved in the Louisiana Virtual Classroom Pilot Project. The statewide program offers Sabine students

11 courses, ranging from Conceptual Physics to Spanish. Some students are taking an online course as an extra class, doing it entirely from home.

Communication among students and teachers is facilitated through e-mail and a discussion board, which is a public arena for messages and class announcements. A student having trouble solving a problem, for example, can post a query to the discussion board to enlist help from fellow students. In addition, the teacher is always available by phone.

Rankin says that although more time is required because “everything has to be very well planned and very well published for the kids to get access to it,” the virtual classroom allows her more time with the students.

“I feel like when I’m online, I’m



*Alicia Holland (right) and classmate search the Internet for a class project.*

really able to teach again,” she says. “There are no interruptions. Everybody has an opportunity to ask a question and I have the opportunity to respond. No one gets left out. And that’s a good feeling as a teacher.”

For more information about the technology initiatives in the Sabine Parish School System, contact its technology director, Ross Williams, at 318-256-9228 or at ross@radar.sabine.k12.la.us. Also, visit Sabine’s Web site at www.sabine.k12.la.us.



# PARTNERSHIP

## *for Family Involvement in Education*

*A coalition of more than 7,200 education, community, religious and business organizations nationwide.  
To join the Partnership, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit <http://pfie.ed.gov>.*

## Nation's Newspaper Reaches Classrooms through Technology

**U***SA TODAY*, a strong supporter of education since the paper was founded in 1982, helps students better understand the people, places and events that impact their lives by connecting them to each day's news in a colorful and engaging way.

According to Nancy Weldon, chair of the language arts department at Hialeah-Miami Lakes Senior High School in Florida, "*USA TODAY* has brought the world into our classrooms. The activities and curriculum have been invaluable teaching tools for promoting learning and literacy."

A member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education (PFIE) since 1997, *USA TODAY* is able to deliver timely news around the world because of technology. The newspaper is published via satellite at 33 locations in the United States and at four international sites. Each day more than one million readers visit *USA TODAY*'s Web site.

The education section of the site— at <http://education.usatoday.com>— provides parents and educators with access to a daily lesson plan called "Experience TODAY." The lesson plan is available each evening prior to the newspaper's publication, which lets teachers know what's going to be in the next day's paper before it goes to press.

Experience TODAY activities use graphics and editorial features from



<http://education.usatoday.com>

each day's news that can be integrated into all curricular areas for students in grades 6–12. Key features of the lesson plan include discussion questions based on major newsbreaking stories; critical thinking questions about topics such as technology, leadership, diversity and self-esteem; and activities to help students talk about the news with their parents.

The lesson plan has proven to have significant effects in the classroom. In one instance, a Florida teacher used the *USA TODAY* article about the Santana High School shooting to discuss whether or not it would be

acceptable to break a confidence shared by a peer. As a result of that discussion, a student decided to inform the teacher that a friend intended to commit suicide. The school intervened in time and was able to avoid a possible tragedy. In a letter thanking the newspaper, the teacher wrote that the use of *USA TODAY*'s activity "perhaps even saved a student's life."

Recent additions to the Web site have included "Career Quest" worksheets and "Education Roundup," which provides links to interactive resources for timely events, such as in-depth coverage of Census 2000 and the Olympics.

At the college level, *USA TODAY* was instrumental in starting the "Newspaper Readership Program," supplying *USA TODAY* and a selection of other newspapers to designated campuses across the country each morning. This summer, academic resources for college professors will also be available through the program.

*USA TODAY* also hosts PFIE's own Web site at <http://pfie.ed.gov>. For additional information about *USA TODAY* education programs, call 1-800-757-TEACH.

*The U.S. Department of Education does not mandate or prescribe particular curricula or lesson plans. The information in this article is provided only as a resource that educators may find helpful.*

# ABOUT *our* PARTNERS

## *A Roundup of Recent Activities*



*Students in Newport News, Va., use wireless technology in their reading program.*

### **Newport News Public Schools**

Newport News Public Schools in Virginia recently launched a wireless network that enables elementary school students to use wireless devices to gather data for remote, on-site research. Eight elementary schools in Newport News are currently equipped with this technology, and by the end of next year, all of its 28 elementary schools will be connected. “The program allows us to move technology out of the corner and into direct instruction,” says Newsome Park School principal Pete Bender. For more information on Newport News’ technology program, call 757-881-5061 extension 100, or visit [www.sbo.nn.k12.va.us](http://www.sbo.nn.k12.va.us).

### **SAS Institute**

In March, SAS in School—a division of SAS Institute and the Carolina Biological Supply Company—issued software for use with traditional lab activities in secondary science classes. SAS Institute develops K–12 educational technologies, multimedia instructional software, assessment tools and research services. Mark Nielson, technology director for the CIS Academy in Durham, North

Carolina, says that “watching our students connect to poetry, science and math has been a joy.” For more information, call 919-677-8000, or visit [www.SASinschool.com](http://www.SASinschool.com).

### **Scholastic.com**

Scholastic.com—a one-stop shop for thousands of free lesson plans, online activities, and professional development and classroom management resources—features a new “Class Homepage Builder” tool that helps teachers create their own Web pages to foster school-to-home communications. For more information, call 1-800-SCHOLASTIC (1-800-724-6527), or visit [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com).



*Teachers exchange ideas in a Learning Network workshop.*

### **Learning Network**

Free monthly e-mail newsletters, professional development workshops, and online gradebook services for educators are now available from the Learning Network. The network seeks to bridge the connection between schools and families of students in grades K–12. For more information, call 1-800-816-1999, or visit [www.learningnetwork.com](http://www.learningnetwork.com).



## CALENDAR

**May 8–10**, Atlantic City, N.J.  
*“Fostering Careers In Law, Public Safety and Security.”* Call Partners in Education at 703-836-4880, or e-mail Joe Coffee at [jcoffee@napehq.org](mailto:jcoffee@napehq.org).

**May 10–11**, Washington D.C.  
*Business and Education 2001 Conference: “Leveraging Technology—A Call to Action.”* Call The Conference Board at 212-339-0345, or visit [www.conference-board.org/b&e.htm](http://www.conference-board.org/b&e.htm).

**May 31–June 1**, Westborough, Mass.  
*Massachusetts Parent Involvement Project 2001 Conference/Showcase.* Call Patrice Garvin at 617-695-9771, or e-mail [pgarvin@mits.org](mailto:pgarvin@mits.org).

**June 7–8**, Washington, D.C.  
*National Fatherhood Initiative’s Fourth Annual Summit on Fatherhood: “Broadening the Reach.”* Call 301-948-0599, or visit [www.fatherhood.org/summit.htm](http://www.fatherhood.org/summit.htm).

**June 28–July 1**, Minneapolis, Minn.  
*Points of Light Foundation 2001 National Conference: “Community Volunteering and National Service.”* Call TuNia Slade at 202-729-3220, or e-mail [registration@pointsoflight.org](mailto:registration@pointsoflight.org).



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The National Institute for Literacy has just issued two reports and a video entitled *Teaching Children to Read*. Presenting research-based reading instruction, the materials are from a study conducted by the National Reading Panel. For a copy, while supplies last, call 1-800-370-2943, or visit [www.nationalreadingpanel.org/Publications/publications.htm](http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/Publications/publications.htm).

*While these resources are relevant to the mission of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, they are available from a variety of sources and their presence here does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education.*

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# Just a Click Away

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## Spinning a Web of Education Resources

According to a survey by the National Center for Education Statistics, more than half of today's students say they use the Internet on a regular basis to do research for school. At [www.ed.gov/free](http://www.ed.gov/free)—a gateway to thousands of education resources from federal agencies—students can access primary source documents, such as a revised draft of FDR's speech to Congress declaring the country's involvement in World War II. Below is a sample of the newest resources at the FREE Web site:

**Explore Themes in American Art**, provided by the National Gallery of Art, looks at 10 genres of American art: abstraction, the figure, historical subjects, landscape painting, marine painting, portraiture, narrative art, scenes

from everyday life, still life, and topographical views. Illustrated essays, images, featured artists and references are offered for each genre.

**So You Want to Learn About the Civil War?** offers a portrayal of the daily life of soldiers at Petersburg, Virginia, the supply center to the Confederate capital and site of the longest siege in American warfare. Provided by the National Park Service at the Petersburg National Battlefield, photos, excerpts from letters, and biographies of more than 20 leaders explore this segment of history.

**The Luso-Hispanic World in Maps** includes maps created as far back as the early 16th century, from the repository of the Library of Congress. The maps, most of which are hand drawn, depict portions of five continents and represent

different national and political interests and perspectives.

To access these and other resources, go to the "new resources" link at [www.ed.gov/free](http://www.ed.gov/free).

