

BACK-TO-SCHOOL EDITION

eSCHOOL NEWS

BEST PRACTICES in School Technology

A supplement from the publishers of eSCHOOL NEWS

A photograph of a female teacher with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a light blue ribbed polo shirt and a necklace, sitting at a wooden desk with a white laptop. She is smiling and looking towards a young male student standing next to her. The student is wearing a green and blue striped shirt and is also smiling. On the desk, there is a stack of books, a blue pen, and a black watch on the student's wrist. The background is a teal wall.

K-20 Success
Stories and
Case Studies

BEST PRACTICES in School Technology

Best Practices in School Technology is a publication of eSchool News and is dedicated to providing K-20 educators real-world solutions to school technology challenges.

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identiMetrics Brings Biometrics to Hammonton New Jersey Schools

“We needed biometrics that worked with 4, 5 and 6 year old children every day...identiMetrics works!”

Hammonton Public Schools are located in New Jersey. We have four schools in our district: one early childhood education center, one elementary school, one middle school and one high school - over 3,400 students. Foodservices serves about 1,750 lunches, 500 breakfasts and 500 snacks per day.



Jane G. Cora, DTR

As the Supervisor of Food Service, I'm responsible for managing all aspects of breakfasts, lunches, and after-school snacks, hiring, budget, evaluations, scheduling, inventory, food ordering and following all federal laws for the Child Nutrition Program. This is an area that is growing increasingly complex with one of the requirements being accurate student identification for reimbursement.

One of the biggest headaches in foodservice is identifying students. In my experience working in other schools, cards and PINs just don't work effectively. Students are constantly forgetting or losing their cards and forgetting or sharing PINs. The young children can't remember their telephone numbers let alone memorize a PIN! At one point, we even had the PINs taped to the students' shirts. Needless to say, that didn't work either. We also have problems with students with free lunch tickets either selling them or feeling stigmatized and not eating. And mistakes are made in punching in the PINs. We had poor accountability using lettered meal tickets for food service purchases and had to fix it.


I have been in school foodservice for ten years. This is my fourth district. So when it was time to purchase a new cafeteria point-of-sale system for all of the schools in the district, I knew what worked and, more importantly, what didn't.

We chose QSP's cafeteria point-of-sale system. And I wanted to use biometrics. I love the technology and the fact that the students always have their ID with them so there's no anxiety about remembering the card or PIN. QSP recommended the identiMetrics biometrics system.

identiMetrics is the leader in school cafeteria biometrics. They work with any cafeteria application that uses cards or PINs. They know schools and how to implement biometrics in schools. And most importantly, they specialize in biometrics for young children. Our early childhood education center has 500 pre-K to first graders, ages four, five and six. We needed a biometric system that worked and knew that most of them did not work with young children. identiMetrics works with ALL of our four, five and six years olds, every day.

identiMetrics' solution, identiFi™, scans a student's finger for identification. identiFi can operate in a single lunch line or provide identification throughout the entire school district. There's an added bonus: once identiFi is installed in the cafeteria, it can be used to identify students in other areas of the school like classroom attendance, library, nurse's office and for security access at the front door since the students are already enrolled.

How's it working? Our foodservice staff mastered the program easily. Some of them have become experts in enrolling students. Principals were all very supportive. They didn't want to issue cards. Parent response has been excellent. They love the account set-up since everything is now confidential. We were even featured in an article in the local paper. Initially, there were questions regarding privacy. But identiFi doesn't take an actual fingerprint, just unique identifying points. It's certainly more private than a picture and a name on a lost card or a PIN taped to a shirt for everyone to see. Everyone felt comfortable that the fingerprints can't be recreated. Students adapted quickly. I spent some time with the little ones initially, but they learned how to place their finger on the scanner in no time.

In foodservice, seconds count. My goal is to keep it simple for the students, my staff and myself and make it an enjoyable experience to come to the school cafeteria. identiMetrics biometrics as part of my cafeteria point-of-sale did just that. My food service operation has improved, I'm saving time and money, and I love how easy it is to use. I have irrefutable proof of all student purchases for my records, free and reduced lunch students do not feel stigmatized since everything is confidential, the lunch lines move fast, and best of all, the students never forget their ID! 



610-993-9042

www.identiMetrics.net

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION USING ATOMIC LEARNING

Portage Schools: Enriching Curriculum and Community

Mary Whyte, Technology Integration Specialist at Portage Public Schools in Michigan, has seen the effects Atomic Learning can have not only on a district, but on the community as well.

Five years ago at an education conference, Whyte heard people talking about a new product designed to be an anytime, anywhere answer to the technology questions educators and students have. Whyte was intrigued and soon discovered the product they were talking about was Atomic Learning. When Whyte visited the Atomic Learning website, she saw the implications this program could have in her district and on her students. What she did not foresee, was the impact it would have on the community.

Whyte had been watching Atomic Learning since her first experience with it five years ago and was waiting for the right opportunity to incorporate it into the curriculum at Portage. Last year, the opportunity arose.

“All of the teachers at Portage received new computers with Microsoft Office 2003,” explained Whyte. Along with the new computers and software, Portage determined it would be beneficial to subscribe to Atomic Learning.

Portage has made a strong effort in the last year to make Atomic Learning an integral part of their district. Not only did they produce their own internal videos on the use of Atomic Learning, but they also use it for software training and have incorporated it into their curriculum.

Whyte and her colleagues have worked very hard to integrate Atomic Learning into the curriculum at Portage. To kick-off their subscription to Atomic Learning, Portage created their own marketing campaign, producing internal videos highlighting Atomic Learning and its benefits. In no time, students and teachers were walking the hallways repeating the slogan “Ask AL!”.

The next step was to teach educators how to use Atomic Learning, offering them a resource to improve their technology skills so they would feel comfortable integrating technology into the classroom.

Teachers in the district created customized plans that addressed their individualized training needs. As they implemented their plans, the teachers were able to use Atomic Learning at their own pace, answering the questions they had about various software applications.

As the teachers became more comfortable with their technology skills and Atomic Learning, they slowly began integrating Atomic Learning into their curriculum. They have been using it in a variety of ways, but have found particular success

with the Excel Lesson Accelerators in their middle schools. “We went through a mass K-12 realignment and were looking for ways to incorporate databases into our lessons,” described Whyte. “Atomic Learning has been a good resource.”

“Atomic Learning is really raising the whole community’s level of technology skills.”

—Mary Whyte
Technology Integration Specialist
Portage Public Schools

Not only has Portage used Atomic Learning in response to their realignment needs, but they have also been using it successfully in conjunction with Kidspiration and KidPix to meet the new Michigan Education Technology Standards (METS).

As far as Whyte is concerned, the integration of Atomic Learning in the curriculum has been positive. “The response from the students has been outstanding,” she said.

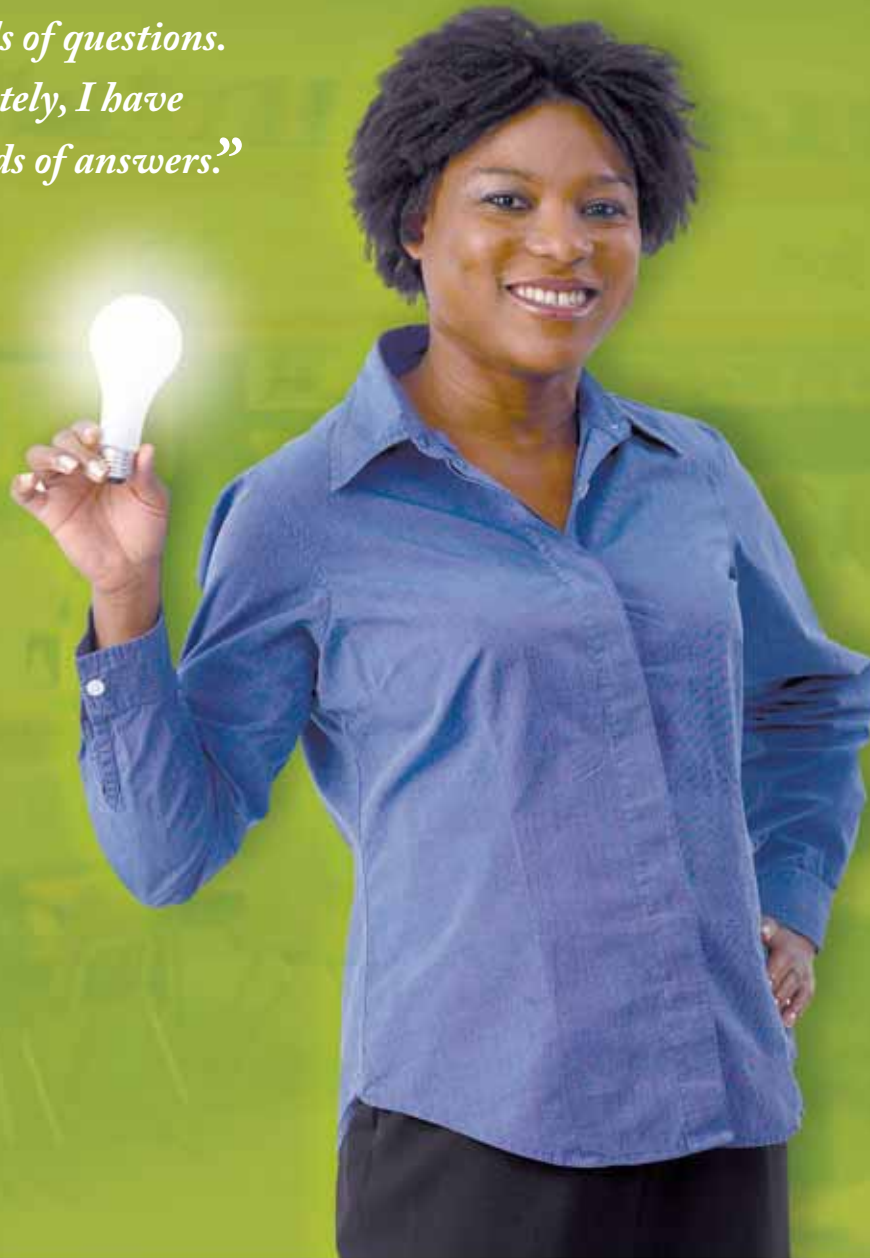
The benefits of Atomic Learning have stretched through the educators, to the students and out into the community. “The kids take home this technology and show it to their parents,” expressed Whyte. “Atomic Learning is really raising the whole community’s level of technology skills.” BP



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Williford Achieves AYP with Successful Technology Implementation and Leadership

With an exceptionally low socio-economic student population and one of the poorest performance records in North Carolina, Williford Elementary (Nash-Rocky Mount School District) achieved its first AYP in large part to the successful implementation and use of classroom interactive technology.

Facing the daunting challenge of a student population of which 98 percent receive free and reduced lunch and more than a third are homeless in a transient community where a quarter of the people move annually, Williford Elementary Principal Sandra Farmer urgently sought solutions and that would positively impact her school. The solutions she implemented have not only turned the failing school around, but have become the model for the district as well.

First, Williford decided to change the traditional paradigm of teaching. With the district's highest suspension rate, one of Williford's goals was to fully engage students to reduce time lost on discipline issues. A new approach was needed.

Farmer laid out a model plan that would touch all the school's stakeholders. "I asked teachers to vow to empower students at any cost," Farmer said. Farmer and her faculty also mobilized parents- no easy task in a community where half the households are headed by a single-parent. Before and after-school programs were introduced to keep kids off the streets and provide more opportunities to learn and develop. Williford also established partnerships with businesses for donations and to host events that enabled students, parents and teachers to build a sense of school community off-campus in new, fun ways.

Farmer and her team then began to research and identify interactive learning technologies that presented the most promise- and proven results- that would work for Williford. After analyzing available technologies, her team selected class leading Promethean Activboards.

Next, Farmer applied for and won federal IMPACT funding through grants from the North Carolina State Board of Education. In addition to the Promethean Activboards, that have replaced chalkboards in classrooms, the federal technology grant has permitted the purchase of computers, projectors and digital cameras. Williford has received more than \$1 million in grants over the past three years.

"One main goal of the IMPACT Model is High Student Achievement. In fact, that is Goal 1," Farmer said. "One way Williford ensures high achievement is by allowing teachers to collaborate with other teachers and specialists. In monthly collaborative sessions, grade level teams meet with our media coordinator, tech facilitator, and other specialists to develop an integrated unit where technology is infused seamlessly."




Sandra Farmer,
Williford Elementary Principal

In 2003, Williford began its technology transformation with the installation of one Promethean Activboard per grade level. By the end of 2004 each of Williford's classrooms had a Promethean Activboard which come with Activstudio lesson development software that enables teachers to easily integrate text, audio, video and Web content into lessons. Williford also purchased Activslates, which free teachers from remaining at the front of the classroom by the whiteboard. Williford saw a marked reduction in disciplinary issues and an increase in attention.

"I'd never teach in a school without one," said second-grade teacher Jerry Lashley. "The kids can participate in ways they can't on a normal chalkboard."

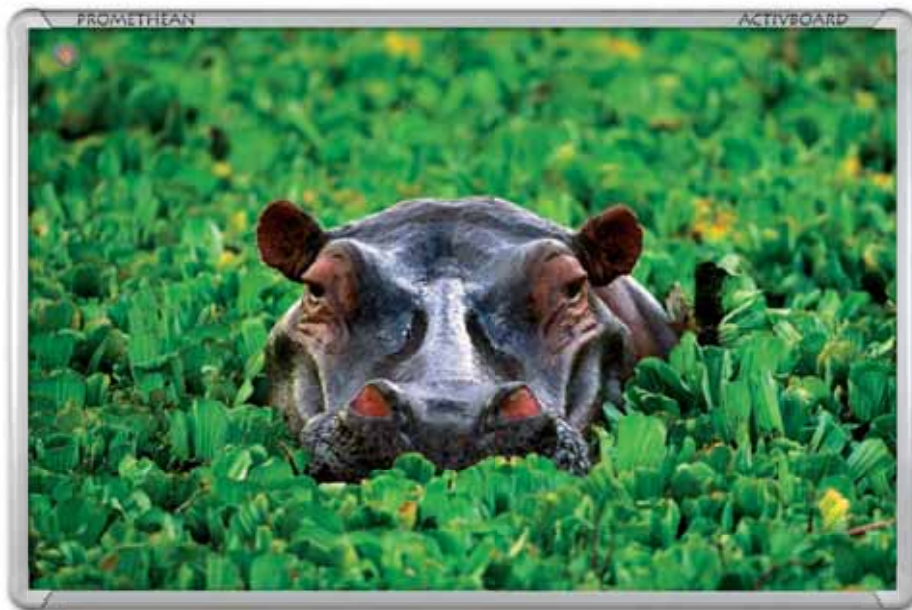
Third grade teacher Christie Baker innovatively uses her Activboard to communicate with students. "In the morning, I have a message for them to read," Baker said. "It's a good way to communicate without talking all the time, and it's visual."

The ensuing changes at Williford were nothing less than astounding. Since receiving the grant to purchase new technologies, student performance at the school has increased, with better test results on both state and federal mandated tests. After taking the 2004 end-of-grade tests, Williford achieve AYP status for the first time. All but one student scored at or above grade level, Farmer reported. And in two and a half years, Williford has posted a 14-point growth rate to achieve 81.1 percent proficiency up from 67 percent in 2003. Williford's End-of-Grade test scores are the highest they have ever been in 2005. And the turnover rate of the same teachers who vowed to empower students, has gone from among the highest to among the lowest in the school system. Most importantly, the results have been long-lasting- Williford has continued to make AYP every year since.

Indeed, Williford's implementation of the IMPACT model has set the stage for the Nash-Rocky Mount School District to install 100 additional Promethean Activboards distributed to all math and science classes in the district. 



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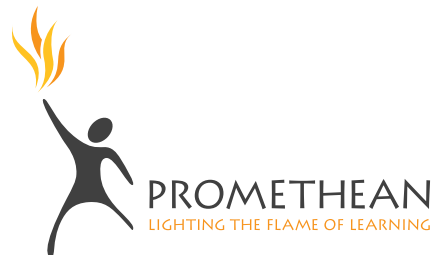
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VBrick's EtherneTV Provides Edina Public Schools with Education On Demand

Edina Public School District in suburban Minneapolis has deployed VBrick digital video capabilities for student on-demand educational programming and faculty/staff training. Additionally, Edina Public Schools uses VBrick to stream live events and cable television to the classroom and distribute student and teacher developed programming (such as morning announcements). The foundation of Edina's digital video capabilities is VBrick's EtherneTV Media Distribution System, a turnkey platform to record, distribute, and manage DVD-quality content.

Edina's innovative digital video capabilities reflect technology's central role in its educational and operational initiatives. Specifically, Edina's District Technology Plan outlines key strategies and goals for incorporating technology into all student educational activities.

"We remain committed to embracing technologies that prepare our children to succeed by promoting learning, enhancing communication, and inspiring creativity," said Dr. Michael Burke, director of District Media and Technology Services, Edina Public School District. "Digital video capabilities from VBrick coupled with our extensive technology resources support teachers' best practices by providing engaging content for all subjects and at all grade levels. Our technology provides additional tools to support varied learning styles and to enhance student achievement."

Creating A Dynamic Digital Video Foundation

Edina upgraded its network backbone to converge all communications – voice, data, and video – onto a single IP network, eliminating burdensome administrative requirements to manage IP and coax cable networks. Importantly, Edina's IP convergence strategy addressed the district's requirements to provide teachers with digital video multimedia capabilities.

Centralized and simplified administration is paramount as the district continues to introduce new classroom technologies and the student population grows. Edina District Media and Technology Services supports diverse IT requirements for the district's more than 7,500 students and nearly 1,140 teachers and support staff in nine schools.

Prior to selecting a digital video solution, Edina's 4,000-title VHS tape library was cumbersome for both administrators and teachers, requiring significant resources for delivering, retrieving, and cataloging VHS tapes. The VHS tape system also limited teacher selection to videos on the media library shelves and created scheduling challenges.

To support its digital video initiatives, Edina worked closely with SKC Communication Products, Inc., a communication and conferencing solutions service provider. To update its multimedia capabilities, Edina selected EtherneTV based on cost, ease-of-use, flexibility, and reliability criteria. EtherneTV includes the EtherneTV-NXG Video on Demand server, the VBrick Portal Server, and VBrick MPEG-2 and MPEG-4 encoder appliances.



Melody Goldmeyer, Technology Integration Specialist, Edina Schools, demonstrating EtherneTV

EtherneTV's intuitive, menu-driven interface enables teachers using networked PCs to search the district's digital video library by subject, grade level, and additional parameters – and access videos on their networked PCs immediately. The Edina classroom PCs connect to ceiling-mounted LCD projectors, which display the digital video programming to students. VBrick's digital video capabilities enable multiple classrooms to view the same video segment concurrently, based on each title's licensing agreement.

"Any classroom technology must incorporate ease-of-use and reliability to ensure that teachers maximize the educational resources available," said Al Bliss, technology specialist, District Media and Technology Services, Edina Public School District. "VBrick combines straightforward point-and-click operations with the flexibility required to ensure that teachers and staff access the video content easily to complement existing lessons and enhance the learning environment."

Streamlining Staff, Administrative Training

EtherneTV on-demand capabilities are integral to training teachers and media staff to use Edina's new ceiling-mounted projectors that are being installed in every new and renovated classroom. District Media and Technology Services created a training video that provides step-by-step visual instruction for projector use. EtherneTV enables the projector training video to include a link to a users' manual for individuals who also want written projector directions.

"The on-demand training videos for teachers and staff have saved countless hours of administrative time while maintaining our high level of service to district employees," said Bliss. "With VBrick, we fulfill federal OSHA training requirements while also providing a system to train staff seamlessly as we roll out IP phones and additional technologies to expand educational resources and district operations." ^{BF}



Hall Memorial bet on SMART and won

– *Hall Memorial School Case Study, Willington, Connecticut*

Hall Memorial may be a small fourth- to eighth-grade rural school with just over 330 students, but the right principal, a Blue Chip School Grant and SMART Board™ interactive whiteboards have transformed this Willington, Connecticut, school from ordinary to exemplary.

Integrating technology 101

Like many rural schools, Hall Memorial doesn't have much money for technology, so during principal David Harding's first year at the school, he and a few teachers searched for additional technology funding. Along with 16 other schools in the state, Hall Memorial was awarded a Blue Chip School Grant of US\$225,000 for technology and professional development in 2002.

Wanting to use the money effectively, Harding researched everything from laptops to handheld devices, eventually choosing SMART Board interactive whiteboards.

But Harding was cautious. He purchased one SMART Board interactive whiteboard, and to test it out, he gave it to math teacher Lynn Reedy, his most tech-savvy teacher.

"There was so much excitement from the teachers about the interactive whiteboard and how versatile and easy to use it was," says Reedy.

Seeing the enthusiasm, Harding bought four more SMART Board interactive whiteboards and gave them to the teachers who showed the most interest in technology.

"Now, our art teacher, our music teacher, our shop teacher – everybody uses a SMART Board interactive whiteboard."

– David Harding, Principal

Students speak up

Harding also created a student technology committee that surveyed students about SMART Board interactive whiteboards. He learned that students felt more engaged and excited about learning, they were more likely to want to go to the interactive whiteboard and they found lessons easier to understand because they could visualize exactly what the teacher was talking about.

Harding knew he'd made the right decision. Within two years, he gave every teacher a laptop and put a SMART Board interactive whiteboard in every classroom. He says the laptops helped the integration process because teachers could take them home at night to work on lessons.

"Now, our art teacher, our music teacher, our shop teacher – everybody uses a SMART Board interactive whiteboard," says Harding.



Student success soars

Although Harding doesn't believe that technology alone improves student performance, he does expect to see rising scores over the next few years. He believes that integrating SMART Board interactive whiteboards has increased engagement and improved performance.

Harding says even the culture of the school has changed – teachers and students at Hall Memorial are excited to be there every day. With so much excitement about learning, discipline issues are nonexistent. This gives teachers more time to focus on teaching. "We don't have discipline issues here – all the focus is on curriculum alignment and strategies for improving curriculum." ^{BP}

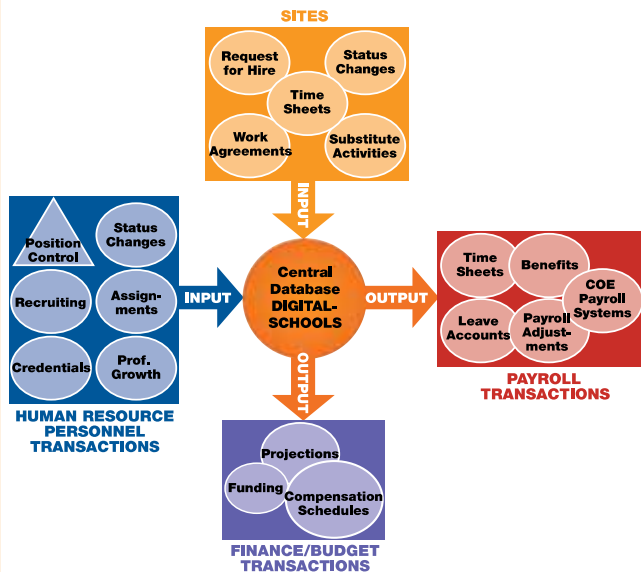
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Dawn Breaker Systems is an established service provider specializing in delivering business solutions for school districts. Since 2000, they have partnered with several districts in developing a 21st century solution. The company deploys and supports a highly effective, field-tested system that embeds district-specific business rules for managing payroll costs, staffing assignments, benefits, credentials and other critical data. Digital-Schools is now deployed in over 30 districts in California and represents a major advancement in automating personnel and payroll operations. The result is a less costly and more efficient operating environment.

Why? Because Digital-Schools brings all personnel data into one central database, and gives secure access to real-time information at the click of a mouse. Transactions are designed around a well defined Position Control Model. This model interoperates the business functions and processes of payroll, human resource and budgeting impacted by employee activities. The schematic here illustrates some of the activities and processes captured and then digitized in Digital-Schools.



For example, personnel transactions are first captured by human resources, including salary placement, credentials, assignments, and other information. Using this core information, HR manages transactions that involve hiring, changing sites, changing FTE and funding sources. In most cases, these changes are filled out on paper to be later transferred into some other system. With Position Control, employees are hired into a position properly, approved and budgeted by the business office. The sites then act on the employee positions for tracking attendance, substitute activities and extra work. All these transactions are then driven to the payroll and business offices.

Dawn Breaker Systems applies technology and a high level of support to implement Digital-Schools, to transform paper processes into a sophisticated digital system, integrating the functions of the human resource, business operations, payroll and sites. A digital position control system eliminates the fragmentation of employee information and gives full visibility to critical payroll and personnel transactions.

A Digital-Schools Success Story:

Salinas Union High School District, Salinas, California

The District:

Salinas Union High School District is a medium-size California school district with an enrollment of 13,848 students grades 7 through 12. The district includes four middle and four high schools, one continuation high school, an adult school and a Regional Occupational Program. Approximately 70% of the students are Hispanic and many of their parents are migrant workers. Jobs related to agriculture represent the majority of employment opportunities in Salinas. This makes staffing a challenge, because the district's peak enrollment is in October, followed by a large drop in enrollment in December, when students parents leave the area to look for jobs.

The Challenge:

Several years ago, the district was in financial crisis. They had no position control system and were hiring more positions than the district's student enrollment required. All personnel and payroll-related transactions were handled manually using paper and pencil. Payroll data was maintained on 4" x 6" cards. The district had a budget system, but it was not integrated with the current systems used by HR, Payroll or Finance. Cindy Fellows, Budget Analyst for the district, stated, "We lacked position control and a way to integrate all of these systems together."

The Solution:

They selected Digital-Schools because they were looking for one system that could do everything. Now HR, sites and the business office reference the identical information. Position control has completely eliminated hiring personnel who are not properly funded and authorized. All sites can manage employee activities on-line and in real-time.

The Result:

Having a Position Control System, the core of the Digital-Schools solution, has reduced the district's dependency on paper forms. It has streamlined its personnel and business operations transactions. Now employees are hired based on a previously approved slot that provides the district with position

"Before Digital-Schools, we lacked position control and a way to integrate all systems together... Now our budget is more reliable, accurate and takes less time to complete. HR and the Business Office no longer argue over who's data is correct. Digital-Schools has given our payroll staff a life."

-Cindy Fellows, SUHSD Budget Analyst

control. In addition, all district staff use the same system and can view the same live data at any time.

Digital-Schools goes beyond position control; it integrates all HR and Payroll related activities with 21st century technology.

To learn more visit www.digital-schools.com

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Integrating HR and Payroll Operations

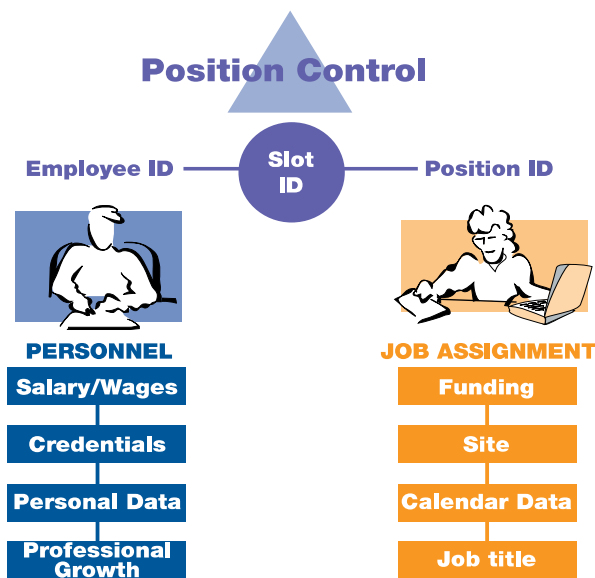


Defining Position Control

FCMAT* reports that one of the reasons districts get into financial stress is the lack of a proper position control system.

The business office often considers position control as a budgeting tool. Human Resources thinks of it as staffing and assignment management methodology. However, position control should integrate all functions and business processes for managing and tracking employee costs.

Therefore, when districts do implement some kind of position control function, it is segregated from the larger administration of operations, and usually managed by stand-alone software spreadsheets or antiquated financial systems. Personnel data from Human Resources must be updated manually and does not provide real-time budgeting data required by Fiscal Services.



True position control should link employees and their attributes to positions (jobs) and their properties. All liabilities associated with each person are now related to their position's funding. When a position has been properly funded and authorized electronically by the business office, HR can "slot" in the right person for the position. Because these activities are performed within the same system, changes in personnel are reflected in real-time reports. In other words, Digital-Schools delivers full visibility to all personnel activities.

Digital-Schools brings the functions of both HR and fiscal services together in one central system. The *Unified Position Control ModeSM* is how personnel data is structured and transactions are managed.

For example, when a person is hired, he/she is placed in a pre-approved position with all properties of the position, including funding, as illustrated by the schematic above. This places tight control on placement and tracking of personnel.

*Fiscal Crisis & Management Assistance Team <http://www.fcma.org>

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eSN multimedia resources help keep schools on the cutting edge of technology

No-nonsense intelligence on your biggest challenges and next purchases

Because educators face a myriad of challenges with tech funding and acquisitions, professional development, and integrating technology into the curriculum, *eSchool News* wanted to help ease some of these burdens by creating the Educator's Resource Center (ERC). Created in 2002, the ERC was developed as a means to provide educators with a centralized reservoir of on-point and time-saving resources covering timely topics such as "1 to 1 Computing," "Visual Learning," "Professional Enrichment," and more. Each ERC is crafted by the editors of *eSchool News* who collect, hone, and unify the sum of our news coverage on a particular aspect of the ed-tech universe.

Over the past 4 years, dozens of subjects have been explored in the Educator's Resource Center, and part of the secret of its success lies in its flexibility and variety. The format allows for coverage on broader trends and issues such as network security or professional development while simultaneously allowing for an in-depth look at complicated and specific issues. One example of this is the "eRate Resource Center," a collaborative effort by *eSchool News* and Funds for Learning, LLC. This resource center is replete with relevant information: survival guides, funding tips and guidelines, instructions on free "eRate

These days it's virtually impossible to engage today's student without using some form of video in the instruction. This is a fundamental shift in the educational landscape, and in response to that, *eSchool News* developed its Media Arts Resource Center (MARC). The *eSchool News* MARC is a convenient location where educators can not only learn about available video around the web, but how to use it.

Perhaps no technology has hit the education world with greater force than the availability of video in the classroom facilitated by the internet and the continued progress of the 1 to 1 computing movement. Educators recognize that video is so central to the 21st-century classroom, that an entire new network—Internet2—is being developed to facilitate making internet video accessible to educators. These realities, coupled with the increasing focus on students who are "visual learners," means that educators and parents need to not only know what content and equipment is out there, but also how to best use and implement this new technology.

eSchool News is committed to keeping educators informed about the wealth of video and multimedia resources educators have at their disposal, which is why we created this central repository of links to video resources around the web, video news coverage of ed-tech conferences, video tutorials, and even a Video Marketplace where technology buyers from all segments of the ed-tech field can view video clips that allow technology providers to display and explain their products. With all



Checkups," and more. Because of this flexibility and utility, many of the world's leading technology companies have joined forces with *eSchool News* to continue to provide this in-depth, streamlined access to vital information on education's most pressing technology challenges.

"The ERC gives online readers a unique, targeted, and convenient means to obtain a 'big picture' view of years' worth of *eSchool News* coverage without having to search for it and aggregate it themselves," said *eSchool News* Online Editor Roger Riddell. "The convenience of the *eSchool News* ERC brings people in, but the reason readers come back time and time again is the quality, depth, and diversity of the content, content only available at *eSchool News* Online."

<http://www.eschoolnews.com/erc/Challenges/>



these resources available, one can see the latest trends, find excellent sources of free video, and even partake of some online professional skills development through our "Show Me How Now" section, sponsored by Atomic Learning.

In the MARC, it's all video, all the time--just one more way *eSchool News* keeps educators ahead of the curve in the ever-changing world of education technology.

<http://www.eschoolnews.com/marc/>

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Tech-savvy educators offer candor and insights on what works

Use these free tools from eSchool News to keep pace with the ed-tech community

The **eSchool News Conference Information Center (CIC)**—available all year long, 24/7—brings you an educator’s-eye view of the most important developments at the field’s most important ed-tech conferences. The information you acquire here can literally change the way you approach your job and thereby make a huge difference for students in your schools.

During the dates one of those key events is actually under way, eSN’s CIC gives you daily coverage of prime speakers, notable attendees, and major announcements made at the conference.

eSchool News goes beyond traditional conference coverage with a unique feature in the **Conference Information Center** – peer reporting by volunteer educators. By enlisting a large number of volunteers, eSchool News is able to tell the story of each workshop from the educator’s perspective. You’ll get a sense of the session and how relevant it was to someone just like yourself.



“Being part of the reporting group actually gave me a different look at the conference,” said Sharon Betts, a director of educational technology for Maine School Administrative District 71 in Kennebunkport, who filed reports from NSBA T+L².

Check out her reports and those of her colleagues at the eSN Conference Information Center. You can rely on your peers for reality-focused reporting that illuminates the issues that matter most to educators.

www.eschoolnews.com/cic

eSchool News’ **Ed-Tech Insider** is a dynamic community of tech-savvy educators, communicating via “blogs,” short for “web logs.” eSchool News wanted to step beyond the fad and provide practical value to educators by creating an online community to turn the promise of technology into practice.

Good blogs, however, require good bloggers. And while there are many educators with expert opinions on school technology, there are not as many skilled and experienced with blogs. To locate such people, eSchool News enlisted the help of Clarity Innovations, a company based in Portland, Ore. Clarity Innovations has been a pioneer of the effort to bring blogs to schools, and also produces official blogs for major ed-tech conferences.

eSchool News and Clarity Innovations spent several months formulating what would become the eSN **Ed-Tech Insider**. Together, the organizations recruited a team of all-star ed-tech bloggers, each of whom had been posting opinions and advice on the internet for at least a year. Here are just a few of the people you’ll find in our eSN **Ed-Tech Insider**:

- Will Richardson: A recognized leading resource for the use of blogs in education who has been quoted in both *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*.



- Anne Davis: An instructional technology specialist based at the Georgia State University College of Education and a frequent presenter at regional and national conferences.
- Tim Lauer: A school principal who in 1994 developed one of the first web sites in the nation for an elementary school.

Ed-Tech Insider Richardson told the *Times* that blogs mean “class doesn’t have to end when the bell rings.” The same is true for meaningful discussions of technology and learning—which now exist 24/7 at the **eSchool News Ed-Tech Insider**.

www.eschoolnews.com/eti



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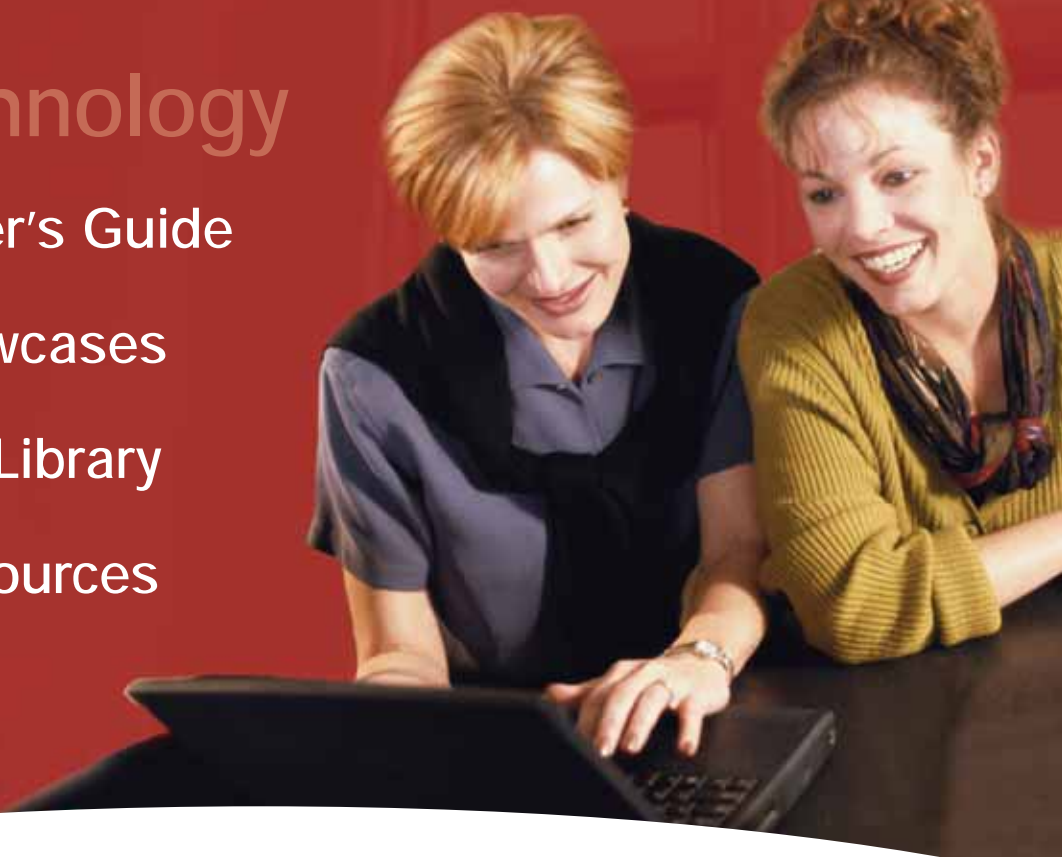
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The **K-20 Technology Solutions Center** from eSchool News is an invaluable tool for today's successful school technology buyer.

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