



NORTHWEST REGIONAL WIDE AREA NETWORK CONSORTIUM

LEARN

LEADING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT
THROUGH THE REGIONAL NETWORK

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2009

LEARN HIGHLIGHTS—YEAR 2

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Wide Area Network (WAN) was established through funds secured from an Act 183 E-Fund grant provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit 5, Riverview Intermediate Unit 6 and ARIN Intermediate Unit 28 partnered to secure the \$5,205,682 three-year E-Fund grant. The consortium also purchased 400 Mbps of Internet to be distributed across the WAN and shared Internet2 connectivity.

The infrastructure phase was completed this year connecting the nine counties the three Intermediate Units serve. The next stage of the project - LEARN (which stands for Leading Educational Achievement through the Regional Network) - was adopted to address the implementation phase.

LEARN PORTAL

Visit the LEARN Portal at www.learninpa.org for resources including:

- ◆ Voice-over PowerPoints explaining the LEARN Initiative, Web 2.0 and Internet2.
- ◆ Recommended lists of resources for videoconferencing/webconferencing.
- ◆ Discussion boards to share best practices or request information.
- ◆ Schedule the bridge for district video/webconferencing activities.

Check back often for additions to the site!

Participating LEAs have received:

- A Polycom IP Videoconference Unit
- Webcams (eyeball and/or handicams)
- \$2250 to conduct videoconferencing professional development within LEA
- \$2000 to purchase Study Island subscription
- \$1500 for onsite professional development
- \$1275 for Career and Technical Center professional development
- ClearOne Chat device
- Scopia Desktop access
- Internet2 connectivity
- MAGPI membership
- Video distribution service

HIGHLIGHTS

The 2008-09 school year brought many LEARN initiatives to our region. One such activity has caught the attention of PA Secretary of Education, Dr. Gerald Zahorchak. After hearing of the Freedom Calls being conducted, the Secretary said, *“Connecting classrooms and communities to soldiers in Iraq is an excellent way to engage our students and communities through the effective use of technology. The Freedom Calls conducted utilizing the Northwest PA Regional Wide Area network exemplifies how schools throughout the Commonwealth can now easily videoconference with people all over the world.”*

The Freedom Calls Foundation is a nonprofit organization that connects friends and family members to soldiers stationed overseas.



Left: Family members interact with their loved ones stationed in Iraq during a Freedom Call. Right: Soldiers from the Washington State Army National Guard's 1st Squadron 303rd Cavalry Regiment of the 81st Heavy Brigade Combat Team and the 62nd Transport Company interact via videoconference with Freepoint Middle School students who wrote letters to the soldiers in observance of Memorial Day.

Professional Development Wrap-Up

The LEARN Initiative has provided a variety of workshops offered at IUs 5, 6 and 28 for teachers, administrators and IU employees including:

- LEARN Academies for Administrators, Language Arts, Math, Science/Social Studies, Librarians and Career and Technical Centers
- Videoconferencing Showcases
- MAGPI Overview
- Videoconferencing Best Practices
- Scopia Webconferencing
- Study Island
- Technology Firewall

In total, the LEARN Initiative has provided training to more than 700 LEA professionals, administrators and IU employees.

2009 - 2010 AT-A-GLANCE

- Regional educational technology conferences are being planned.
- A LEARN Academy for primary elementary teachers is being planned.
- A cadre of student trainers will be developed and workshops implemented.
- The Consortium will be applying for a new E-Fund grant to expand the programs and services being offered through our Regional Wide Area Network (RWAN).
- The deployment of SuccessMaker and other e-Learning software.
- Partnerships with Keystone Technology Integrators and other technology-based groups in school districts.
- Digital content will be made more readily available and appropriate trainings will be provided.
- Quarterly LEARN newsletters will continue beginning in September.

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