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DCP Today

Volume 4, Issue 10
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Welcome to DCP Today, CENIC's monthly electronic newsletter detailing the latest news about the Digital California Project.

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Digital California Project News

New Funding Opportunity to Enable Educational Use of the DCP Network

The Federal No Child Left Behind Act provides opportunities for the use of the DCP Network to deliver professional development for teachers and administrators, expand student-learning opportunities, and to support administrative technology applications. The grant program for technology is briefly summarized as follows:

Approximately \$22 million is available for competitive grants under Title II, Part D, Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) grants. The completed proposals are due January 14th, 2004.

The federal and state program goals supported by this grant are:

- To implement and support a comprehensive program that effectively uses technology to help students meet or exceed the state academic content standards adopted by the State Board of Education.
- To encourage the effective integration of technology resources and systems with teacher training and curriculum development to establish research-based instructional methods that can be widely implemented as best practices by state educational agencies and local educational agencies.
- To assist in the acquisition, development, interconnection, implementation, improvement, and maintenance of an effective educational technology infrastructure in a manner that expands access to technology for students, particularly for disadvantaged students, and for teachers.
- To encourage communication and collaboration among home, school, and community that will support student achievement.

Competitive grants are limited to school districts, (including locally funded charters), a consortium of school districts, county offices of education, and direct-funded charter schools that serve students in grades 4-8 and that meet the federal criteria. To obtain the request for Application (RFA) describing the parameters and requirements for the EETT Competitive Grant Award go to: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/edtech/eett/rfacinfo.htm>.

For information on how to utilize the DCP network in your proposal, contact John Cradler, Consultant to DCP, at: cradler@earthlink.net.

ADA for Online Courses for High School Students

AB 294, authored by Assembly Member Lynn Daucher (R-Brea), was recently signed into law. The bill changes a number of the provisions in the Assembly Member's 2002 legislation (AB 885) which allows 40

school sites to generate average daily attendance (ADA, i.e. funding) for online classroom instruction to secondary students. The pilot program was instituted after the State Department of Finance declared invalid Orange Unified's claim for ADA funding for an online "American Government and Economics" course at Canyon High School.

Daucher introduced the original legislation to ensure that online classrooms would be recognized as "legitimate and effective learning venue" for California students. When signing AB 885 in 2002, then Governor Gray Davis requested Ms. Daucher carry legislation to clarify the provisions of the bill. AB 294 "limits the participation of a pupil in an online course from qualifying for more average daily attendance than for an equivalent course taught in a traditional setting." It also requires pupil academic performance information be submitted to the State Department of Education.

The law now states that the long-time requirement that a student be under the immediate supervision of a certificated teacher for ADA purposes also refers to students enrolled in online courses for high school credit. It further stipulates that the teacher for an online course must be concurrently teaching the same course in a traditional classroom setting or have done so within the immediate preceding two year period. To read AB 294 in its entirety, you may access the text at: <http://leginfo.ca.gov>.

An example of successful use of online courses is the Clovis USD CAL Online (www.cusd.com) which is currently offering five online courses in AP Government/Economics, World History, Art History, English 9 and American Literature. The district has 130 students enrolled in the program that started in June 2001 by leasing course content from Florida Virtual School (www.flvs.net) with teachers in CUSD teaching.

DCP Survey on Instructional Uses of the Network

The DCP staff, in collaboration with a subcommittee of the County Superintendents Association (CCSESA), are conducting a survey to document and describe educational uses of the network. If you know of specific uses of the DCP Network, it would be greatly appreciated if you could provide responses to the following:

- An example of how DCP has saved money for a county, a district or a school.
- An example of how DCP provides a level of service not previously available and why this is important.
- An example of an educational, professional development or administrative use of the network. A use that wasn't possible prior to the DCP would be great but a good example, even if possible over the commercial Internet, would be ok too.

The information collected will be compiled into a report that will be shared with the California Legislature and the Governor to educate them about the benefits of the DCP Network for education. Please submit your response to sacto-aa@cenic.org as soon as possible.

DCP Network Expands Access to Instructional Programs

At least three companies have initiated use of the DCP Network as a vehicle to deliver online student instruction using standards-aligned electronic learning resources (ELRs). One of the companies, United Learning, is now delivering instructional programs in math and science to students in Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties.

The Monterey County Office of Education initiated a partnership with United Learning whereby the ELRs are hosted on a DCP server and delivered on a subscription basis to participating schools in the region. Monterey COE will soon expand the Network and provide access via microwave to several rural high schools. They will add the Safari system which consists of large ELR databases formatted to a common interface. Safari Inc. distributes a wide variety of web-based programs contained in one central location.

Pearson Inc. is working with the San Diego County Office of Education to launch a pilot test to deliver its Knowledgebox product. The Knowledgebox product is an elementary level ELR focusing on interactive instruction in reading and math. This product has been reviewed by the California Learning Resource Network (CLRN) to ensure alignment with the California Content Standards.

Future editions of DCP Today will feature more details on these and other programs delivered over the DCP Network. DCP staff monitor and document the cost-benefits of these and other programs

Poway Unified Goes High Tech and Reaps the Benefits

Poway Unified School District in San Diego County has committed time, energy, and funds to expand innovative learning opportunities using technology, institute home-to-school collaboration and communication on-line, enhance teaching methodologies with professional technology training, and focus attention on student/program assessment tools to help teachers and parents better understand student progress. A recent article in the Cable in the Classroom publication, Threshold, written by Charlie Garten, Executive Director Educational Technology and Information Services for the Poway district can be found on in its entirety at: <http://www.cenic.org/DCP/articles.htm>.

Poway is a leading technology district in the state, demonstrated by their integrated effort to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their schools. Technology and the support of district policies, allows third graders to talk directly with scientists in the Arctic Circle or at a North Carolina tide pool, teachers to participate in staff development programs and hands on training, and parents to go online to check homework assignments at night. Information about other innovative programs can be found on the Cable in the Classroom website at: <http://www.ciconline.com>.

Learning for the 21st Century Report

The comprehensive report "Learning for the 21st Century" strongly recommends that public policy makers and educators focus on the importance of preparing students to work and live in the 21st century with the technology tools central to one's ability to succeed in the work world.

It clearly articulates the "need for technologically literate citizens and workers". Current 21st century tools are identified as: computers, networking and other technologies, plus audio, video, and other media and multimedia tools. The report goes on to say "these tools enable people to perform effectively at work and in their daily lives, by using such tools as spreadsheets for calculation, budgeting and building scenarios, graphic and multimedia programs for presentations, databases for research, and networks for communicating with others" Copies of the report may be downloaded at: <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/> or ordered online for a nominal fee.

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and Virtual Reality

The Virtual Classroom, developed by Dr. Albert "Skip" Rizzo for the assessment and treatment of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, is featured in an article on the Science News for Kids Website at <http://www.sciencenewsforkids.org/articles/20031022/Feature1.asp>. For more information on the project, visit <http://fmsc.usc.edu/research/project/virtclass/index.html>.

Rizzo found that by using virtual reality headgear he was able to create calm environments as well as chaotic ones for the efficient testing and diagnosis of ADHD in children. By identifying kids with the characteristics of ADHD early in their education, teachers can address their special needs. Identifying the specific activities which are most distracting to kids with ADHD can help teachers find ways to minimize the distractions and focus attention on the most positive ways of interacting in their classrooms.

E-Rate Consortium Update

The 2004-2005 E-rate consortium is forming, with more than 500 districts and county offices of education across California submitting letters of agency so CENIC can apply for E-rate discounts on its K-12 network circuits. The E-rate application will be written during December and early January, with submission targeted for mid-January 2004.

The 2003-2004 CENIC E-rate application is still under review. One aspect of the review (dates of contracts) has been completed satisfactorily. The consultants are now providing information about the discount rates for approximately 53 of the thousands of schools represented in the application. CENIC is eagerly anticipating a Funding Commitment Decision Letter advising of any discounts for which they qualify. Large consortium applications like CENIC's are often handled last in the cycle due to their size and complexity.

Tal Finney Honored for Support of the CENIC/DCP at PSC Meeting

Tal Finney, Director of the Office of Planning and Research, was honored at the November 12th meeting of the Digital California Project's (DCP's) Program Steering Committee (PSC) for his contributions and leadership in support of the DCP. He has been a vocal proponent of CENIC and DCP since their inception. Mr. Finney expressed his outspoken belief in the potential of CENIC's CalREN network to change the face of education. Mr. Finney has been appointed Director of the Office of Administrative Law.

The PSC meeting included updates on: "last mile" connectivity and efforts to update the Last Mile Database, content providers' desire to put content/servers on DCP's network, presentations at the Computer Using Educators and National School Boards Association's conferences, the California Educational Technology Program Administrators conference, the California Student Information Systems project, and the new DigitalCalifornia.net web site. There was also discussion about the RFP release for State Enhancing Education Through Technology grants and the California Department of Education's emphasis on the integration of the grant proposals with the adopted curriculum and the 13 different categories of funding in the No Child Left Behind Act.

The continuing pressures on the DCP budget as a result of the state's fiscal crisis were discussed at length. Indications are that DCP's funding may be impacted by the mid year budget reductions and the program cuts in the 2004-05 budget proposal. To view the minutes from the meeting go to http://www.cenic.org/DCP/PSC_meet.htm

Statewide Education Groups Highlight DCP Efforts

During the past month, several of the major K-12 organizations in California provided support and assistance to DCP's efforts. The California School Boards Association featured the Digital California Project on their web site, <http://www.csba.org/qa/couch.htm>. The article, now in the archive section, is in a Question and Answer format with Stephanie Couch, DCP's Director. The three page article features network technology (including video conferencing and Web-casts), E-Rate and online education resources.

The California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO), the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), the Small School Districts Association (SSDA), and the Comprehensive Legislative Update in Education (CLUE) have all published articles about DCP on their websites or in association newsletters within the last month. The ACSA/Xerox Alliance included a discussion about DCP at their November meeting, and will be talking to the Board of Directors about DCP in December.

DCP deeply appreciates the publicity and visibility provided by these groups.

Teaching and Learning in the Digital Age

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jack O'Connell, the California Postsecondary Education Commission and DCP are co-sponsoring a K-20 Summit on Teaching and Learning in the Digital Age on

December 8th in Sacramento. The one day event will highlight innovative uses of technology in K12 schools, identification of major issues, and recommendations for the future. Presenters include Superintendent O'Connell, Carol Twigg, Executive Director, Center for Academic Transformation Rensselear Polytechnic Institute, and higher education and K-12 leaders in the digital arena.

DCP Featured at the Fall Cue Conference

Many attendees at last month's Computer Using Educators (CUE) Conference in Santa Clara participated in a workshop that featured an overview of the DCP and several specific examples of the resources enabled by DCP. These examples included the University of California College Prep program's Advanced Placement (AP) courses and projects developed by Gail Desler of the Elk Grove Unified School District. Gail's projects utilized the network for student to student interactions across distances and the use of resources on the network (such as the California Digital Library). Over 100 persons attended the CUE session with many expressing a great deal of interest in DCP and plans to follow up on possible applications for their own use.

CENIC's Gigabit or Bust Task Forces Develop Agendas for Building Gigabit Network

CENIC's Gigabit or Bust Initiative leaders and its 13 task forces got down to business quickly at the November 5-6 Roundtable Meeting. More than 95 gigabit believers attended the Sacramento meeting, and they brought passionate energy to the work at hand. Task forces spent the two days identifying the opportunities and obstacles to achieving one gigabit throughout California by 2010 and establishing action plans to achieve this goal.

We encourage you to investigate the task forces and join those that share your interests and goals. For more information about each task force visit: <http://www.cenic.org/GB/taskforces/index.htm>

To view the video clips and slide presentations from the event visit: <http://www.cenic.org/GB/meetings/110503/pres/contents.htm>

About CENIC

CENIC is a not-for-profit corporation serving California Institute of Technology, California State University, Stanford University, University of California, University of Southern California, California Community Colleges and the statewide K-12 school system.

CENIC's mission is to facilitate and coordinate the development, deployment and operation of a set of robust multi-tiered advanced network services for this research and education community.

More information about CENIC can be found at www.cenic.org.

About DCP

The Digital California Project is a project of CENIC. Funded by the State of California, the DCP was designed to build the necessary network infrastructure needed to prepare California's schools to take advantage of tomorrow's advances in network technology. In essence, CENIC is developing an advanced-services network to serve the entire California K-20 education and research community.

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