

One Connect Community: Central Catholic's Vision of Modern Education
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Catholic schools today are faced with a dilemma. This dilemma consists of trying to balance scholarship, a student's spiritual growth and identify, and whether or not the school should adapt its curriculum to modern, progressive, educational models. Toledo Central Catholic has decided to make this issue a goal and major priority moving into the 21st century.

Central Catholic High School recently announced a 1 to 1 laptop initiative that will begin in the Fall of 2007. This program will provide an Apple Macbook laptop to each incoming freshman starting with the class of 2011, and will continue until all students at CCHS are provided with laptops. The future of education is the driving force behind our program- *One Connected Community*. This program was designed and implemented in order to enhance student learning and achievement. We are committed to connecting and enhancing our curriculum by utilizing all that the world of technology has to offer. This laptop initiative, the cornerstone of our technology program, will offer our students the opportunity to participate in a global educational environment.

Central Catholic High School has been forward-looking and studying trends in educational technology for many years. This idea was simply an evolution of thought leading in a direction that would provide all of our students with equal and common opportunities in education. The 21st century requires that our learners be able to navigate smoothly, effectively, and purposefully through the world of technology. "Technology is a powerful tool with enormous potential for paving high-speed highways from outdated educational systems to systems capable of providing learning opportunities for all, to better serve the needs of 21st century work, communications, learning, and life."
http://cnets.iste.org/nets_overview.html (2007)

Since our Long Range Strategic Planning Convocation that took place in the Spring of 2005, CCHS has made great strides toward achieving all five of its primary objectives. The objectives are ranked below in their order of importance relative to the success of the program.

1. Hire full time support personnel that will provide immediate support to any and all technology based needs.
2. Establish a technology center in order to provide full support of these objectives.
3. Fully integrate educational technology into every curricular area.
4. Provide all students and staff with laptop technology capabilities.
5. Make academic administrative functions paperless.

All of these objectives have been accomplished through the hiring of key personnel, continued professional development for our faculty, and progressive planning for the future. Beyond these objectives, CCHS has implemented a Course Management System on a server located in our building. Using this web-based system, faculty can publish all facets of curriculum from class notes, quizzes, online discussion forums, wikis, blogs, audio and video podcasts, as well as a classroom polling system with which teachers can instantly garner information as to the effectiveness of their instruction. This tool creates an online virtual classroom giving our students on-demand access to their instructor's

curricular content from anywhere in the world via an internet connection.

One of the goals of this laptop program is improved student performance. According to a study by Rockman et al, students who participate in one to one learning turn out to be better writers, collaborate more effectively and are more willing and dedicated participants in their curriculum.

<http://www.microsoft.com/Education/aalresearch1.msp>

The second goal of *One Connected Community* is to develop an effective model for project-based instruction. The new standards for the integration of technology point to a project-based learning environment in the classroom. (State of Ohio Technology Course of Study) By shifting technology instruction into subject area classrooms, our students will develop skills required to be self directed, independent, and lifelong learners.

According to a study conducted and published by S. Adams and M. Burns, "Discussions, conversations, explanations, listening--all these are ways we learn by interacting with others. Project-based activities encourage social interaction and introduce multiple perspectives through reflection, collaboration, negotiation, and shared meaning. In many situations, learning is enhanced by verbal representation of thoughts--it helps to speak about an idea, to clarify procedures, or float a theory to an audience. The exchange of different perceptions between learners enriches an individual's insight."

<http://www.techlearning.com/showArticle.php?articleID=18902862> (1999) These laptops will provide the students with a multimedia creation platform that is exceptionally suited to project-based learning.

In another study done by Boston College at the Technology and Assessment Study Collaborative, "A comparison study of students where approximately half were provided with an individual laptop and the other half shared a mobile cart of laptop computers showed key differences in student learning and behavior. In 1 to 1 classrooms, students with unlimited access to laptops showed significantly higher levels of engagement in class, greater amount of writing and better writing, more time working independently, and higher levels of technology use in all subject areas." <http://www.apple.com/education/k12/onetoone/research.html> (2004) As a result of our focus on meeting the Long Range Strategic Planning Convocation goals, CCHS has made great strides in technology since 2005, and we have already seen the incredible results that this commitment to technology has precipitated. These results are seen in both the positive reactions that our students, parents and faculty have shared, and also in the impressive academic and collaborative progress that each of these groups has made within our school community.

CCHS has also converted its school information system to Pearson PowerSchool. This system provides parents and students with real-time access to academic information. The response to PowerSchool has been truly amazing. Students and their parents have unequivocally embraced it and have given CCHS nothing but incredibly positive feedback. In this our first year of using PowerSchool, our records indicate that 99% of our students are now actively checking their academic progress using this system. By providing a laptop to every student in the next four years, 100% of our students and parents will have the opportunity to instantly evaluate student academic progress. Social Studies teacher Sr. Linda Pleiman, a teacher of 29 years, states that the parents are so accustomed to PowerSchool now that they regularly access it as part of their

normal daily routine.

CCHS is committed to promoting and embracing social diversity. With this goal in mind, our laptop program will remove a key barrier for students that may not otherwise have access to state-of-the-art technology in their home. Principal Michael J. Kaucher explains, “The *One Connected Community* program will provide each and every student, regardless of socio-economic status, with equal access to the world of technology curriculum integration. By providing a level playing field for all of our students, we are ensuring that each and every student at Central Catholic will leave our school taking with them vital skills that are especially suited to our world in the 21st century.”