

BEST UPDATE - June 1, 2005

Business and Education for Schools and Technology

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN 1-TO-1 COMPUTING FOR MASSACHUSETTS?

BEST activists continue to work behind the scenes during these difficult times, and we're looking for others who support the idea of 1-to-1 computing for all students and teachers in Massachusetts. Please e-mail to blowd@mindspring.com if you are willing to work to educate your state legislators about the importance of such an initiative.

You can also help by inviting your legislators to see outstanding uses of technology for learning in your schools. Educating them about your successes and your needs can help achieve our goals.

MOMENTUM BUILDS: 1-TO-1 PILOT PROJECTS BEING DEVELOPED

Last year's state budget funded a wireless technology initiative in the middle schools in Pittsfield and North Adams. After much careful preparation, the teachers are now receiving their laptops. This summer Mass. College of Liberal Arts in North Adams will provide significant training. Next fall students in grade six will receive their laptops.

Federally funded competitive grants under Chapter 170-B also helped to fund this project and two others. One, at Gateway Regional Middle School partnering with Easthampton's White Middle School, is emphasizing 7th and 8th grade mathematics. The other is at New Bedford Global Learning Horace Mann Charter School. Gateway's plan is notable for the involvement of parents in hardware purchasing.

See <http://www.doe.mass.edu/edtech/grants/fy05/fc170b.html>

All of these efforts are in response to the spring 2004 report of the Special Commission on Educational Technology at the State House, whose members included legislators, the Commissioner of Education, other policy makers, and technology coordinators. The report, which focuses on the advantages of and recommends one-to-one computing, and also contains other useful sections, can be downloaded it at <http://www.state.ma.us/legis/reports/repindex.htm>

BUDGET INCLUDES WIRELESS PILOT LEARNING INITIATIVE

This year's House budget included language and funding for "a pilot wireless student learning initiative at the New Boston Pilot School in the City of Boston." While the Senate budget is unlikely to contain funding, it does contain the same wording. Proponents Rep. Marie St. Fleur and Sen. Jack Hart hope to include funding in a supplemental budget in the fall.

COMPETITIVE GRANTS CAN INCLUDE 1-TO-1 COMPUTING PILOTS

For the second time, the Department of Education has included in its guidelines for the competitive grants under No Child Left Behind an option for piloting one-to-one computing in classrooms in middle or high school and focusing on English, language arts, and mathematics. This means in 2005-06 there may well be additional districts that are exploring intensive use of computers for learning through the use of wireless devices.

OTHER FOCUS AREAS FOR BEST

BEST continues its interest in promoting more rigorous and specific technology competency standards for teachers and administrators. The Educational Technology Advisory Council (ETAC) is also working on this idea.

Funding is another concern for BEST. We believe that the Chapter 70 funding formula should contain more realistic numbers for the costs of technology as a target for school spending. We will continue to work with the state legislature whenever the opportunity arises to educate them about the benefits of better funding for technology in schools.

EDUCATION WEEK SHOWS MASSACHUSETTS LAGGING

The 2005 issue of Education Week's Technology Counts that compares the states on a number of indicators shows that Massachusetts continues to lag behind the national average in nearly every category. A compilation of some of the statistics appears on BEST's web site and the entire chart at <http://www.edweek.org/rc/edcounts/>

**TECHNOLOGY IN MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOLS, 2003-2004
PUBLISHED**

The Department of Education has recently published the educational technology data it collects each fall from the public schools. To download it, go to
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edtech/etreport/2004let.html>

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NEXT MEETING: June 23, 8-10 a.m. in the Cafe at 200 Fifth Ave., Waltham. Please call if you decide to attend.

B.E.S.T. - Business and Education for Schools and Technology.

A coalition of twenty-one organizations supporting educational technology in Massachusetts schools.

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