

# STORIES FOR ADVOCACY

## Principal Becomes Technology Advocate

As told by Ric Wiltse, Michigan Association for Computer Users in Learning (MACUL) to Suzie Boss

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An inner-city school in Flint, Michigan, looks like it could have come right out of a Michael Moore movie. Needs are high, achievement is low, and resources are limited due to a stagnant local economy.

*The principal sees evidence that teaching is improving due to the focus on educational technology and the new vision of powerful learning.*

Our organization—Michigan Association for Computers Users in Education, or MACUL—came here to conduct a training session. Our statewide program, the ATA Technology Academy, has trained more than 3,500 educators from 850 schools. Our goal is to help district-level teams better use technology to enhance teaching and learning. When we conduct a building-level training, we expect the principal to participate.

At this school, we met a reluctant school leader. The principal was not at all convinced that educational technology would help his students succeed. His students have had little access to technology; nearly all are economically disadvantaged, minority students.

During the two-day session, this principal's thinking shifted. As he gained a better picture of effective technology integration, he became convinced that infusing technology into the curriculum could boost student achievement. He became a strong advocate for educational technology and invited us back to work with his entire staff.

Since then, this principal has continued to provide strong leadership, empowering his staff to infuse technology into teaching and learning. Staff development offerings now include technology, and the principal evaluates teachers on their effective use of technology. The principal sees evidence that teaching is improving due to the focus on educational technology and the new vision of powerful learning.

Recently, we were planning a press conference to announce a new grant from SBC Foundation. The funding is intended to help under-performing schools make better use of technology to support student achievement. We held the press conference at this principal's school, where a committed school leader has changed the entire culture of professional learning.

### Focus on Funding

*The ATA Technology Academy started with a historic \$2 million-dollar grant from the Ameritech (now SBC) Foundation. Now in its sixth year, Michigan educators continue to participate in the program, supported by funding from local districts, the Michigan Department of Education, and federal Title II Part D grants.*

To learn more about the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), and to view other stories and resources in the Advocacy Toolkit, please visit [www.iste.org/advocacy/toolkit/](http://www.iste.org/advocacy/toolkit/).

*ISTE provides leadership and service to improve teaching and learning by advancing the effective use of technology in education.*