

MAKING IT HAPPEN (IN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY) GAZETTE

THE FACE OF THE FUTURE: AN INTERVIEW WITH TOM GREAVES

Vice-Chairman, NetSchools Corporation

What has led us to where we are today in educational computing?

Over the last 15 years, we have seen schools move through various stages of implementing education technology. Labs full of computers were once considered cutting-edge. Then educators wanted students to have more access to technology than one hour a week, and we began to see a movement toward distributed networks, four or five computers in the back of the classroom.

Today, the latest breakthroughs in education technology seek to truly integrate access to technology and the Internet into every aspect of education—for every student at school and at home.

What would you say is the single most important trend in educational computing today?

I believe that one-to-one computing—giving every student their own laptop computer, is the wave of the future. Inexpensive and durable laptops that accompany students throughout the school day, that have continuous access to the Internet with educator-selected Websites as directed by their teachers. In contrast, in a shared computer environment, studies show that students access the Internet less than ten times a month.

How will the Internet affect education and content delivery?

In our NetSchools leadership sites, every student and teacher has their own laptop connected to the Internet and the school LAN via an infrared wireless network. Our students often access the Internet ten or more times a day, going to NetSchools selected Websites as directed by their teachers. In contrast, in a shared computer environment, studies show that students access the Internet less than ten times a month.

Access to technology and the Internet is a requirement for students today in order to prepare them for the workplace of tomorrow—not only the students who will go on to college, but also those who will enter the workforce directly. Therefore our teachers need to be sure that the access students have to academic content will not only prepare them for the world of work but that the content aligns with the standards that are being mandated by their state or district.

How can this concept of one-to-one computing help with the home-school connection?

One important benefit of one-to-one computing is that it bridges the digital divide. Every student has access to technology, regardless of socio-economic background. When students take their laptops home after school, parental involvement rises and communication between school and home increases. Parents can now use the students' laptops to access the school server and the Internet and use the school's library resources software for say, a GED prep class, e-mail their child's teacher, and receive communications on school and community activities.

How does this technology make a difference in the behaviors and attitudes of kids and teachers?

One-to-one computing engages and motivates students. Many of our leadership sites have seen a decline in missed school days and discipline referrals. At Hancock High School in Kiln, Mississippi, School Superintendent Terry Randolph has commented: "When the laptop computers were given to our students, we

found a new level of excitement and engagement. We've got the best attendance we've ever had, and a noticeable decline in discipline referrals."

When students are engaged and parents involved, test scores improve. At Rio Bravo Middle School in El Paso, Texas, (a school with a 92% free and reduced lunch student population), the average math score for students increased from 83% to 95% within one year, and writing skills went up 5%. According to Principal Carmen Zamora, her middle schoolers are more focused, take more pride in their work and spend more time on task. They've even managed a 97% attendance.

We have seen a science teacher in South Carolina who was announcing her retirement decide to stay, while having more fun than ever as a result of using laptops in her classroom. When one-to-one computing is implemented in a school, with adequate professional development for teachers, students and parents, great things can happen!

ARE YOU MAKING IT HAPPEN?

Tell us your story and you may be the next recipient of the famous pink jacket!

Send a 50-word description of how you are 'making it happen' (photo optional) to:

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PAT WALKINGTON (C)

Pat Walkington has been involved in marketing and selling technology related products to schools since 1983, where she began her career with Commodore Business Machines as the East Coast Regional Sales Manager. She later became the company's Director of Education.

Pat joined The Learning Company as Director of Education Sales in 1986. As part of the founding team of The Learning Company, she managed the company's school business and was appointed Vice President of Education Sales and Marketing at The Learning Company in 1994.

From The Learning Company Pat joined Broderbund in April of 1996 where she served as Vice President of the company's Education Division. Pat received an Intellectual Capital Award from the company for conceiving, organizing, and successfully implementing the School Division's Inside Education Services/Sales program, enabling the company to both serve and learn more about its school customers.

Since leaving Broderbund in October, following the sale of the company to The Learning Company, Pat has begun to put her skills to work in helping other companies build their sales and marketing organizations, including Talking Fingers, New Deal, Intellitools, Adaptive Learning Technology, and most recently Teacher Universe.



Throughout her career, Pat has worked closely with schools across the country to determine what educators need to effectively equip children for their world today and tomorrow. She is the past co-chair of the Education Board of the Software Publisher's Association, and co-founded "Making It Happen" with Deb deVries and Kathy Hurley in 1995. Pat is a former Kindergarten teacher as well as a District Director of Gifted Education.

Pat has two masters degrees from Arizona State University and resides with her husband in San Francisco.

DEB DEVRIES (R)

Deb started her career in the classroom as a special education teacher. She earned her masters degree at the University of Utah and has taught in Utah, Washington, and Minnesota. She joined the private sector in the early 80's and has worked for Control Data Corporation, MECC, The Learning Company, and Connors Communications. Deb has held

senior management positions in sales and marketing as well as been active in industry organizations. She is currently working part time for NetSchools as the director of marketing programs and development and is a principal partner with Meeting Strategies Group. Deb's proudest accomplishments are her two daughters, Chloe and Mallory, who are definitely making it happen in the 6th and 3rd grade! She and her family reside in St. Paul, Minnesota.

KATHY HURLEY (L)

Ms. Hurley is Vice President of Marketing and Strategic Relationships for NetSchools. Prior to joining NetSchools, she was Senior Vice President of Education Marketing for The Learning Company. Kathy serves on several industry and education advisory boards, including; Software and Information Industry Association (SIIA), International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), the Council of Great City Schools Technology Steering Committee, and The National Catholic Education Exhibitors' Association. Kathy also heads up the Education Advisory Board for Target Stores. Prior to working for the Learning Company, she was the Senior Vice President of SkillsBank Corporation. Kathy has held various positions with IBM, Mindscape, Grolier, and DLM. Kathy began her career working with learning disabled students after receiving her Masters degree at the Jersey City State College. She also continues to support her undergraduate institution, The University of Dayton, by serving on the school of education's advisory board.

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THE FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

1. APPLY AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY NOW.
2. MOVE FORWARD AND DON'T LOOK BACK.
3. SEE STUDENTS AS REAL PEOPLE.
4. TEACH THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS: INSPIRE, ENCOURAGE AND NURTURE.
5. RECOGNIZE FURTHER CHANGE IS NECESSARY, BUT IT IS A PROCESS.
6. TEACHER EMPOWERMENT IS THE KEY ELEMENT TO INTEGRATION.
7. EXPECT SUCCESS.
8. MOTIVATE THROUGH AWARENESS AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION.

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