

MAKING IT HAPPEN (IN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY) GAZETTE

AN INTERVIEW WITH GREG PORTER

CEO of PowerSchool

powerschool was one of several companies that proactively submitted testimony to the Web-Based Education Commission prior to the December 2000 release of the Commission's final report, titled *The Power of the Internet for Learning: Moving from Promise to Practice*. The 16-member Commission was established by Congress to develop policy recommendations that would maximize the educational promise of the Internet for pre-kindergarten through postsecondary learners.

Making It Happen asked Greg Porter, CEO of powerschool, to comment.

What is the significance of this report?

GP – The Web-Based Education Commission was asked to review educational software, conduct public hearings, and make recommendations to Congress about web-based education. The formation of the Commission in itself signifies that education is not approaching a new technological era, but that it exists in a new technological era. Computer technology is now an integral part of the education landscape.

What are your overall comments about the Commission's findings?

GP – The report is valuable for the variety of case studies it presents. On a macro-level, its primary value is as a guide for legislative action and policy with respect to education. It is important to note that the Commission recognized that the Internet holds promise in many areas of education, but for this report they considered the Internet in teaching and instruction only. The Commission did not examine web-based applications beyond instruction, such as school data management. The powerschool student information system, for example, is a web-based application that extends beyond instructional applications and allows schools to manage, share and evaluate student data while allowing parental access to student information.

Can you expand on that?

GP – powerschool is a powerful student information system that is accessed via the Internet. Because it is web-based, access to powerschool is available anytime/anywhere, which increases the school's ability to bring together key stakeholders in education. Specifically, it provides data management, reporting, assessment and classroom management capabilities for teachers and administrators, and provides parental access to student information about grades, attendance and overall performance.

Tell us about those other applications in education.

GP – Private industry already enjoys the benefits of web-based applications that allow teams to work together, share data in real-time, evaluate systems and report information. At powerschool we use a virtual office for project teams so that staff from various locations can work simultaneously while sharing real-time data. The Web has vastly increased our efficiency.



Greg Porter

Similar business applications can be applied to education allowing teachers and administrative staff to work on collaborative projects across the globe or across the district. Student records can be entered, viewed and evaluated from any location with Internet access. Imagine how this type of access and collaboration draws a parent into their child's education. The ability to access necessary data—at any time, in any place, and in real-time—is immensely empowering.

In your view, where does the education community go from here?

GP – We will be selling ourselves short if we only think of the Internet for use in teaching and instruction. The Internet is a powerful working network that creates collaborative environments; it promises efficiency, accuracy and the ability to make connections. Our view should be expansive enough that it drives us to develop more applications that fit a broader range of educational needs.

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:

Making It Happen
c/o New Learning
Presentation Systems
25 22nd Avenue
Isle of Palms, SC 29451
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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 of 1998, 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 Intellitools, Adaptive Learning Technology, Teacher Universe, Netschools, Teachers' Curriculum Institute and Project Achieve.



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 for NetSchools as the director of marketing programs and development. Deb's proudest accomplishments are her two daughters, Chloe and Mallory, who are definitely making it happen in middle and elementary school! She and her family reside in St. Paul, Minnesota.

KATHY HURLEY (L)

Ms. Hurley is Senior Vice President of Marketing and Business Development 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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