

E-rate Supported Educational Services for Mobile County Public Schools

Prior to the first opportunity to apply for E-rate funds, our WAN consisted of a single 64k connection to the school office. With the first opportunity to apply for E-rate funds for WANs and LANs, we began our mission to accomplish the following goal: to provide every classroom, office, media center, and computer lab with local area networks based on recommended standards provided by the Alabama State Department of Education. Within a year and a half, with funding from E-rate and various grants, our system met that goal.

During the same time period, we received E-rate funds to facilitate the implementation of a plan to upgrade our WAN from 64K data lines to a state of the art wireless wide area network. Within 6 months, we provided 1,200 teachers with 15 hours of training on use of the Internet to teacher their specific subject. All 1,200 participants attended training after school and on Saturdays and were rewarded by receiving a new classroom computer connected to the Internet. Grant funds provided training for additional teachers and administrators, requiring the school system this year to upgrade our WAN to a fiber network to accommodate the instructional demands from teachers and students. With the improved Internet access, we have expanded our instructional services in the following areas:

- Provided elementary and high school students with the first online textbook in the state
- Developed a website (<http://www.tripforteachers.org/>) that correlates our state and local curriculum standards to more than 16,000 teacher-tested lessons and resources
- Implemented a district-wide quarterly Criterion Reference Testing (CRT) Program that allows the system to test every student in every core subject area; electronically score the tests; collect the test data and send it to a vendor, who disaggregates the data based on NCLB categories. The resulting reports are posted on a website available to all school system administrators and teachers. The assessment reports are provided by district, by school, by teacher, by grade and by student. Teachers must develop intervention programs based on these results. Many students in our lowest performing schools increased test scores on the CRTs from 30% to 80%.
- Provided a website that reports all state and district-wide assessment scores by NCLB categories. These reports are available down to the teachers' desks. This electronic
- Provided access to weekly electronic testing program with the new mathematics adoption, providing teachers instant feedback for re-teaching purposes.
- Provided electronic grade reporting and electronic lesson plan books that can be access via the web.
- Provided web-based e-mail access that fosters professional networking and improved school/parent communication.
- Provided a school district website that includes web pages for all departments and all schools, increasing communication between schools, parents and other community members, including communications concerning teacher homework and classroom assignments.

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