

St. Clair County Schools

St. Clair County Schools is a rural school system located in north central Alabama. This county is still largely agrarian, with most workers leaving the county to work in neighboring locations in industry or sales. Demographically, St. Clair County is almost 35% free and reduced lunch and our county tax mills tax is 13.5%. Being such, we are somewhat dependant on seeking outside sources of income. Our system serves almost 8,000 students in grades K-12. We have five high schools (9-12) with the rest being K-8 facilities.

100% of our schools and administration offices are data-connected. This connection affords all our financial and school administration servers to be connected to our central office for live-time student demographic data, point-of-sale lunchroom statistics, and also connections to the Internet as an educational resource.

In 2000, we began a comprehensive program to bring real-time audio/video conferencing into all five high schools. This collaboration would serve two ends. Number one, we would be able to offer highly-qualified instruction to all high schools for all subject matter. For example, we are able to "transmit" a high school Algebra II class from one high school, to the remaining four. We have successfully transmitted classes in this manor for four school years; covering subjects like Spanish, History, Career Technical and higher math. This process has worked so well, we have actually coordinated classes between ourselves and an adjoining school system.

Number two, the transport mechanism for the audio/video conferencing is based on fiber-optic architecture. We are able to transmit data as well as our audio/video conferences. The yearly charge to connect all our high schools is immense. Without the discounts we receive from the SLD on E-rate rebates, we would have to scuttle our network altogether.

E-rate is a significant contributor to address our local funding shortfall. Our stakeholders demand the best from us as a school system, and without E-rate, we would not be able to offer them our very best in education.