

OVER 20,000 ENROLLMENT

Linking to the Community

Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation, Evansville, Ind.

PROGRAM NAME:

EVSC Community Link

DISTRICT DILEMMA:

The school district sought to create a student-driven program linking schools with the community, while also offering students advanced training in using video technology to tell stories.

SOLUTION:

A half-hour television program, created by students at two of Evansville's high schools, fit the bill. The show about school and community events and issues airs on the local PBS channel, is streamed on the Internet, and replays on cable.

THE BOARD'S INVOLVEMENT:

The school board approved the program in 2003. Ever since, board members have helped create the shows. They help students find ideas for TV packages, offer financial support, assist in reviews, and attend formal previews. In addition, the board has asked high school students to videotape several important initiatives, including the 2006-07 back-to-school ceremonies.

RESULTS:

In an urban district with a \$2 million budget and more than 22,500 students, EVSC Community Link brings citizens close to their schools and keeps students informed about the community. Programs highlight business, civic, municipal, and school district events. But each package is a student creation from inception to final edit.

In creating video stories, students write scripts, conduct preliminary and final interviews, videotape using multiple camera setups, ensure sound quality, and then download to a computer and edit. Each "Link" program passes through a review stage where producers and technical experts evaluate content and technology use. Students then revise each package for a formal preview attended by school board members, students, the community, and the superintendent and assistant superintendents.

The community's local newspaper, the



Evansville-Vanderburgh students receive advanced training in video technology so they can document school and community events.

Evansville Courier Press, posts each program on its website. Sigecom, a local cable television channel, repeats the program every eight hours on its community cable channel.

Two high schools, Central High School and Benjamin Bosse High School, are involved. Students at both schools may take the courses for college "bridge credit" offered by the University of Southern Indiana and by Indiana Vocational and Technical College. Several graduates have majored in telecommunications in college.

"Students learn better when creating a real product for a real audience," says Terry W. Hughes, the district's specialist in integrating curriculum and technology.

Link also breaks down barriers. Students meet the mayor, city and county councils, the sheriff, and charitable and business leaders. Link segments connect the schools to Habitat for Humanity, the farm bureau, and a cross section of other groups. When a disastrous tornado struck the area in November 2005, Link students produced segments on the tornado, its victims, and the aftermath.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact Terry W. Hughes, specialist for integrating curriculum and technology, at (812) 435-5290, or via e-mail at thughes@evsc.k12.in.us. The district's website is www.evsc.k12.in.us.



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