



## Issue Brief Technology in education

### It's a 21<sup>st</sup> century world. Are our classrooms keeping up?

Technology and access to information have fueled a transformation in the way we do business in this country. But has our education system kept pace? Initiatives aimed at the state's K-12 and university systems are designed to give South Dakota students the skills and preparation they need for the jobs of tomorrow.

At the high school level, **South Dakota's Classroom Connections** helps school districts equip their students with laptops to expand their learning. The initiative is changing the way teachers instruct and students learn.

At the university level, the **Mobile Computing Initiative** outlines a move to a wireless computing environment on all six of the university campuses, as well as a move to change the way instruction is delivered.

Together, the two initiatives provide for a streamlined educational experience with shared long-range objectives:

- To create a more **relevant learning environment** that engages all students
- To **provide students with the tools** used in today's workplace
- To **prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow**

- To **close the digital divide** between those students that have access to technology and those that do not

### It's not about equipment. It's about skills.

Equipping South Dakota students with today's tools for learning is not about technology for technology's sake. It is about helping students develop the skills they need to thrive in our 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

Some of those skills include:

- Critical thinking skills
- Problem solving skills
- Communication skills
- Ability to do research
- Collaboration and teamwork

### What results can we expect?

- Students are **more motivated and engaged** in learning.
- Curriculum has become more personalized and **relevant**.
- Students have become better **researchers**.
- **Communication** between students, teachers and parents has been enhanced.
- Students **spend more time** collaborating.
- Students work in a **paperless environment** with constant access to course materials.
- There is **increased interaction** between students and faculty.

NOTE: Results reported by K-12 schools currently in Classroom Connections or by administrators at DSU and SDSMT, which both have tablet requirements.

## Classroom Connections

### What is it?

South Dakota's Classroom Connections provides high school students with laptop computers. Laptops allow access to a wealth of information and expanded opportunities for learning. Ultimately, the initiative aims to help students gain the skills they need for further education and the jobs of tomorrow.

### How does it improve education?

Laptops themselves do *not* improve education. It's the access to information, the expanded opportunities for learning, and the ability to collaborate that make a difference. Learning by laptop requires a paradigm shift in the way classrooms function.

### Who has it impacted?

Forty-one school districts, serving 9,800 students, currently participate in the program. That means **nearly 25 percent of all high school students** in the state have access to laptops through this innovative project. Participation by districts is voluntary.

### Who pays for it?

South Dakota's Classroom Connections project is a \$1 match from the state for every \$2 invested by a local school district. Gov. Rounds has requested \$2.9 million for the project for FY 09.

### For information

For information about South Dakota's Classroom Connections initiative, contact Wade Pogany, Department of Education, at (605) 773-3282 or [wade.pogany@state.sd.us](mailto:wade.pogany@state.sd.us).

## Mobile Computing

### What is it?

The Board of Regents' Mobile Computing Initiative seeks to create a wireless environment at the state's public universities and to design the delivery of instruction to include the use of mobile computing devices.

### Who will it impact?

The initiative will impact students and faculty at all six of the state's public universities.

### How will it improve education?

An estimated 80 to 90 percent of students at South Dakota's public universities bring a computer to school with them. The move to a wireless environment and the corresponding change in how curricula are delivered will bring our campuses into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Students will learn via the same tools that are used every day in the business and professional worlds.

### How will it be funded?

One-time costs to set up a mobile computing environment at the universities can be accomplished with legislative approval to use existing university funds. Gov. Rounds has included \$1.3 million for ongoing technical support of the system in his budget proposal for FY 09.

### For information

For information about the Mobile Computing Initiative, contact Sam Gingerich, South Dakota Board of Regents, at (605) 773-3455 or [samg@sdbor.edu](mailto:samg@sdbor.edu).

## **Classroom Connections**

### **Participating K-12 school districts** (Years 1 and 2):

Bonesteel-Fairfax  
Castlewood  
Chamberlain  
Chester  
Conde  
Corsica  
Deuel  
Doland  
Dupree  
Elk Point-Jefferson  
Estelline  
Eureka  
Faith  
Flandreau  
Frederick  
Gettysburg  
Hamlin  
Hill City  
Huron  
Kadoka  
Lead-Deadwood  
Lemmon  
Madison Central  
McCook Central  
Menno  
Miller  
Mitchell  
Newell  
Parker  
Parkston  
Pierre  
Platte  
Spearfish  
Tri-Valley  
Viborg  
Wagner  
Wall  
Warner  
Watertown  
Wessington Springs  
Winner