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Computer
School
Initiative*

Administration Accomplishments in Education and Technology

The Clinton Administration has made an unprecedented commitment to bringing technology into the classroom. As a central element of the President's lifelong learning agenda, the Administration believes that technology can help expand opportunities for American children to improve their skills, maximize their potential, and ready them for the 21st century.

America's Technology Literacy Challenge

(www.whitehouse.gov/WH/New/other/challenge.html#education)

On February 15, 1996, the President called for a five-year, \$2 billion fund that would support grassroots efforts at the state and local level to put the future at the fingertips of every child by the dawn of the new century -- with modern computers, high quality educational software, trained teachers, and connections to the information superhighway.

21st Century Teachers (www.21ct.org)

In May of 1996, the nation's leading parent, teacher, and school board organizations are stepping forward together to meet a vital component of the President's challenge: Ensuring that all teachers will be trained to use the new educational technologies. This national volunteer partnership has made a commitment to the President to work cooperatively to support teachers and other educators at the local level by disseminating information on skills teachers will need to facilitate learning in the 21st century, ensuring professional development opportunities, developing awards and incentives for using educational technology, and promoting the development of, and access to, classroom resources and curricula that use advanced technologies.

Ensuring Equality in Access (www.ustc.org/CyberEd/index.html)

On April 17, 1996 the Vice President joined with business leaders and the Tech Corp to launch CyberEd, the mobile library of the 21st century. CyberEd will travel to fifteen cities and rural communities over the next three months to catalyze efforts to connect every school in all 15 empowerment zones this year. The President's Technology Literacy Challenge conditions funding on states joining with local communities and the private sector to determine how they can best assure that all schools in all districts will have full access to education by the dawn of the next century.

Affordable Computers

On April 17, 1996 the President signed an Executive Order (we need this as a link) making it much easier to get computers no longer needed by the federal government into America's classrooms. Procedures have been simplified, and private organizations will ensure that the computers are fully functional and equipped to use modern software.

Affordable Communications

(<http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/OP/telecom/signing.html>)

On February 8, 1996 the president signed a bold reform of the nation's telecommunication laws that will increase competition and lower prices for all users of communication -- including schools. The bill includes a specific requirement for telecommunications companies to provide classrooms and libraries with discounted access to the information superhighway.
(www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/OP/telecom/telecom-top.html)

Netdays (www.netday96.com/)

The Administration is working actively with Congress, the states, local governments, private industry, public interest groups and the public groups themselves to achieve this goal. In March, the President and Vice President worked with more than 20,000 other volunteers to wire 3000 California schools in an "electronic barnraising". Companies contributed wiring kits, more than six million feet of cable, technical assistance, free Internet access, and free or discounted hardware and software. This sparked national interest and 32 states are planning netdays this fall and another eight are actively organizing.

High Quality Content-- The Technology Learning Challenge Grant Program
(web.fie.com/htdoc/fed/ito/any/any/menu/any/tlcindex.htm)

The Administration initiated a "Technology Learning Challenge," to challenge communities to form partnerships of local school systems, students, colleges, universities and private businesses to develop creative new ways to use technology for learning. Each grant focuses on integrating innovative learning technologies into curriculum and leverages federal dollars to establish local consortia of communities committed to school reform and technology integration. The Administration has awarded 19 grants for FY 95.

Organizing Volunteers with Computer Expertise (www.ustc.org)

In October 1995 the President announced the business-sponsored US Tech Corps, which now has chapters in 30 states and the District of Columbia. This volunteer organization enables high-tech workers from the private sector to assist teachers and schools in using educational technology.

Honoring Student Volunteers

In October, 1995 the President helped inaugurate the national Technology Honorary Society, created by the nation's secondary school principals to honor students who serve their schools by helping their peers and teachers use new learning technologies. This group also operates the National Honor Society.

Grants to schools through TIIAP

In 1994, the Clinton Administration created the Department of Commerce's TIIAP (Telecommunications and Information Infrastructure Assistance Program) which makes grants to public institutions to speed up the flow of information through the application of advanced communications technology. Through federal support and investment, TIIAP has accelerated the pace of connecting public institutions and has stimulated private sector investment. This program has enabled the federal government to leverage \$24.4 million in federal funds to provide a total of \$64.4 million in cutting-edge demonstration projects for public institutions. The program is so successful that there are 200 times more applications than there are grants.

Other Federal programs in Education Technology

ERIC Program

In order to reach out to the teachers across the country, the Clinton Administration funds the ERIC service, which stands for the Educational Resources Information Clearing House Service. Educators are able to send questions through e-mail to askERIC, and receive a response within 48 hours. Educators can ask about lesson plans, educational techniques information on GOALS 2000 and so on. Every week 200 new questions come in, and the information that ERIC has made available on-line, such as sample lesson plans and answers to frequently asked questions is accessed more than 15,000 times a week.

Star Schools Program

The Star School's distance learning projects have helped to improve instruction in mathematics, science and foreign languages, literacy skills and vocational education. These distance learning projects serve under-served populations through partnerships that develop, construct, acquire, maintain and operate telecommunications audio and visual facilities and equipment, develop and acquire educational and instructional programming, and obtain technical assistance for the use of such facilities and instructional programming. More than one million students and their teachers in 50 states and territories participate in this program funded by the Department of Education.

Connecting Students to the Environment

Vice President Gore initiated the Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) Program in 1994. GLOBE joins students, educators and scientists in an international science and environmental education network using state-of-the-art technology. GLOBE students make environmental observations at or near their schools and share their data through the Internet. More than 2,000 schools in the U.S. are participating in GLOBE in 1995.

Assessing School Connectivity

The first national survey of schools access to broad band telecommunications and the Internet was completed in the Fall of 1994. A second national survey was conducted in October, 1995 and documents the progress being made to link schools and classrooms.

Improving rural education and health care

The Administration's commitment to ensuring the wide dissemination of information has worked through the Rural Utilities Service Distance Learning and Medical Link (DLML) Grant Program, to improving education and health care for rural residents throughout the Nation. The program has already given hundreds of students attending rural schools in 28 states access to previously unavailable courses.

Regional Technology Consortia Grant Program

The Clinton Administration initiated the Department of Education's Regional Technology Consortia Program to help state, local educational agencies, teachers, administrators and others to integrate advanced technologies into K-12 grade classrooms, library media centers and other educational settings (including adult literacy centers). The Consortia are establishing and conducting regional activities that address professional development, technical assistance, and information resource dissemination to promote the effective use of technology in education.

National Plan for Technology in Education

Education Secretary Riley will submit a National Plan for Technology in Education to Congress in early 1996. The report is the effort of hundreds of educators, citizens and industry leaders in seven regional forums, two national conferences and an on-line discussion over the Internet to address the important issues in educational technology.

Rural telecommunications infrastructure

The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) administers grants and loan programs to assist rural and remote communities with the development of their communications infrastructure, including schools. Additionally, fifty-two K-12 school systems will be provided two-way interactive video services.