

Bloomfield Visit  
Elementary Technology  
Monday, March 8, 1999

During today's visit I was able to visit to a Grade 6 class, a Grade 2 class and the Elementary Computer Lab. I was also was able to interact with the Director of Technology at Bloomfield. Bloomfield has done all of it's present work in technology through local funds. A bond issue which passed this fall will include additional work on technology along with the construction of a Middle School. Over the past few years, teachers were given banks of five computers after they wrote proposals explaining how they would use technology in their classroom.

This year Bloomfield is piloting the CCC software program for Math and Reading. This program is a complete curriculum along with a management system. Besides the CCC system, each computer in the Elementary School is loaded with other specific software. The K-2 computers all have Kid Pix; Student Writing Center; and Read, Write, Type. Only the teacher's workstation in Grades K-2 is loaded with Micro Soft Office. From Grade 3 on, Micro Soft Office is loaded on all workstations. There are a series of typing programs used in the district. Read, Write, Type; All the Right Type (grades 3-4); Ultra Key (grades 5-6); and Southwestern Software in the High School. Many other individual software programs are available. The most prominent are the Mighty Math Workshop (Edu Mark), Adam, the Inside Story (grade 5), and Living Books (K-2).

Staffing at Bloomfield is minimal. There are two teachers, one K-6 and the other 7-12. The K-6 teacher has contact in her lab with all students' grades K-6. The 7-12 teacher has contact with grades 7 & 8 students for 10 weeks/year. In the High School, the program consists of electives such as Electronic Information Processing, C++, Internet Publishing (introductory and advanced). The application programs of Micro Soft Office are taught by the High School Business Department. The remaining staff consists of 2 ½ aides. Their job consists of trouble shooting and loading programs. Two of these aides are Novell certified. They work in the labs part of the time. The Elementary School aide works from 9-3 in the lab and is paid from 8-9 a.m. and 3-4 p.m. as a technician at a rate of \$10/hour.

When we visited, the Elementary lab was filled with kindergartners. They were proficient with the use of a mouse and spent their lab time using the program Bailey's Book House. They were being helped by the lab teacher, lab aide, and the classroom teacher who remained in the room. It was amazing seeing how well they navigated the PC. (See computer teacher report that is attached.)

The Grade 6 classroom visit consisted of viewing the management system of the CCC software in reading. This software pre-test students, tracks their progress by their increases and moves them forward or back in the curriculum as needed. The teacher explained that if he did not have five computers for class of 20 students, this program would be unmanageable. He also has adapted the software to focus on one particular weakness of each student since the software does not do this, but rather spirals through grade level curriculum. For example, he has a folder on fractions for one of his students as well as the regular folder, which takes the student through many different topics. This teacher has four of the computers at the rear of the room facing the wall and one computer up by his desk with the screen facing out towards the students (to use for displaying information to students). This arrangement took minimal classroom space.

The Grade 2 classroom used a rotational program (see attachment). Each student visits one of the five classroom computers daily for math and reading and every other day for writing. The students rotate between a lesson taught by the teacher, computer work and a learning center activity. There are five computers in the room. One computer sits by the teacher's desk that faces the rug area so that the teacher can display programs to the students while they sit on the rug. The other four computers are on a trapezoid table in the back of the room. This arrangement seems to take up more space than the Grade 6 arrangement, since the table cannot be pushed against the wall.

All in all, this was a half-day well spent. It helps to visit other schools to see how they are addressing technology issues. I believe that we are moving forward with our plan, but are probably at least two years behind Bloomfield. This fact in itself would not be daunting except with the present rate of technology expansion, this growth curve translates into a multiple of two.