

Classrooms for the Future Year Three Starts on a High Note

Three years, 144,000 laptops, and 447 schools later, what's the takeaway from Gov. Edward Rendell's innovate Classrooms for the Future (CFF) initiative? According to researchers, not only has CFF increased the standards of learning across the state, but it has also improved students' enthusiasm for their studies.

The annual evaluation indicates that CFF schools are making the shift towards student-centered classrooms, teachers are increasing the use of project-based learning, and students are increasing their instructional pace and improving the quality of their work.

The research also revealed:

- Traditional lecture-based teaching is giving way to a more collaborative, learner-centered approach, with students working in groups, contributing to discussions, and researching topics in real time, rather than working alone at their desks
- Almost two-thirds of teachers (64%) either agreed or strongly agreed that with CFF they can expect the highest quality of work from their students
- CFF is changing how students are evaluated. While tests still have a place in the instructional process, teachers are placing more emphasis on oral reports, presentations, projects, and group work, with the increased use of standardized rubrics to assess project work

“The teachers and students in the CFF classrooms are part of a paradigm shift in secondary education – from desk-based learning to collaborative, student-paced education enabled by technology tools,” said Bob Kirby, senior director, K-12 education, CDW Government, Inc. (CDW-G).

Please find the full press release included below. To learn more about the research report and to speak with a CFF school, please contact me at ltorphy@okco.com or 703-883-9000, ext. 134.

Best,
Lisa

Pennsylvania Classrooms for the Future Moves into Year Three with Successful Track Record for Educational Progress

Research Indicates More Student-Centered Classrooms, Project-Based Learning and Improved Student Work

VERNON HILLS, Ill., and HARRISBURG, Pa. – January 26, 2009 – CDW Government, Inc. (CDW-G), a wholly owned subsidiary of CDW Corporation and leading source of Information Technology (IT) solutions to educators and governments, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) today announced the findings of PDE's annual evaluation of the

Classrooms for the Future (CFF) program, which to date, has brought technology-based learning to 447 high schools across Pennsylvania.

The annual evaluation, conducted by researchers at Penn State University, Ohio University and Towson University, indicates that CFF is changing student learning by shifting to student-centered classrooms, increasing use of project-based learning and improving student instructional pace and quality of student work.

Classrooms for the Future, launched in 2006 by Gov. Edward Rendell and PDE, is a three-year program designed to engage high school students in their studies and make learning more responsive to the economic challenges presented by globalization. At the end of the 2008-2009 school year, the state will have about 140,000 laptops and other instructional technology in schools around Pennsylvania. CFF also provides extensive professional development and support to teachers and administrators to ensure that teachers seamlessly integrate the technology into their classrooms. As a primary contractor for CFF, CDW-G manages the technology implementation and professional development for schools that select the PC platform. CDW-G worked closely with PDE to develop the CFF professional development program, including integrating the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) standards into the content.

“With Classrooms for the Future, we’re supporting development of 21st-century learning strategies to influence student results, and our teachers have been wonderful collaborators in this effort,” said Gerald L. Zahorchak, secretary of education, PDE.

Putting Students First

In their research, evaluators looked at the instructional strategies teachers employ in the CFF classrooms. They found that CFF enables teachers to be more creative in how they deliver content, leading to more differentiated instruction. The traditional lecture-based approach is giving way to a more collaborative, learner-centered approach, with students working in groups, contributing to discussions and researching topics in real time, rather than working quietly, alone at their desks. One principal interviewed for the report noted that while the quality of instruction

prior to CFF was good, CFF “really aided in taking the relevant and rigorous curriculum to the next level.”

“CDW-G has worked hand-in-hand with PDE and Classrooms for the Future coaches and teachers to ensure the success of CFF – and indeed, this landmark program is making a positive impact on teaching and learning,” said Bob Kirby, senior director, K-12 education, CDW-G. “The teachers and students in the CFF classrooms are part of a paradigm shift in secondary education – from desk-based learning to collaborative, student-paced education enabled by technology tools.”

Improving Student Performance

Interviews with principals and project managers indicated that CFF teachers are devoting more time to project-based learning and hands-on activities – and student achievement is improving as a direct result on the program. One project manager reported, “Students are engaged from three-fourths to 90 percent of the classroom time. They are dialoging, creating and collaborating. They are analyzing to a much higher level and to a greater extent.” Further, almost two-thirds of teachers (64%) either agreed or strongly agreed that with CFF they can expect the highest quality of work from their students.

Improving Student Evaluation

CFF researchers also found ample evidence that CFF is changing how students are evaluated. While tests have a place in the instructional process, teachers are placing more emphasis on oral reports, presentations, projects and group work, with the increased use of standardized rubrics to assess project work. Interviews with project managers noted that since the CFF launch, student work has become increasingly complex and incorporates more of the students’ skills. One project manager said, “We were concerned that the instructional pace might slow down, but the instructional pace and learning has actually increased. We have been able to cover more content because of the technology.”

For more information about Classrooms for the Future, please visit

<http://www.pde.state.pa.us/k12/site/default.asp>.

About CDW-G

A wholly owned subsidiary of CDW Corporation, ranked No. 34 on Forbes' list of America's Largest Private Companies, CDW Government, Inc. (CDW-G) is a leading provider of technology solutions for federal, state and local government agencies, as well as educational institutions at all levels. The company features dedicated account managers who help customers choose the right technology products and services to meet their needs. The company's technology specialists and engineers offer expertise in designing customized solutions, while its advanced technology engineers can assist customers with the implementation and long-term management of those solutions. Areas of focus include notebooks, desktops, printers, servers and storage, unified communications, security, wireless, power and cooling, networking, software licensing and mobility solutions.

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