

IDL EQUIPMENT FACILITATES Educational Classes and More at Barber County North



Where Kansans Access the Information Age

Kan-ed -- Where Kansans Access the Information Age

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Barber County North USD 254, in south central Kansas, has been using Kan-ed funded videoconferencing equipment for Interactive Distance Learning (IDL) for the past three years. The IDL lab in the middle school was established in 2006, and another was established in the high school in 2008. Barbara Keltner, IDL coordinator and librarian, estimates that 1,800 students, staff, and patrons have participated in IDL programs since then. Keltner conveyed that without the Kan-ed funding for this equipment, they “could never have afforded to bring the wonderful presentations to our school like we have via IDL.”

Keltner took the opportunity to share the many ways in which the school makes use of the videoconferencing equipment. They have approximately three to five IDL programs a month, and they most frequently connect with Wichita State University (WSU), Vanderbilt Virtual University, and Connect2Kansas. Keltner shared, “We have taken advantage of a number of free science programs through WSU for our students in grades 1-8. In addition, our students have participated in programs on the topics of black history, the Holocaust, rattlesnakes, bats, owls, election campaign ads, diabetes, severe weather, the WWII museum in Nashville, and a class on Mandarin Chinese.” Further, the first graders participated in a program on “The Nutcracker Suite,” during which they learned ballet moves from a young ballerina. The senior class participated in an historic IDL session with the plaintiffs of the *Brown v. Board of Education* court case, which was a very special opportunity to talk to people involved in that piece of Kansas history.

The school system has utilized the equipment beyond just educational classes. Keltner described her favorite use, “One year we had a young lady who was a year too old to participate in junior high sports, so our principal had appealed this to the Kansas State High School Activities Association. In the past, he would have had to drive the student to Topeka for an interview to gain an exemption. We live about three hours from Topeka, so this would take the better part of a school day for the two of them plus the expense of a school vehicle. But this time we were able to connect to that person via videoconference, have the interview, and she returned to class an official member of the athletic team, all within half an hour!” The school also has used the equipment to have a book discussion for the *Twilight* book series. Keltner stated, “Through the librarian's listserv, I located another library with enthusiastic fans and videoconferencing equipment, and they all thoroughly enjoyed the ensuing book discussion.”

Keltner shared many positive comments about Kan-ed’s service to their school system. She stated, “The staff at Kan-ed is unbelievably accommodating, helpful, understanding, and efficient! When we were having trouble with our connections when we first started in 2006, the staff were relentless on figuring out what needed to be done to get us a quality connection, including making a trip to Medicine Lodge for a meeting with our technology people. Besides the things they do for us, the friendly and encouraging manner in which they take care of us is above-and-beyond in every situation!” She also hoped that her comments would “help Kan-ed secure funding to be able to continue to help schools acquire videoconferencing equipment and service as it has been VERY beneficial to our students and staff in the three years we've had it!”

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Barber County North USD 254
Serves: 500+ students,
20+ educators
Kan-ed member since:
May 29, 2003