

District Using Desktop to Teach 'Information Literacy Skills'

**Kan-ed Annual
Evaluation Report
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Jefferson West USD 340
Serves: 950+ students,
80+ educators
Kan-ed member since:
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According to Mary Getto, Director of Curriculum and Instruction at Jefferson West USD 340, the district started training all teachers to use the Kan-ed Empowered Desktop three years ago. Getto described that the training targets a maximum of four teachers at a time and involves showing them how to use specific features of the Desktop such as how to: bookmark, personalize your page, access student games, do a safe search, and use the genealogy tool. Getto remarked, "The Desktop provides a secure place for teachers to house information for their students. They can be assured that the sites accessed through the portal are appropriate for their children."

Jan Wells, fourth grade teacher at Jefferson West Intermediate School, also stated, "Our teachers are discovering that there's more to Kan-ed than they realized. They were excited to see how the Desktop could help them as teachers and with student learning. It allows teachers to give students some freedom, while being reassured that what they're doing is productive. With our commitment to learning about how the Desktop can help, we found it to be a very powerful tool."

Training on the Desktop also takes place for students. The Jefferson West Middle and High School librarian, Billie Esser, says in her experience, the Desktop is predominantly used for student research assignments. "We've been using the Desktop for at least five years. As a small district with less money and resources, we have to take advantage of all the resources made available to us. I can't possibly provide every print resource. Before the Desktop, we had to go to a variety of websites to teach students how to find and access resources. The Desktop provides one entry point and makes it much less confusing. Also, before the Desktop, students couldn't bookmark websites or keep research and project information separate from their personal, file-sharing space on our school network; now they can, and it has been great!"

Students are taught to use the Desktop in one to four class periods as freshman and then given "refreshers" the subsequent years. Esser commented, "I see it as a way to help teach information literacy skills, knowing how to access and find quality electronic resources. The Desktop allows me to teach these skills that will follow students to college and the workplace. Those that are college bound are going to experience these types of resources at their chosen institution; this access and knowledge prepares them and possibly gives them an advantage when they get to their destination." Esser shared this story related to a former student and the Empowered Desktop, "A few years back, I had a late-night call from a former student wanting to use 'that thing' we worked on so much so that he could use to get his work done!"

In summary, Esser shared, "I want to emphasize that the Desktop isn't only for the college bound. Teaching information literacy skills is necessary for all students. Those not going to college still need to know how to find and access information for their own personal or work-related needs - showing all students how these resources help them will follow them in to the future. I believe that having access to the Desktop helps me be a better teacher-librarian."

Pat Happer, K-5 Principal at Jefferson West, remarked, "I think that usage of the Empowered Desktop is going to continue to grow as our infrastructure has improved and more teachers will start utilizing what's available there. I think the legislature will be doing a disservice unfortunately if they pull the plug on Kan-ed and say 'Oh, we're not going to fund it because of budget cuts.' That'll be taking some steps backward in education. I think that would be detrimental for the legislature to cut funding there because it is important. They think it's all about textbooks and worksheets, and education is a lot different than that."