



IDL Network Facilitates Resource Sharing by School Districts

The South Central Kansas Distance Learning Network (SCKDLN) has developed partnerships with Cowley County Community College and 18 Kansas school districts to deliver interactive distance learning (IDL) classes and special programs that connect outside institutions (e.g., zoos and museums) with the classroom over the Kan-ed network. SCKDLN also partners with other Kansas IDL providers like the TEEN network, the A PLUS network, and the I-CAN network, as well as out-of-state institutions, to deliver distance learning opportunities for Kansas students by sharing resources across geographic barriers.



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The network provides 40 to 50 classes a semester, generally with 10 to 24 students enrolled in each class. Audra May, SCKDLN's Distance Learning Coordinator, meets with principals and counselors from participating schools to determine educational needs and develop schedules for IDL. May shared that "the bridge allows a lot of things for us that we might not normally be able to do" due to the bandwidth and multiple site hosting it provides. For example, access to IDL courses like foreign languages allows students to meet requirements of scholarships. She also described that the resources made available through the video bridge are used to train teachers and facilitators on how to use IDL effectively. May described the Kan-ed network as "a huge benefit" to Kansas schools because resources and qualified staff are sometimes scarce.

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without Kan-ed."*

In addition to elementary, middle and high school level courses and special programs, SCKDLN offers college-level courses from Cowley. May coordinates with Bryan McChesney, Coordinator and ITV/Technology Specialist at Cowley, to make the courses available. McChesney said that some students "couldn't get their high school diploma without IDL." He also noted that being exposed to IDL in high school prepares students for interacting with and enjoying technology in their higher education careers. May noted that the Cowley courses offered over IDL have aided some students in graduating with Associate's degrees in the same year they graduate with their high school diploma.

Both May and McChesney indicated that supplementary Kan-ed services, such as the Network Operations Center (NOC) Help Desk, aid them in providing IDL to Kansas schools. May described using the NOC as a resource to connect and troubleshoot connections. McChesney also noted that the Renovo Scheduler service, which makes automatic video connections, "makes life a whole lot easier. Without Kan-ed, I don't think I could do any of that stuff." In addition, he noted that Kan-ed grants have helped fund the purchase of necessary IDL equipment.

IDL saves schools and the state money, in that it "isn't cheap, but it's cheaper than paying for a full-time teacher." May emphasized the importance of IDL for small and rural schools, saying, "Especially right now, in this budget crunch time, I would have schools that wouldn't exist anymore without Kan-ed."



**South Central Kansas
Distance Learning Network**

Serves: 18 member school
districts in Kansas

Kan-ed Affiliate since 2002