

# Kan-ed Network Provides a Transmission System for Student and Teacher Learning

“Without communication lines like the Kan-ed network, we’re sunk,” said Carol Swinney, Director of Distance Learning at Southwest Plains Regional Service Center (SWPRSC). The service center is a “hub” for schools and districts to communicate, improve student learning, and receive continuing education. Through the Kan-ed 2.0 network, SWPRSC can link teachers and students to each other, Kansas universities, and distance learning programs throughout the nation. “Distance is a problem, but right now dollars are a problem. We have many schools where teachers cannot leave the district for workshops. If they leave, they not only have to pay for their day, but their transportation and a substitute. Kan-ed is accessibility. It’s a cost feature, too. As our schools tighten their belts, they’re looking for more ways they can use technology to save on travel costs,” explained Swinney.

Swinney shared how SWPRSC uses the Kan-ed 2.0 network, “We started using the Kan-ed network for basic communication, but we’ve started using the technology for teacher networking.” Veteran teachers are paired and videoconference with new teachers in other schools to help the teachers acclimate to teaching in rural Kansas. SWPRSC also provides workshops, conferences, and meetings via videoconference over the Kan-ed network. In October 2010, eight science teachers went to the National Science Teachers Association conference in Kansas City. Upon returning, the teachers had a videoconference with other districts’ science teachers to share information they learned. The Kan-ed network is helping to “draw these schools closer together. We’re creating networks among content teachers. We’re really only limited by our imagination,” said Swinney.

SWPRSC has partnered with MidAmerica Nazarene University in Olathe for the Preparing Educators in Rural Kansas (PERK) grant that involves six southwest Kansas school districts: Copeland/Montezuma, Deerfield, Lakin, Rolla, Stanton County, and Sublette. The purpose of the grant is to help student teachers prepare to be sent out into western Kansas and rural communities. Swinney described how the Kan-ed network contributes to this project, “Kan-ed network is our transmission system with this grant. I know it’s going to make us much more effective.”

Kansas Teachers of English Language Learners (KANTELL), a collaborative professional development project, is another project where the Kan-ed network is providing a transmission system. For this project, SWPRSC has partnered with the University of Kansas (KU) to connect 22 participants in six locations, five sites in southwest Kansas and KU, so teachers in southwest Kansas can receive the graduate school credits required for KU’s English as a Second Language endorsement program via IDL using the Kan-ed network.

SWPRSC utilizes the Kan-ed network to not only assist teachers in furthering their education but also to help students receive a comprehensive education by connecting them with teachers outside of the district and to programs like NASA’s Digital Learning Network. Swinney shared, “In our small schools, it’s difficult for us to provide teachers in all those critical subjects. The distance education piece allows a huge amount of equity for our students to get those things they need. Really, there’s no end to what can be done through Kan-ed, by creating a true statewide network.”

A close-up photograph of a mechanical watch movement, showing intricate gears, jewels, and metal components. The watch is partially visible, with the dial and case back showing some details.

**Southwest Plains Regional  
Service Center**

**Serves: 51 school districts  
and 3 community colleges**

**Kan-ed member since:  
September 5, 2002**

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