

Rural Schools and Educational Broadband Success

Lake Pend Oreille School District in Sandpoint, Idaho has always had a “Yes You Can!” attitude.

Since the dawn of the World Wide Web, the district’s teachers have held cupcake bake sales to help fund dial-up Internet service for the district’s remote, rural schools and dug ditches for lines connecting one school’s network to another.

Technology funding remains a challenge for the school district, but thanks to Intermax Networks the district’s days of dial up Internet and isolation from the world outside on the web are chalk dust.

Even schools in the farthest reaches of the district – geographically one of the largest school districts in Idaho – have blazing fast Internet access.

Intermax Networks has brought big-time bandwidth to the district with the help of E-Rate, a federal program providing discounted Internet access and technology for rural school districts with a high rate of poverty.



More than half of the 3,700 students in the Lake Pend Oreille School District fall under federal poverty guidelines.

“Rural schools don’t necessarily have volumes of information in their libraries,” said Doug Olin, the district’s assistant administrator.

With big bandwidth from Intermax Networks, students at every school in the district have the ability to access the vast resources the Internet has to offer, along with opportunities for online learning.

A student at rural Clark Fork High can take an online course through the Idaho Digital Learning Academy just as easily as a student in the city at Sandpoint High School.

Students struggling in math can easily access the Apangea online math tutoring program adopted by the State Department of Education last fall. Accelerated reading programs for high achievers are also available online.

“Intermax provides the bandwidth,” Olin said.

The opportunities, savings and efficiencies high-speed Internet provides are numerous.

Travel time and costs: Olin recently attended a webinar from his desk at the district office instead of traveling to Boise to attend in person, something that would have required lost time at work and airline expenses. Teachers can also take professional development courses online.

With increased bandwidth from Intermax Networks, students at every school in the district have the ability to access the vast resources the Internet has to offer, along with opportunities for online learning.

Paper cuts: Industrial Technology teacher Dick Ross has his entire curriculum on his website. Parents and Ross' middle school students can access project calendars and download forms. Students use the Internet for research and he often uses examples from the Internet in class, projecting websites onto a large screen. "I hardly use paper anymore," Ross says.

Collaboration: The lone first-grade teacher at Southside Elementary can easily connect with her peers at other elementary schools throughout the district via e-mail.

At first, Olin considered the Internet to be a tool.

"Now it's a necessity," he says.

Math teacher Sandy Ross has been in the district since before the Internet and through the days of dial-up access.

Since the district began working with Intermax Networks, she has noticed the increased bandwidth and the benefits of faster access to sophisticated teaching tools.

"I don't want to ever go backward," she said. "Without Intermax, we're nothing."



Intermax Networks – with the largest private microwave and fiber optic network in North Idaho – is able to serve areas which DSL and cable providers can't reach.

It's been said that there's no such word as can't.

That's why can't is not part of the Intermax Networks culture. With Intermax Networks, it's "Yes You Can!"