



The ESD SOURCE

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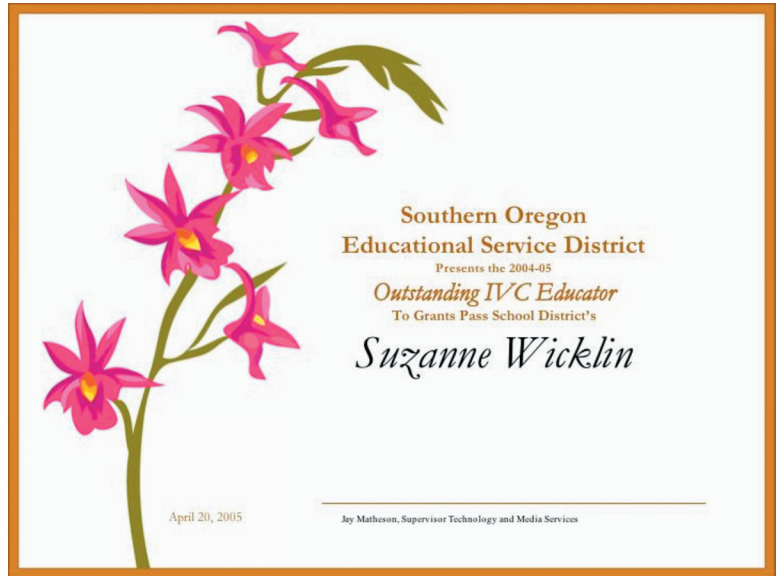
IVC Pioneers Honored

By Jay Matheson, Supervisor, Technology and Media Services

At its April meeting, the SOESD Board took time to honor two outstanding educators who have been pioneers in their districts' interactive video conferencing (IVC) efforts. Doug Smith, curriculum director for Klamath County School District, was named Outstanding IVC Administrator for 2004-05, and Suzanne Wicklin, high school librarian and media specialist for three elementary schools in Grants Pass School District, was named Outstanding IVC Educator for 2004-05.

Doug Smith, a long-time administrator in Klamath County, wears many hats including chief promoter of IVC for the district's 6,500 students and nearly 400 teachers. In the state directory, he is listed for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and technology. He is also the principal of Falcon Heights Alternative School. The maxim "if you want something done—ask a busy person to do it" seems to fit in Doug's case. Doug has worked with SOESD since the beginning of IVC efforts in this area and has kept Klamath County Schools in the leadership position for delivering high school classes. Doug and Klamath County Schools have recently received national and international attention for their efforts. Klamath County Schools are noted in a special study supported by the U.S. Department of Education for "using technology to increase access to accelerated learning opportunities in four states." Last summer Kevin Farrell, a high school principal from New South Wales, Australia, came to visit Klamath County Schools to gather information for inclusion in his report "Best Practice in Interactive Video Teaching." What Mr. Farrell found is what many in Oregon already know—Doug Smith's efforts have been key to the development of IVC classes in Klamath County Schools. Among his accomplishments are 1) a single bell schedule for all the district's five high schools - making shared instruction a logistical possibility, 2) ongoing leadership to promote IVC classes to students, parents, and educators, and 3) a cooperative and sharing attitude with other districts. For these reasons and because of his "Just Do It" attitude, Doug Smith was chosen Outstanding IVC Administrator 2004-05.

Another distance learning pioneer, Suzanne Wicklin, was chosen as IVC Educator for 2004-05. She began her teaching career and served as a librarian for three elementary schools in Grants Pass School District before becoming Grants Pass High School Librarian in 1979. In the last two years, she has come full circle and has returned to working with elementary schools. She now serves as the librarian for three elementary schools and Grants Pass High School.



INSIDE

Source: Paul Rickerson
Sandra Crews New Director of SOESD
Special Education Services
April Board Notes
Teacher Training, Computers Talking, and
Students Learning

We choose Suzanne as our Outstanding IVC Educator, in part, because from the first introduction of IVC in the late 90s Suzanne has been an enthusiastic advocate. Having had experience in elementary schools, she saw the value of what we then called "virtual fieldtrips" and what we now call the content side of IVC. Suzanne caught the vision that IVC could open the doors for students and teachers to venture out into the world in a new way. Suzanne See *IVC* on the third page



The Source: Paul Rickerson

New Challenges for Schools

The federal law that requires districts to provide a free appropriate public education to students with disabilities was recently reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA). While most of the new law becomes effective July 1, the U.S. Department of Education has yet to promulgate regulations to interpret the law. It is reported that these regulations may be released in December, 2005. Subsequently, states will need to realign their own laws and regulations to be consistent with IDEIA.

This law creates a number of challenges and perhaps some flexibility for regular and special educators. Although there are many changes in the new law, some of the significant changes are briefly highlighted.

IDEIA was aligned with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) by requiring that all disabled students participate in state and district wide assessments with appropriate accommodations or participate in alternative assessments as indicated on their Individual Education Plan (IEP). These alternate assessments must be aligned with the state's academic content and achievement standards.

Since NCLB did not specifically define highly qualified special education teachers, IDEIA includes a new definition. Special education teachers must be fully certified and licensed in special education and also be "highly qualified" if they teach core content subjects as defined in NCLB. Current special education teachers may be able to become "highly qualified" by meeting the high, objective, uniform state standard of evaluation (HOUSSE) established by each state. While parents cannot request a due process hearing if a special education teacher is not "highly qualified," school districts are required by NCLB to inform parents if their child's teacher is not "highly qualified."

A strategy used by regular education to see if students make progress from a specific instructional approach may be applied to the identification of students with learning disabilities. Although not required by IDEIA, a state's regulations could replace the current ability-achievement discrepancy model for identifying students with learning disabilities with the use of a "Response to Intervention" (RTI) model. In RTI, the student's limited response and progress to different instructional methods in reading for example, would be a key factor in determining that a student has a specific learning disability in reading.

If the parent refuses initial consent for placement in special education, the district cannot pursue due process but is also released from the law's requirement of providing a free appropriate public education to the student. Some additional relief is that a district is no longer required to re-evaluate a student who is graduating with a diploma or when the student "ages out" of special education entitlement.

The content and meeting participants of the IEP have also changed under IDEIA. Beginning July 2005, the IEP must include a statement of why a student can't participate in the regular state or district assessment and why the selected alternate assessment is appropriate. Although all IEPs require measurable goals, short-term objectives for each goal are no longer required unless the student is taking an off-level alternate state assessment.

The new law reaffirms the importance of the regular education teacher in the IEP team process but provides greater flexibility regarding when and how the teacher(s) participates. For example, an IEP team member isn't required to attend a meeting if the parent and district agree that it is not necessary or agree that only written input is needed. In addition, changes can be made to the IEP after the annual meeting without convening another meeting if the parent and district agree and the district provides a written document of the changes.

However, this added flexibility will likely involve additional written agreements between the district and the parent. The Oregon Department of Education has revised the standardized

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See **Challenges** (continued on the next page)

Challenges (continued)

IEP (www.ode.state.or.us/pubs/forms/iep/standardiepguid.pdf) to address IDEIA changes and has provided sample written agreement forms for use by districts (www.ode.state.or.us/pubs/forms/iep/agreedistparentsamform.pdf).

These and other changes in IDEIA (e.g. dispute resolution, discipline, private schools, etc.) are sure to provide teachers, specialists, and administrators a variety of challenges as they endeavor to understand the new regulations, provide staff development training, and implement new procedures and practices in the 2005-06 school year.

Board Notes

At their meeting on April 20, 2005 SOESD Board members:

- Offered a contract to Sandra Crews to serve as director of Special Education.
- Learned of the resignation of Lorrie Brawner, physical therapist.
- Approved a leave of absence for Kim Jansen, educational assistant.
- Received the financial report for the period ending March 31, 2005.
- Reviewed the superintendent's schedule for April, May, and June.
- Heard a presentation by Ron Enger, director, and Jay Matheson, supervisor, of Technology and Media Services, relating to the use of interactive video conferencing for distance education.
- Were apprised that SOESD had received approximately \$14,900 in energy tax credits.
- Approved their meeting scheduled for 2005/2006.
- Adopted an evaluation calendar and criteria for evaluation of the superintendent.
- Were briefed on the status of Senate Bills 765 and 415 by Superintendent Boyarsky.

IVC (continued)

worked with teachers from a variety of subject matter and grade levels to experiment with this new telecommunications device. In almost every case when the SOESD distance learning staff needed someone to try a new event, Suzanne knew a teacher who would be interested. She did this on what we now call the "bleeding edge" of a new technology. Suzanne's optimism and enthusiasm for new and innovative projects has helped to keep IVC "events" an ongoing option in Grants Pass School District #7.



Doug Smith

Sandra Crews assumes directorship of Special Education Services

Sandra Heinzl Crews has worked for the Southern Oregon Education Service District since August 1996. As Special Programs Supervisor (and later as Coordinator), she supervised the STEPS Program for students ages 5-21 with multiple and severe disabilities, which now serves 200 students in 20 elementary or secondary schools in Jackson and Klamath Counties and in 4 community/apartment sites for post-high school age students. Ms. Crews also supervised Speech-Language services provided to school districts in Jackson County and the former Harambe Shelter Home classroom.



Prior to moving to Oregon, Ms. Crews lived in Illinois, where she worked as a special education teacher for 11 years and administrator for 11 years, including 9 years at the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) in positions related to early intervention and early childhood education, special education, compliance monitoring, Title I, and school improvement. At ISBE, Ms. Crews spearheaded a number of statewide initiatives which promoted parent training, family involvement, and parent-school collaboration and also served as a mediator to resolve parent-district disputes.

Ms. Crews holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in special education and administration, respectively, as well as numerous teaching certificates/licenses in elementary education, early childhood education, special education, and educational administration. She has also been active in civic and professional organizations and currently serves on the Board of Directors for Pathways Enterprises, Inc. and Creative Supports, Inc., both of which provide services to adults with developmental disabilities.

Ms. Crews has embraced the lifestyle of southern Oregon—enjoying hiking, fishing, rafting, camping, music, and the arts. She is looking forward to leading the special education department in continuing its excellent service to students with disabilities. She is also eager to share in the leadership and planning of the ESD in relationship to its member districts and community at large.

Teacher Training, Computers Talking, and Students Learning

By Kris Davis, Assistive Technology Specialist

The final training session of a grant awarded to the Assistive Technology Program, from the Gordon Elwood Foundation, occurred in mid-April. The Grant provided eighteen elementary special education teachers in Jackson County an opportunity to increase their knowledge and use of assistive technology. Participating teachers received a set of specialized technology tools to support students with learning disabilities:

- Recycled and upgraded computers donated by the U. S. Forest Service.
- New color printers.
- *Clicker 4*, a powerful and user-friendly talking/writing support and multimedia tool that enables students to write with whole words, phrases or pictures.
- *Type to Learn*, a proven typing curriculum based on sequential, skills-building instruction.
- A variety of other software programs and Internet resources that help students with reading and writing difficulties.

Students with learning disabilities often need software to read back what they have written. Talking word processing software can help students hear their errors and make sure that what they wrote is really what they wanted to say. Computers can also read text aloud to students who are unable to read it for themselves. When technology is used as a reading support, students who have trouble learning to read can get the information they need from their textbooks, worksheets, and from the Internet.

Statewide data indicate that only 1-5% of students with learning disabilities use computer technology in this way. Research on the uses of technology for children with learning disabilities indicates that a much larger number could benefit. One of the best ways to address this problem is to make sure teachers have the tools and training they need in order to understand how computers and specialized software can help their students. The project was designed to increase the ability of elementary special education teachers to offer appropriate technology solutions to their students with learning disabilities.

Each participating teacher attended four full-day training sessions offered collaboratively by the Assistive Technology Program of Southern Oregon ESD and the Oregon Technology Access Program. In addition to training in the operation of the computer and software, teachers received training on how to use computers and software to help their students with learning disabilities read and write more effectively and independently.

The grant had two primary goals. The first goal was to increase the ability of special education teachers to teach their students



Pictured from the left are Mel Ginsberg, Kate Sullivan, Jeffrey Mann, and Jeff Johnson, teachers from Ashland School District's special education program, discussing new and innovative ways to provide assistive technology to students with special needs.

how to incorporate specialized computer software into their existing educational programs to help them overcome barriers to reading and writing. The second goal was to increase the ability of students with learning disabilities to learn and show what they have learned by using technology designed for their special needs.

Here's what a few teachers said about the training:

- "I have incorporated many of the resources into my teaching. They will continue to be utilized well into the future."
- "Very valuable information. I like that the training was completed over a variety of sessions. By returning to prior information on follow-up sessions, it was more easily remembered and applied."
- "Once the computer was setup and I spent some planning time on the use of it - it was then used continually throughout the day, including before and after school."

At the end of the training, teachers identified individual goals that they want to achieve. The following is a sample of these goals:

- Review the Assistive Technology Screening Form with the regular education teachers at a school staff meeting.
- Use my newly acquired Assistive Technology knowledge to educate regular education teachers on the use and benefits of Assistive Technology.
- Introduce parents to software and websites that promote learning for students with learning disabilities.
- Systematically incorporate more Assistive Technology strategies and tools into the student's IEP.

The Gordon Elwood Foundation Grant provided a terrific opportunity for learning about assistive technology, sharing strategies for implementation, and developing a collegial network for support across districts. This is a fantastic group of teachers. It was fun and a real privilege to work with them.