

Support for Empowered Desktop by Kan-ed

March 21, 2007

Diana Wieland
Curriculum Director, Colby Public Schools
Principal, Thomas County Academy (public charter)

I am Diana Wieland, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for USD 315 Colby Public Schools (approximately 1000 students) and the Principal of our 5-8 grade public charter, Thomas County Academy (24 students). I have had the privilege of being the Kan-ed Northwest Kansas Region Affiliate Chair as well as currently serve on the Local Area I Workforce Investment Act Board, comprised of 62 counties. This information is provided to show strong support for the continuing the full funding of the 'Empowered Desktop by Kan-ed', a custom web portal available to all students, families, and educators in Kansas. LearningStation provides, in my opinion, the great support for and customization of the 'Empowered Desktop by Kan-ed'.

I have had the opportunity to not only share this safe, valuable tool with our district but also, sharing the resources and benefits with educators across the state. Based on my interactions with others, the two essential issues are **Affordability and Accessibility**.

Affordability is the key to **accessibility**. It is important that all Kansas students, families and educators can access the Kan-ed resources through the 'Empowered Desktop by Kan-ed' at the same level regardless of the geographical and/or demographics of where one resides in Kansas. It must be economically affordable to all. Affordability to our region means that the smallest school district and the smallest public library can gain a reasonable minimum level of content and service. The current resources include many needed resources to meet the current workforce demands and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability. Bottom line; resources must be available, on-demand, to all students in Kansas.

The 'Empowered Desktop by Kan-ed' provides user-friendly, current, fast, safely delivered, information-rich content with a vast amount of 'just-in-time' learning opportunities as well as becoming a vital collaborative tool to promote public/private interaction. It is essential that all Kansas students have equal access to these online resources, databases, and collaboration mechanisms (e-meeting software) either directly, through subsidized pricing, or leveraging volume purchasing for the much-needed resources particularly for Northwest Kansans. It is imperative that we look toward the future and the quality of life that we want for all Kansans. A summary of the resources is attached to show the variety of resources that helps us differentiate instruction, surpass the NCLB targets, and better prepare for the technology-rich workforce. To highlight some of benefits:

- Supports academic achievement: A variety of teaching and learning resources enable Kansas schools to harness the Inter to advance learning to our digital-aged students.
 - Selected library databases, World Book, SIRS, Thomson-Gale, etc., provide a wealth of multilevel resources to support their learning investigations. The variety of these resources is essential to meet the end users needs.
 - LS Test Builder allows educators to create, save, and share tests aligned with standards, group students, deliver online/paper tests, as well as evaluate individual and class performance using a variety of reports. In addition, students can log in and use an automatic test generation tool for self-directed study – helping students take responsibility for their own learning.

- An award-winning academic search engine, netTrekker, provides fast and easy access to more than 180,000 educator-selected online resources aligned with Kansas Standards helps reinforce skills.
 - Providing access to a teaching and learning profile system, P.E.T., helps teachers identify their teaching strengths, pinpoint their students' learning styles, and develop strategies for modifying instruction to meet students' individual learning needs.
 - Indicating the cutting-edge thinking, LearningStation has recently partnered with a Kansas based company to provide the first online-delivered personal experience curriculum, sometimes referred to as story-based or scenarios, engaging students through virtual learning with topics like cartoon animation and web game designing.
- Allows for individualization and personalization: At Colby Public Schools we provide individual logins for each student and educator so that the desktop can be used at its fullest: individual standard/content knowledge determination (LS Test Builder), teaching/learning solutions inventory (P.E.T.), web-based, virtual storage (Backpack), bookmarks, to name a few.
- Provides for school customization and ongoing support: Each building in our district has customized their 'Empowered Desktop by Kan-ed' to meet their students' needs. LearningStation with outstanding customer service, assists schools to pull all our primary programs and resources into one online location, including access to our online data management system, online district library resources, subscription applications, and many more. This is a great time saver, and more importantly, it brings to one place, much needed resources to the user,

I often compare the development of the 'Empowered Desktop by Kan-ed' as a work-in-progress similar to building an airplane while in the air; *we are using it while creating it*. It is invigorating to witness the excitement as the participants begin to understand the potential of these rich resources and the implications for the future. I am privileged to be a part of the Kan-ed initiative to 'Re-Imagine' the way Kansans do business. 'Empowered Desktop by Kan-ed' is a great model for delivery of 21st Century Statewide Networks.

I understand that supporting funding for the 'Empowered Desktop by Kan-ed' is not easy and will take courageous leadership. But I firmly believe that if we succeed, it will pay rich dividends for our students as they continue to prepare for the workplace. With this continued funding and the dedication of the Kan-ed staff, consultants, and vast number of volunteers, this can be the catalyst for the delivery of many things for the 21st Century.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support. I welcome any questions that you might have.
 (785) 460-5005 or dwieland@colbyeagles.org