



IBM Network Station enters school in North Carolina.

For students at East Cary Middle School in Wake County, North Carolina, the letters "NC" are more than the postal abbreviation for their home state. They also stand for the IBM Network Station™ network computers that are helping students here learn vocational skills in one of the most well-networked classrooms in the country.

The Wake County school system, situated in the heart of North Carolina's Research Triangle, is the second largest school district in the state and has more than 90,000 students. Nearly every one of its 106 schools has computers linked over a local area network, as well as high-speed connections to other county schools and the district's central office.

What makes the East Cary school just a little bit different from the other schools in the district are the 31 small, powerful IBM Network Station network computers being used in the school's vocational lab, where students spend 18 weeks learning fundamental computer skills, including word processing, databases and spreadsheets. The IBM Network Stations are connected to an IBM PC Server, which is where the students' applications actually run.

Setting a new standard

Before the Network Stations arrived, students in the vocational lab at East Cary Middle School were using older, non-networked Apple® computers and saving their work to diskettes. When they needed to print a file, they had to take a diskette containing the file to a separate printing station.

"The Network Station has made our lives a lot easier. It has helped us to standardize our hardware, our software, and the availability of applications to our students," says Brenda Hourigan, chief technology officer for the Wake County School system. "It's also faster and easier to support because it lets us make upgrades at the file server instead of the desktop."

Application	Teaching basic PC application skills to public school students
Hardware	IBM Network Station, IBM PC Server
Software	IBM Network Station Manager; WinCenter Pro; Integrated, Windows-based productivity applications





Of course, students no longer have to save their files to diskette, because all their work is stored on – and printed from – the server. This is not only more convenient, but also safer and more reliable.

Hourigan also likes the fact that the Network Station allows an instructor to view what's happening on each student's screen from the instructor's own workstation. "This is so much more efficient because teachers don't have to go from desk to desk to see when someone's having difficulty. They can view and interact with the student's screen right from their own desktop," she says.

Student and taxpayer friendly

Hourigan views the IBM Network Station as a "natural" for the schools' vocational training programs, as well as for administrators' offices. In fact, 30 more IBM Network Stations are now installed in the school system's central office, running typical PC productivity applications.

Eventually, she hopes to place Network Stations in all the district's schools and use them in other instructional programs where it makes sense. "We are driven by curriculum, not technology," she says.

Given today's tight school budgets, Hourigan regards NCs as extremely taxpayer friendly. Her experiences to date have convinced her that IBM Network Stations will be far less expensive and easier to support than PCs in the classroom. They will also reduce the risk of computer viruses and permit network computers throughout the district to be maintained and supported from a single location.

"If I were buying new computers today, I would rather be buying NCs than PCs where appropriate," Hourigan says. This is especially true, she says, considering the high growth rate in student enrollment in the Wake County schools.

A solid foundation

Hourigan gives local parents much of the credit for making network computing a reality in the Wake County school system. "We have a highly educated and technologically sophisticated population that's willing to embrace new things," she says, pointing out that many computer companies – including IBM – maintain a major presence here.

"These are people who demand a solid technology education for their kids, and I think we are giving it to them," Hourigan asserts. "We are on the leading edge of the school districts in what we're doing, not just technologically, but in providing consistency among the schools."

For more information

To find out more about how network computing with the IBM Network Station and the IBM family of servers can help you make the most of your business opportunities, call 1 800 IBM-7080, priority code 6N7BK005, in North America. Outside North America, call 416 383-5152, priority code 6N7BK005. Or contact your IBM Business Partner or local IBM representative.

If you have access to the Internet, you can find additional Network Station information via the World Wide Web at www.ibm.com/nc.



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