



A NEWSLETTER FOR EDUCATORS TO ENHANCE LEARNING THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

# Beyond Connectivity

Now that your classroom's connected to the Internet, where do you go from here?

Almost 95 percent of all U.S. public schools are connected to the Internet, according to a recent U.S. Education Department study. But in this age of rapidly emerging communication technology, simple connectivity is not enough.

### Sharpen Your Teaching Tools

Sprint offers products and services that can help your district enhance learning, increase parental involvement and reduce administrative time.

In this issue of Classroom Connections, you'll see how the

DeSoto Unified School District in Kansas uses Sprint products to enhance parental involvement and instructional learning with ParentLink and Sprint TekNet IP™.

Sprint TekNet IP allows the district to integrate media in every classroom as well as automate the public address system, bells and clocks.

ParentLink provides parents of the district with instant access to their child's homework and future homework assignments and information specific to each school. This communications system has provided the district with a valuable tool for increasing parental involvement.

Also in this issue, you'll see how districts such as Clark County in Nevada leveraged E-Rate funding to obtain their telecommunications services and networking infrastructure. With the help of Sprint, this school district was able to obtain \$2.3 million in E-Rate funding.



*Where's the real excitement? It's about totally changing the concept of a term paper.*

Jerry Smith  
Group Manager  
Sprint Education Markets

### Free Planning Tools

Need more information? Visit our Web site at [www.sprint.com/education](http://www.sprint.com/education), where you can order free copies of the Educator's Guide to Wide Area Networking and the Educator's Tool Kit on Technology.

Or call your Sprint Representative, who'll provide you with customized solutions as you travel into your telecommunications future.

"Until recently, computer technology has primarily been used to refine existing models of instruction," says Jerry Smith, Group Manager, Sprint Education Markets.

"But where's the real excitement? It's not in using computers as word processors for doing term papers; it's about totally changing the concept of a term paper.

"Maybe that traditional term paper becomes a movie produced on a computer or becomes an electronic field trip or picture album into another culture."

By using multi-media applications and high-speed Internet access - and working with leading providers of school telecommunications like Sprint - students, teachers, parents and administrators are entering a high-tech world of enhanced education. Just as digital imaging has transformed the photographic industry, broadband technology will transform classroom instruction.

# Sprint PCS<sup>SM</sup> Keeps You Mobile and Connected

Sprint PCS wireless phones provide dependable, high-tech safety and security while offering simple, cost-effective and flexible network solutions.

Everyone involved with schools - teachers, staff, students and parents - fear emergencies on school grounds.

If a player gets hurt on the football field or if a school bus breaks down, coaches, drivers or others in charge need a quick, easy way to call for help or alert office staff.

While no one can prevent accidents or emergencies, you can be prepared with Sprint PCS (Personal Communication System). With Sprint PCS, you can also save time, improve productivity and enhance communications with staff members.

No wonder teachers and principals named wireless communications the most beneficial technology used in schools today, according to a recent Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association study.

### Improve safety and security

Sprint PCS service enables you to:

- ▶ Stay connected on the playground or elsewhere without wired phones.
- ▶ Report emergencies more quickly if someone is hurt on a trip or athletic field.
- ▶ Speed up response time from personnel who are between classrooms or offices.
- ▶ Provide backup communications in case of fire, power outages or vandalism.
- ▶ Remotely access paging systems, such as Sprint TekNet IP, to make urgent announcements.

### Communicate quickly and easily

With the flexible options and improved communication of Sprint PCS, you can:

- ▶ Send immediate, confidential messages with text messaging.
- ▶ Improve teacher and parent communications with voicemail.
- ▶ Connect staff through group or "broadcast" messaging.
- ▶ Provide Internet and e-mail access with an array of Sprint PCS devices.
- ▶ Summon emergency backup in the instant it takes to dial your phone.



### Make connections flexibly and economically

Sprint PCS solutions allow you to:

- ▶ Eliminate costly wiring and delays with fixed wireless devices that can easily be moved, networked or reconfigured.

- ▶ Increase productivity with access to mobile personnel.
- ▶ Save time with immediate access to vital personnel.
- ▶ Manage your account balance using the Sprint PCS Web site at [www.sprintpcs.com](http://www.sprintpcs.com).

When you've got an important message to circulate or when the unexpected occurs, be prepared with services from Sprint PCS.



[www.sprint.com/education](http://www.sprint.com/education)



Sprint Marketing Communications  
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### PLEASE ROUTE

- Superintendent
- Principal
- Technology Coordinator
- Library Administrator
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## Don't Wait: Ask for E-Rate

New, predictable deadlines make it easier to apply.

Childcare experts and parents know: kids crave structure. Which may be why they grow into adults who have a penchant for the predictable.

Sprint E-Rate expert Barbara Stoll sure does. She's betting that so do those in the country's 36,000 schools and school districts that are potential E-Rate recipients.

"Finally, we have set E-Rate deadlines, and educators are thrilled," says Stoll, Manager, Sprint Education Markets.

"During the program's first two years, many customers didn't apply because the deadlines kept changing and they didn't know when they were."

The Schools and Libraries Division (SLD) now has a regular timetable for each year's E-Rate program. The schedule for Funding Year 3 is the predictable pattern for Funding Year 4 and following years. See the E-Rate timeline side bar on this page for an outline of these deadlines. ❖

## 6 Myths of E-Rate

**E-Rate offers simpler ways to update your telecommunications capabilities.**

If your school district hankers for a slice of E-Rate's federal funding pie, don't let these myths spoil your appetite:

**MYTH 1. All the money goes to heavily urban areas and I don't have a chance.** Only the E-Rate category, "Internal Connections", is prioritized based on your school district's participation in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program.

If you apply for Telecommunications and Internet access, funding chances are excellent.

**MYTH 2. It's too much work.** E-Rate forms were simplified in Funding Year 3.

If you have questions, call Sprint's E-Rate Service Center toll-free at 1-877-231-3850. Sprint offers assistance in completing the E-Rate application process.

**MYTH 3. I missed all the deadlines and I can't collect my money now.** Some E-Rate deadlines such as the Form 471 window (usually October through mid-January), are firm. But other suggested deadlines are often flexible.

When in deadline doubt, call the toll-free Schools and Libraries Division (SLD) Help Line at 1-888-203-8100.

**MYTH 4. If I fill out a Form 486, there's no need to complete additional paperwork.** The Form 486 serves as a 'trigger' to the SLD that the vendor is providing your service. You will need to complete the BEAR (Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement) Form 472 on a quarterly, semi-annual or annual basis to receive your award. After completing the paperwork, your check should arrive in 45 days.

**MYTH 5. I'd like to put in a wide area network (WAN) to connect my schools but E-Rate won't fund it.** E-Rate will fund WANs that are leased from a common telecommunications carrier. Your Sprint Sales Representative can help you with WAN specifications and E-Rate filing.

**MYTH 6. My school can't afford high-speed Internet access so why bother to apply.** Improved technologies make the cost of dedicated Internet access go down every year. One new option? Sprint Network Consolidation. It includes on-site equipment and enables you to "future-proof" your purchase with upgrades as technology advances.

**For more information on E-Rate funding or Sprint products and services, visit our Web site at [www.sprint.com/education](http://www.sprint.com/education).** ❖

# Keeping in Touch

## Sprint TekNet IP<sup>SM</sup> and ParentLink keep teachers, students and parents in the learning loop.

Located in eastern Kansas, DeSoto Unified School District covers 100 square miles and portions of five cities. Communicating with that diverse, dispersed student body creates a significant challenge.

When the district started building a new high school and three new elementary schools recently, communicating became even more complex.

District leaders agreed: They needed to find ways to enhance and streamline communications.

### The Opportunity

DeSoto had several communication goals:

- ▶ Keeping its far-flung, fast-growing school population abreast of activities and schedules.
- ▶ Focusing teacher time on educating instead of on making phone calls and writing notes.
- ▶ Enhancing learning through high-tech teaching tools.
- ▶ Reducing the cost of expensive audio-visual equipment.
- ▶ Saving time on administrative systems, such as clocks, bells and the PA system.

"Our goal was to use technology to support academic achievement as well as saving time and money on communications," says Starside Elementary Principal Paula Hill.

### The Solutions

DeSoto came up with two solutions to these communication challenges:

**1. ParentLink.** To keep students, parents and teachers within the burgeoning district connected, DeSoto's Starside Elementary School recently installed ParentLink.

ParentLink is an interactive voice response system that works as a homework hotline, an outbound dialing system and a voice mail system for parents and students calling in.

This communications system runs 24 hours a day through a PC-based, interactive voice response unit that works with the school's phone system and administrative computer.

**2. Sprint TekNet IP.** To help the district enhance education, streamline administration and stretch its telecommunications dollars, three DeSoto elementary schools recently introduced Sprint TekNet IP.

This automated system combines more than a dozen school communication functions into one package. It encompasses:

- ▶ Administrative support, including bells, clocks, PA system and remote control devices.
- ▶ A video distribution and control system, which allows teachers to control media via telephone, integrate media into the classroom, bring in video programs from a remote location and broadcast video bulletins.

### The Benefits

ParentLink and TekNet IP are already helping DeSoto:

- ▶ Keep parents, teachers and students connected. "Parents don't always see notes we send home," Hill says. "ParentLink allows them to contact us on their schedule."

Indeed, parents can call in, press a few buttons, and find out at their convenience what their child missed when he was out with the flu.

"Starside parents use ParentLink to report sick children, which keeps our phone lines freed up," Hill says. "Teachers use it to set up homework assignments and post activities that parents can call in for."

- ▶ Streamline communications and free up teacher's time to educate. DeSoto teachers used to communicate with parents through time-consuming hand-written notes and repetitious phone calls.

As the district population increases, teachers anticipated spending more and more time making routine phone calls, writing notes and duplicating assignments and schedules.

Now, with ParentLink, Starside office staff and teachers can leave a message at every student's house reminding parents about the field trip on Tuesday or inviting them to sign up for this semester's parent-teacher conference – all with the press of a few buttons.

"ParentLink is a quick, cost-efficient way to communicate everything from homework to school activities to lunch menus, all from a single source," Hill says. "For teachers, it's valuable because they don't have to make as many phone calls."

Instead, Starside teachers can focus their time and energy on their top priority: educating students.

- ▶ Improve education. Sprint TekNet IP allows DeSoto teachers to integrate media into the classroom, bringing in video programs and broadcasting video bulletins. That helps teachers keep students engaged in learning, make the curriculum more relevant and better serving to a variety of learning styles.
- ▶ Control costs. DeSoto's budget watchers worried that new audio-visual equipment for each new school would be costly.



Members of the DeSoto Unified School District accept the Sprint Showcase Schools award. Pictured from left to right: Doug Weiss, Director of Technology for the district; Dr. Sharon Zoellner, Assistant Superintendent for the district; Dr. Joe Novak, Mill Valley High School Principal; Mary Peters, Sprint Public Affairs Manager; Dr. Marilyn Layman, Superintendent for the district; Sean Reilly, Mill Valley High School Associate Principal; Tony Hebenstriet, Sprint Project Manager; Jeff Cilek, Sprint Account Executive.

But the Sprint TekNet IP open architecture allowed DeSoto to use existing, off-the-shelf telephones, televisions, VCRs and other equipment instead of purchasing expensive, single-function systems.

TekNet IP's modular design also means DeSoto can easily and inexpensively add capabilities, as the district needs them. That makes Sprint's solution a cost-effective communications decision for tomorrow, as well as today.

Another bonus is reduced damage to equipment. Instead of carting cumbersome devices from room to room, teachers can schedule media from their classroom computer or call the library, where the staff loads videos or CDs for broadcast through the Sprint TekNet IP system on classroom TVs.

That means costly equipment and resources stay put, slashing the possibility of damage or loss while they're on loan.

- ▶ Streamline administration. TekNet IP automates and coordinates DeSoto's alarms, bells, clocks and paging.

No longer do DeSoto staff members have the time-consuming task of changing complicated bell schedules for different grade levels, holidays or block scheduling. Instead, they just punch a few buttons on their telephone handset, and the system does it all for them.

### A Look Ahead

"Sprint helped us achieve our communication goals," says Starside Elementary Principal Paula Hill. "We're enhancing learning and seeing time and cost savings."

DeSoto's innovative approach to learning has not gone unrecognized. This spring, DeSoto was selected as a Sprint Showcase School where they serve as a model for other districts hoping to implement technology solutions.

As DeSoto grows, these new telecommunications tools will grow with it. And that will keep teachers and parents, students and staff connected – no matter how much the district expands in the future. ❖

## FREE PLANNING TOOLS

Sprint has developed free tools that can assist you in planning for your technology needs.

You can order the Educator's Guide to wide area networking or the Educator's tool kit on technology.

Order on line at [www.sprint.com/education](http://www.sprint.com/education)

## E-Rate Quick Reference Guide

### Checklist of key E-Rate deadlines

Date	FY*	Task
<input type="checkbox"/> Jan 2000	FY2	If filing BEAR (Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement), submit for first six months of program year
<input type="checkbox"/> Feb-March	FY3	Receipt Acknowledgment Letters arrive, correct and return to SLD (Schools & Libraries Division) within two weeks.
<input type="checkbox"/> April-May	FY3	Funding letters arrive; for Telecom and Internet Access, file Form 486 as soon as possible; for Internal Connections, file July 1. For all services, determine BEAR check or credit on bill.
<input type="checkbox"/> April-May	FY3	If funds are denied, must appeal to SLD within 30 days of receiving notice.
<input type="checkbox"/> June-July	FY2	If filing BEAR, submit for second six months of funding year
<input type="checkbox"/> August	FY4	Consult with Sprint representative to discuss your technology needs in preparation for FY4.
<input type="checkbox"/> By Nov	FY4	File Form 470 for telecommunications, Internet access, and Internal Connections (may not be required for multi-year contracts).
<input type="checkbox"/> Oct-Jan 2001	FY4	Wait 28 days for competitive bids, select a service provider, file Form 471.

**\*FY = Funding Year; also referred to as Program Year (PY)**

FY2 = Funds awarded for July 1999 - June 2000

FY3 = Funds awarded for July 2000 - June 2001

FY4 = Funds awarded for July 2001 - June 2002

For complete details about E-Rate deadlines, call the SLD Help Desk at 1-888-203-8100, or visit the Web site at: [www.sld.universalservice.org](http://www.sld.universalservice.org)

### Sprint Service Provider Identification Numbers (SPINs)

Sprint Local Service SPIN 143 01 9614

Sprint Long Distance SPIN 143 00 5695

Sprint PCS Wireless SPIN 143 00 6742

**For more information, contact a Sprint E-Rate Representative at 1-877-231-3850.** ❖

## Clark County Collects

### Nevada school district receives millions in E-Rate funds with help from Sprint.

Despite variations in application deadlines during E-Rate's first two years, Bruce Daley knew he had to keep up.

His school district, Clark County, Nevada, is the eighth largest in the country with more than 217,000 students – and growing.

With 129 new schools and renovations planned through 2008, the district needed E-Rate's help equipping schools with vital telecommunications services. Now in its fourth year, this federal Schools and Libraries Division program offers \$2.25 billion for such services annually.

"It would be a very difficult and expensive project to pay for the development of the resources for telecommunications, internal connections and Internet access," says Daley, technology development services coordinator.

"E-Rate has provided the opportunity to fast track the

development of the technical networking infrastructure."

With Daley and Sprint working together to meet deadlines and iron out requirement details, Clark County is getting its share. Daley credits Barbara Stoll, Sprint E-Rate Specialist, with helping the district receive \$2.3 million in E-Rate funding for the program's first year.

"Sprint, through the leadership of Barbara Stoll, has been very involved," he says. "Through their efforts, they have truly made a significant difference in the lives of many educators and children in our school district."

As has Daley. Since the early 1990s, this former first- and third-grade teacher has experience with diverse projects involving technology and education, including:

- ▶ The Consortium for School Networking, which advised the

*It would be a very difficult, expensive project to pay for the development of the resources for telecommunications, internal connections and Internet access. E-Rate has provided the opportunity to fast track the development of the technical networking infrastructure.*

**Bruce Daley, Technology Development Services Coordinator, Clark County School District**



U.S. Department of Education on Internet use in the classroom.

- ▶ An Internet e-mail exchange between students and researcher Paul Smith, who wrote about his experiences while in Antarctica.
- ▶ NASA's interactive "electronic field trip" for students that involved the Hubble Space Telescope.

*For more information on the E-Rate program, visit the SLD Web site at [www.sld.universalservice.org](http://www.sld.universalservice.org)* ❖