

School Districts to Connect to Third Frontier Network

Learning from medical researchers, watching spaceships being launched from NASA, talking with scientists about new inventions – these are only a few of many possible opportunities that will be available for Ohio’s K-12 students by connecting to the Third Frontier Network (TFN).

Today, Toledo Public Schools and Scioto Valley Local Schools became the first two K-12 school districts in the state to connect to the TFN, the most advanced statewide, fiber-optic network for education, research and economic development in the country. The K-12 and higher education network is the first of its kind in the nation.

“The Third Frontier Network connects Ohio’s colleges, universities, research institutions and schools, and I am proud that we are realizing its potential by bringing the excitement of scientific inquiry directly into elementary and secondary classrooms,” said Governor Bob Taft. “Connecting the Third Frontier Network to K-12 classrooms will open doors for exciting new learning opportunities and interest more students in scientific and high-tech careers.”

Susan Tave Zelman, superintendent of public instruction at the Ohio Department of Education, said, “We’re very excited about this first step in connecting our K-12 students to the network. The Third Frontier Network will allow students from across the state to have access to the same information and opportunities to learn.”

Education and government leaders gathered at the Ohio Supercomputer Center in Columbus, Woodward High School in Toledo and Piketon Junior/Senior High School in Piketon for a lighting ceremony to officially connect the districts to the network. The event featured live videoconferencing among the three locations.

"eTech Ohio is a proud partner in the Third Frontier Network initiative," said eTech Ohio Commission Chair Bill Sams. "Through this collaborative effort, Ohio citizens will have the high capacity access needed to successfully advance education and accelerate learning through technology."

Superintendents Eugene Sanders of Toledo Public Schools and Dennis Thompson of Scioto Valley Local Schools spoke during the event. Students from both districts participated by demonstrating and discussing the benefits of the TFN.

Launched in 2004, the TFN has connected Ohio’s colleges and universities to business partners, hospitals and Ohio’s federal labs.

“The Third Frontier Network has given Ohio's higher education and research partners a competitive edge,” said Roderick G. W. Chu, chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents. “Connecting our partners in K-12 will sharpen our ability to better educate even more Ohioans to compete and win in today's global economy.”

The TFN provides a dedicated high-speed connection to Internet2 and the National Lambda Rail, national high-performance backbone information technology networks.

Stan Ahalt, executive director of the Ohio Supercomputer Center, said he is thrilled to be

connecting the K-12 community with higher education and the research community.

“This is exactly the kind of synergy that the TFN was built to support, and the kind of cooperative use of a shared common infrastructure that gives the Ohio taxpayers reason to rejoice,” Ahalt said. “This exemplifies the very best of good government – for the benefit of all students in the state of Ohio.”

By Sept. 30, 2006, Ohio’s 23 Information Technology Centers as well as the city school districts in Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton and Youngstown will be connected to the TFN.

For more information or to download a video of the lighting ceremony, visit www.thirdfrontiernetwork.org.