



School Technology Directors Praise CeCTO Program

innovative course is making an impact from the mountains to the coast and all points between

Working with public schools is an opportunity for talented IT professionals to give back by ensuring public education meets the requirements of today's world. Technology is constantly changing. It doesn't give you a chance to get bored - and that's what many of the state's public school technology directors like most about their jobs. They are constantly learning how to do their jobs better which in turn helps their students do better and improve their communities as a whole.

Nearly 70 school leaders from across the state are thrilled to be participating in the new Certified Educational Chief Technology Officer (CeCTO) program. CeCTO is offered through a partnership between the N.C. Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), UNC School of Government's Center for Public Technology, and MCNC.

This innovative program features two components – one for superintendents and one for technology directors.

Superintendents participate with technology directors to discuss the role of transformational leadership in K-12 education followed by an instructional session geared specifically to their roles, which is scheduled in September. Technology directors participate in a 240-hour instructional course during a 10-month track that helps establish the core competencies needed for assessing and addressing some of the most critical issues facing IT leaders in school systems. The purpose is to equip school leaders with the tools to help them manage and improve organizational technology within their school district as well as address IT governance, project and risk management, legal and regulatory issues, and more.

Tech Directors Like Expanding Their Network



David Useche is CIO for Caswell County Schools. He has a master's degree in computer applications and computer information systems and came to Caswell almost 15 years ago from Venezuela as part of an exchange/cultural program that initially had him teaching high school Spanish and computers. After about three years, he moved from high school technology facilitator to the central office where he has his current position.

"CeCTO has been a great opportunity to help my school district because it allows me to move out of my daily routine and really think about what we're doing and where we want to go," he explained. "The program also has helped me to understand my role better as a leader in the district who must sell a vision, be more efficient and effective with our technology infrastructure in order to benefit all students and everyone in the community."

Useche said the program has made an immediate impact and motivated him to start collecting information from surveys from his district and neighboring districts. So right away, he created a comparative analysis for his district to see where they were in terms of number of computers verses population and enrolled students. "This was really helpful information to show our actual situation as well as what other districts are doing in the state."

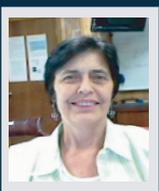
Paul O'Briant is a former teacher and principal at Currituck County High School and has been tech director for the school district since 2005. He faces some of the most unique challenges than anywhere else in the state.



Currituck is a vast county. From a technology standpoint, one of the most unique challenges is in Knotts Island across the Currituck Sound. Middle-and high-school students must take a ferry to and from school every day. The school uses a VPN to connect to the central office. However, O'Briant said the CeCTO program has allowed him to work with others in the state to learn best practices on how to face tough technology challenges such as this one while also addressing a variety of other important areas ranging from project management and planning to issues with work-life balance.

"This program has been a good opportunity to take the tech director position in Currituck County to a more professional level," said O'Briant. "The ability to network with other tech directors in the state is very beneficial because there are few times that we ever get to meet or be in the same room together. It is a good cross-section of people who are able to help each other by sharing their expertise in order to better serve not only our district's students, but all the students in North Carolina."

Finally, moving from the coast to the mountains, Dony-Kaye Merrill has worked in education for more 34 years – as a middle-school math and science teacher, a secondary math teacher, a guidance counselor, an assistant principal, and now tech director for Transylvania County Schools. She is one of the more experienced professionals in the CeCTO program and shared some insight on how it is helping her to do her job better.



"I am one of the 'old timers' I guess, and for me the CeCTO program has been absolutely phenomenal," she said. "Someone is always going to know something different. This program's model allows us to be open to new ideas and professional collaboration. It has provided the opportunity to see my role from a different perspective while at the same time expand my network throughout the state."

The overall reaction from the CeCTO program has been positive and participants agree that they hope to see some kind of follow-up or continuation of the program. CeCTO is one of the nation's first technology-centered certification programs for North Carolina K-12 superintendents and technology directors.

Instruction began Feb. 9 with a graduation ceremony on Nov. 17.

2010 CeCTO Certification Participants

SCHOOL DISTRICT	SUPERINTENDENT	TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR
Alleghany County Schools	Jeff Cox	Leslie Clark
Avery County Schools	Keith Eades	Dennis Brown
Caldwell County Schools	Steve Stone	Raymond Norman
Caswell County Schools	Douglas Barker	David Useche
Catawba County Schools	Tim Markley	Judith Ray
Cherokee County Schools	Stephen Lane	Jeana Hardin
Currituck County Schools	Meghan Doyle	Paul O'Briant
Edenton-Chowan Schools	Allan Smith	Nelle Hyatt
Franklin County Schools	Edward Ingram	Christopher Shearer
Halifax County Schools	Elease Frederick	Stacy Lee
Harnett County Schools	Phillip Ferrell	Thomas Frye
Haywood County Schools	Anne Garrett	Nathan Trantham
Hoke County Schools	Freddie Williamson	Jason Atkinson
Hyde County Schools	Gregory Todd	Shelby Gibbs
Johnston County Schools	Ed Croom	Diana Freeman
Lee County Schools	Jeff Moss	Cindy Johnson
Lenior County Schools	Terry Cline	Philip Decker
Lincoln County Schools	David Martin	Lee O'Neal
Macon County Schools	Dan Brigman	Tim Burrell
Mitchell County Schools	Brock Womble	Janie Duncan
Moore County Schools	Susan Purser	Anthony Tuso
Mt. Airy City Schools	Darrin Hartness	Judy Walker
Orange County Schools	Patrick Rhodes	Angela Veitch
Person County Schools	Larry Cartner	Deborah Burleson-Smith
Polk County Schools	William Miller	David Scherping
Rockingham Co. Schools	Rodney Shotwell	Dennis Frye/Lee Cummings
Stanly County Schools	Samuel DePaul	Brandon DeLeeuw
Surry County Schools	Ashley Hinson	Jill Reinhardt
Transylvania Co. Schools	Jeffrey McDaris	Donys Merrill
Vance County Schools	Norman Shearin	Marsha Abbott
Warren County Schools	Ray Spain	Christopher Withrow
Whiteville City Schools	Tom Hager	Anthony Martin
Yancey County Schools	Tom Little	Walter Peterson